

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND  
FRANCHISES

----- X

November 4, 2019  
Start: 10:15 a.m.  
Recess: 1:18 p.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Francisco P. Moya,  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Barry S. Grodenchik  
Rory I. Lancman  
Stephen T. Levin  
Antonio Reynoso  
Donovan J. Richards  
Carlina Rivera

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

A P P E A R A N C E S

Richard Lobel  
Law Firm of Sheldon Lobel, P.C.

Jennifer Dickson  
Herrick Feinstein on behalf of La Hermosa

Dan Kaplan  
FX Collaborative

Gloria Feliciano  
Pastor La Hermosa

Danial Feliciano  
Reverend at La Hermosa

Alexa Smith  
Chief of Staff of Manhattan School of Music

Magdalena Garcia  
In support of plan for La Hermosa

Maria Rivera  
In support of plan for La Hermosa

Lasona Acouchi  
Member of SEIU Local 32BJ

Wanna Ramos  
In support of plan for La Hermosa

Antonio Soto  
In support of plan for La Hermosa

Reverend Ralph Rodriguez

Stephen Mott  
Chief of Staff of HELP USA

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

3

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

- Matt Borden  
Department of Social Services
- David Cleghorn  
Chief Housing Office for Help USA
- Lacey Tauber  
Housing Preservation and Development
- Charles Barron  
Assemblyman
- Kirk Goodrich  
Partner at Monadnock Development
- Iesha Whitaker  
Program Director at Genesis
- Charlyn McMullen  
Director of Youth Family and Educational Services  
of Genesis
- Helen Bley  
Client at Genesis Homes
- Bruce Jacobs  
Coalition of the Rockaways
- Jenise Morgan  
Senior Project and Business Manager for  
Brownsville Community Development Corporation
- Cynthia Stewart  
(On behalf of Laura Mascuch) the Executive  
Director of the Supportive Housing Network of New  
York

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES 4

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONT.)

Crystal Lewis  
Program Director for one of HELP USA's newer  
supportive housing program sites in the Bronx,  
HELP Woodycrest

Carlos Teroza[SP?]  
In accordance with the shelter situation

Ted Houghton  
President of Gateway Housing

Henry Love  
Program Coordinator for the Tenants Matters  
Program at Gateway Housing

Keona Johnson  
Resident at HELP One

Shakeeya[SP?] Davis  
Single mother of three

Gina Park  
Social Worker and the Executive Director of the  
HELP One

Bill Wilkins  
Director of Economic Development for the local  
development corporation of east New York

Adam Huron  
Vice President for Family Transitional Housing  
with HELP USA

2           SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning ladies and  
3 gentlemen, we're going to be starting shortly,  
4 everybody that's on the floor that's standing you  
5 cannot stand in the chambers. There is additional  
6 seating up in the balcony, very comfortable. When  
7 you exit the room, the staircase to your right takes  
8 you up there. No standing in the chambers, please  
9 take a seat upstairs. When your name is called to  
10 testify, we'll give you plenty of time to come down.  
11 Thank you so much. I appreciate everybody's  
12 cooperation. Make sure, we're going to start now, so  
13 make sure you set all your cellphones to vibration.  
14 Should you need to take a call, you can take the call  
15 outside. Thank you so much folks.

16           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: [GAVEL] Good morning and  
17 welcome to the meeting of the Subcommittee on Zoning  
18 and Franchises. I am Council Member Francisco Moya;  
19 the Chairperson of the Subcommittee and today we are  
20 joined by Council Members Grodenchik, Levin, Reynoso,  
21 Barron, Perkins, that's who we have for now.

22           If you are here to testify, please fill out a  
23 speaker slip with the sergeant at arms indicating  
24 your full name, the application name or the LU number  
25 and whether you are in favor or against the proposal.

2 We will begin this – sorry. We will begin by  
3 hearing a preconsidered LU item C 190305 ZMK for the  
4 6003 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue Rezoning relating to property in  
5 Council Member Menchaca’ s district in Brooklyn.

6 The applicant seeks approval for a zoning map  
7 amendment to rezone an existing R6 C1-3 District to a  
8 proposed C4-2 District along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue between 60<sup>th</sup>  
9 and 61<sup>st</sup> which would bring an existing three-story  
10 commercial building into conformance with zoning.

11 I now open the public hearing on this  
12 Application, and I call Richard Lobel and Frank – I’m  
13 sorry, I can’t make out your last name.

14 UNIDENTIFIED: Noriega.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Noriega, thank you. Council,  
16 I could please swear in the panel.

17 COUNCIL CLERK: Please raise your right hands and  
18 state your name for the record.

19 RICHARD LOBEL: Richard Lobel.

20 FRANK NORTIAGA: Frank Noriega.

21 COUNCIL CLERK: Do you swear or affirm that the  
22 testimony that you are about to give will be the  
23 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and  
24 you will answer all questions truthfully?

25 PANEL: I do.

2 COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You may begin, thank you.

4 RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you Chair Moya, Council  
5 Members, good morning. Again, Richard Lobel from the  
6 Law Firm of Sheldon Lobel, P.C. I'm joined by Frank  
7 Noriega and we're here to talk about the 6003 8<sup>th</sup>  
8 Avenue rezoning.

9 So, as can be seen from the circled area, this  
10 rezoning encompasses a block front and really half a  
11 block front on 60<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Sunset Park in  
12 Brooklyn and the rezoning right now, the southern  
13 portion of the block front is an M 11 District while  
14 the northern portion which will be the subject of the  
15 rezoning is R6 C1-3. You can see from the tax map  
16 that follows, the exact designation of the area to be  
17 rezoned. There is five blocks fronting on 8<sup>th</sup>  
18 Avenue, two blocks fronting on 60<sup>th</sup> Street.

19 The existing zoning is R6 C1-3 which would permit  
20 a building in a max FAR of 4.8 for a community  
21 facility and with the C4-2 we have the same  
22 residential equivalent which would allow for R6 type  
23 construction. The difference and the sole reason for  
24 the rezoning is that in an R6 C1-3, the commercial is  
25 limited to the ground floor. Whereas in a C4-2

2    district, the commercial is permitted above the  
3    ground floor onto the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stories.

4           The existing building at the site has commercial  
5    ground floor, formally had residential on the upper  
6    two stories. This was subsequently changed and there  
7    is now commercial occupancy.

8           The reason that the rezoning has been so widely  
9    approved up until this point, is because many of the  
10   buildings along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue in this area have  
11   commercial use which goes further than the ground  
12   floor. It goes up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> stories and the  
13   photographs included with the Application, a casual  
14   walk down 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue demonstrates that this is the  
15   prevailing condition.

16          This I believe is why the community board was so  
17   heavily in favor of the rezoning, voted 33 in favor,  
18   none against and one abstention, as well as the  
19   Brooklyn Borough President and City Planning  
20   Commission voting in favor of the Applications.

21          So, the Zoning Change Map, you can see, this is a  
22   relatively small rezoning encompassing a very small  
23   number of lots, roughly 6 to 7 lots. And again, with  
24   the zoning comparison table, you can see that the  
25   bulk setbacks height etc., all of these things are



1 consistent. The primary difference being the  
2 commercial FAR. Where the commercial FAR, the max  
3 commercial FAR is a two under the existing zoning.  
4 Under the proposed C4-2, it could be a 3.4, but  
5 again, the residential equivalent remains the same  
6 and the community facility remains the same.

7  
8 We of course included photographs with the  
9 Application, as is usual for an Application of this  
10 nature. You can see that there's commercial  
11 designation on the corner property above the first  
12 story. This condition is essentially not permitted  
13 under the existing zoning. The proposal would allow  
14 this to be legalized. Not only in our building but  
15 in other buildings.

16 I think the last thing that I would add is as you  
17 walk down 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue here, many of the community  
18 board members who attended the hearing were very  
19 interested in this because they actually have the  
20 same condition and we're hopeful that this rezoning  
21 area could actually be expanded to include other  
22 building along 40<sup>th</sup> to 60<sup>th</sup> Street and 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

23 Indeed, the City Planning Commission commented  
24 that the city should look to an areawide rezoning to  
25 fix this existing condition. So, that's really the

2 bulk of the Application and Chair, I'm happy to  
3 answer any questions.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great thank you for your  
5 testimony. Just a couple questions and I think you  
6 said this in the beginning of the presentation, but  
7 the stated rationale for this zoning is to bring  
8 existing commercial use into zoning compliance. What  
9 are the consequences of having a building occupied by  
10 a noncompliant use?

11 RICHARD LOBEL: So, the nonconforming uses in  
12 this area, the consequences are actually fairly small  
13 with regards to the rezoning itself. If you have a  
14 three-story building under the existing zoning, you  
15 could have ground floor commercial with two floors of  
16 residential above.

17 Under the proposed zoning, that commercial, to  
18 the extent you are in a mixed-use building, could be  
19 extended to the second story. So, most of the  
20 commercial uses in this area are existing.  
21 Commercial uses like office use, professional office  
22 use, which are inherently consistent with that mixed-  
23 use character. So, really the actual difference  
24 between the zoning districts is really allowing the  
25 commercial up - to get further up and you know, these

1 buildings themselves, you could actually even have a  
2 2 FAR for commercial if you wanted to be entirely  
3 commercial.  
4

5 So, in this building for example, I think the  
6 difference between the existing and proposed zoning  
7 would allow for an additional 690 square feet of  
8 commercial. So, it's really not that much of a  
9 difference.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And so, just to go with that,  
11 what are the advantages of bringing the building into  
12 compliance and what led you to file this Application?

13 RICHARD LOBEL: So, I think that one of the  
14 advantages is that you're in an area which there is a  
15 lot of commercial activity. The subway, the inline,  
16 stops a block from the site.

17 The city themselves, as you can see on the lower  
18 left portion of the map, rezoned in 2007, a rather  
19 large swath to C4-2. So, I think one of the things  
20 is that in an area where commercial activity is high,  
21 and you've got a lot of these existing commercial  
22 uses that enables a use that's more consistent along  
23 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue here.

24 And I think the second thing which is something  
25 that was really hit on at the community board is

1 flexibility. It really enables these owners to allow  
2 for moderate applications in order to prevent them  
3 from having empty spaces here. If you want to keep  
4 your building with an existing ground floor,  
5 commercial and residential above, you may do so under  
6 the proposed rezoning. It just allows for the  
7 ability to go in and to really populate floors when  
8 there is really no other legal use.

10 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Right, and is this Application  
11 like we've encouraged the conversion of existing  
12 apartments in the rezoning area to commercial space?

13 RICHARD LOBEL: I'd say the answer to that is no,  
14 for the following reason. And again, this was  
15 something we talked about seriously at the community  
16 board. I think that most of the individuals who were  
17 going to have residential there have residential  
18 right now.

19 And so, if you look at the buildings on our  
20 block, many of these buildings are built to a maximum  
21 FAR. They have a mix of commercial and residential  
22 uses. The sad truth is that many of the buildings  
23 along 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue here have basically taken it upon  
24 themselves to make these changes without going to the  
25 Department of Buildings. And you can see how in our

1 example of our building, really the additional 690  
2 square feet of commercial is all there getting is a  
3 factual matter out of this Application.  
4

5 So, the fact is that our applicant really wanted  
6 to do it the right way and I think that the existing  
7 residential on these upper stories, to the extent  
8 that the building supported is fine and is going to  
9 remain there but I think there was a recognition  
10 throughout the process that it's an area that's  
11 appropriate for additional commercial and to the  
12 extent that we don't want to have vacancies in these  
13 buildings. That this kind of enables a seamless  
14 usage in that regard.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I'm still staying in that line  
16 of thought. Is this application likely to spur any  
17 additional new development in the rezoning area?

18 RICHARD LOBEL: It is not. The building that  
19 were looked at pursuant to the environmental  
20 assessment statement, most of them are built out to  
21 FAR's ranging from 2.8 to 4.8 and so, some of these  
22 buildings already maxed out even under the community  
23 facility that they would be able to do so.

24 So, really for a mixed-use commercial building,  
25 the idea of essentially redeveloping in light of an

2 additional .6 of commercial. If they were going to  
3 redevelop, it's likely they would have redeveloped  
4 already and that's borne out by the negative  
5 declaration that we received on the environmental  
6 review which said that they didn't view these as soft  
7 sites.

8           CHAIRPERSON MOYA:   Okay, and last question. Are  
9 the other property owners in the area aware and  
10 supportive of the application?

11           RICHARD LOBEL: We had several property owners on  
12 this block and surrounding blocks who attended the  
13 community board hearing. So, it's our understanding  
14 that everyone at the community board and everyone who  
15 showed up, not only spoke in favor but actually  
16 requested both to the community board and to me that  
17 night that you know, if we could, if we could just  
18 spread the rezoning over several more blocks.

19           We're of course unable to do that. We're in  
20 ULURP, but we've received nothing but positive  
21 feedback from the community board which is evidence  
22 by their 33 to nothing vote.

23           CHAIRPERSON MOYA:   Okay, thank you very much for  
24 your testimony today.

25           RICHARD LOBEL: Thank you Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

3 I'd like to call up the next panelist which is  
4 Bruce Jacobs.

5 BRUCE JACOBS: Good morning everybody.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Good morning.

7 BRUCE JACOBS: My name is Bruce Jacobs; Coalition  
8 of the Rockaways, supporter of medical and religious  
9 freedom, U.S. Navy Vet, 9-1-1 first responder,  
10 fighter for New York City. I have very much respect  
11 for this lawyer; however, to start changing variances  
12 in neighborhoods to go commercial, all you're doing  
13 is knocking everybody out of their neighborhoods.  
14 Because if you give one variance to somebody,  
15 everybody is going to want to do it and then  
16 everybody that lives in residential in that  
17 neighborhood is going to end up being thrown out of  
18 that neighborhood. And then I don't care what anyone  
19 says, they are doing noncompliance as it is in that  
20 neighborhood.

21 Now they come here wanting to change their  
22 variance. They say they are doing it for commercial  
23 use; however, what about the residents that live in  
24 this neighborhood? Whenever you get a big commercial  
25 and this is office space. You got plenty of office

1 space in New York. It's going to affect the people  
2 that live there.

3  
4 People in that neighborhood don't have all kinds  
5 of money. They've lived there most of their lives in  
6 that neighborhood, they have homes. Some could take  
7 advantage you know, with commercial, not everybody.

8 Then you are going to speak about community  
9 board. People, working people, can't make it to the  
10 community board. So, you're going to say what the  
11 community board said.

12 What does the neighborhood really say? I don't  
13 care you know, if you are going to say on one aspect  
14 that the community board is what counts, then do it  
15 for all neighborhoods what the community counts, what  
16 they say. Because I see that sometimes they don't  
17 count what the community board says in some  
18 neighborhoods. But in other neighborhoods, what the  
19 community board says. Community board is not really  
20 the whole neighborhood because I know in my  
21 neighborhood, like in Far Rockaways, because my  
22 family lives in Sunset Park. But in Far Rockaway,  
23 people can't even make it to the community board and  
24 people don't even know when the meetings are, and  
25 people are working.



2           So, once again, like I said, I have respect for  
3 this lawyer, he's a very good man. I have respect  
4 for you guys but by giving a variance to change a  
5 zoning to a commercial, you are affecting the people  
6 that live in that neighborhood. Thank you very much.

7           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.  
8 We're going to take a brief pause for just two  
9 minutes and then we're going to get restarted again.

10          Sorry for the delay, we are now going to begin,  
11 but first let me acknowledge that we have been joined  
12 by Council Member's Rivera and Council Member  
13 Richards. We are going to start with our votes.  
14 Today we will vote to approve with modifications LU's  
15 0559 and 0560 for the 44-01 Northern Boulevard  
16 Rezoning Proposal relating to property in Council  
17 Member Van Bramer's district in Queens.

18          The Application was originally proposed would  
19 rezone an existing M1-1 District to an R7X and R6B  
20 District with a C2-4 Commercial Overlay and establish  
21 a mandatory inclusionary housing area utilizing  
22 Option 1 and 2 to facilitate the construction of two  
23 new mixed-use buildings with approximately 335  
24 dwelling units and approximately 156 off street  
25 parking spaces. Our modification will be to remove

1  
2 Option 2. Council Member Van Bramer is in support of  
3 this Application as modified.

4 We will also be voting to approve with  
5 modifications LU's 0550 through 0554 for the  
6 Peninsula Hospital Redevelopment Plan relating to  
7 property in Council Member Richards District in  
8 Queens.

9 The Application was originally proposed sought  
10 approval for a City Map Amendment, a Zoning Map  
11 Amendment, a Zoning Text Amendment and a large-scale  
12 general development special permit to modify the  
13 underlying bulk and signed regulations.

14 As part of the proposed zoning text amendment, the  
15 application sought to establish a mandatory  
16 inclusionary housing area utilizing Option 1 and  
17 Option 2. Our modification will be to remove Option  
18 2 and to reduce the maximum permitted unit count to  
19 2,050 units from a proposed 2,200 units as well as  
20 the related reduction in maximum permitted building  
21 heights.

22 We will also be modifying the restrictive  
23 declaration associated with the zoning special permit  
24 by adding the local Council Member office to the list  
25 of parties to be notified with regard to a school

1 mitigation proposal, clarifying the school mitigation  
2 options by stating the inclusion of provision for  
3 either offsite land or core and shell for annex space  
4 whether offsite or onsite. And specifying the  
5 requirement for specified phasing, sequencing as  
6 provided in Exhibit G.

8 Council Member Richard is in support of this  
9 Application as modified and I wanted to turn it over  
10 to Council Member Richards for some brief remarks.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Thank you Chair Moya  
12 and good morning. What a great day for the people of  
13 the Rockaways, but in particular for the people who  
14 reside in both Edgemere and Arverne.

15 A neighborhood that has always had the potential  
16 not to only serve as a retail destination for local  
17 residents but a tourist attraction alike. However,  
18 like many neighborhoods on the eastern portion of  
19 Rockaways, the challenges of sorely needed  
20 infrastructure, affordable housing, and a lack of  
21 space for our young people to congregate or  
22 nonexistent.

23 This vacuum created immense challenges such as  
24 the highest unemployment rate in Queens, high rates  
25 of obesity due to a lack of access to a supermarket

1  
2 in close proximity to thousands of public housing  
3 residents and homeowners. But today, I am happy to  
4 announce Edgemere commence projects seeks to address  
5 there systematic issues. This project will serve as  
6 a template for what a resilient mixed-use development  
7 should look like in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

8 During a time when our city is facing one of the  
9 largest housing crisis we have ever witnessed, this  
10 project will produce over 2,000 units of true  
11 affordable housing, serving a healthy mix of incomes  
12 as low as 30 percent AMI.

13 The addition of much needed senior housing units  
14 is a big win for those who wish to age in place  
15 gracefully on the Peninsula as well.

16 I want my community to know that we heard you  
17 loud and clear on the need to ensure we aren't just  
18 building housing but addressing the needs of our  
19 community as well. This is why I am happy to  
20 announce the creation of a new community center,  
21 health care facility, supermarket, open space and  
22 much needed local and destination retail as well.

23 The combination of these will enable us to  
24 stimulate the economy in Edgemere and ensure our  
25

1 youth and their families will have a safe place to  
2 go.  
3

4 Lastly, I'm happy to announce we've reached an  
5 agreement with the companies in 32-BJ which will  
6 ensure we aren't subsidizing poverty jobs.

7 Furthermore, the developer has agreed to a 35  
8 percent local hiring and 30 percent MWBE commitment  
9 to ensure these goals are achieved. They've also  
10 agreed to a \$2 million Community and Youth  
11 Development fund for local CBO's to track the  
12 progress of this project.

13 In closing, I want to thank the Archa companies  
14 for their commitment to the Rockaway community, to  
15 Alex, Daniel, Simon, Ethen and Joe. Thank you so  
16 much, I look forward to continuing to work with you  
17 in the future. I also look forward to hearing from  
18 the admin by the land use vote on some other  
19 outstanding items as we move towards the full vote on  
20 this project.

21 I would also like to than Chair Moya, Community  
22 Board 14, The Peninsula Hospital Redevelopment Task  
23 Force and all of the community stakeholders who  
24 engage in this project.  
25

2 I would also like to thank my staff members,  
3 Malik Sanders, Ms. Ludy[SP?] and especially Kelly  
4 Sexton for ensuring we could pull this project over  
5 the finish line.

6 Lastly, thank you Chair for your amazing work. I  
7 know I said lastly a few times, but I also want to  
8 thank the impeccable Land Use Staff Raju Manjon  
9 Douglas[SP?], Amy Levinson, and Julie Luben as well.

10 And with that, I recommend the committee votes  
11 aye on this project.

12 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council Member and  
13 congratulations on a great effort on your part and  
14 for the community as well.

15 We also are going to be voting to pursuant to the  
16 Council rules 7.90 and 11.60. We will also be filing  
17 preconsidered LU's for the special natural resources  
18 district zoning text and Zoning Map amendments to  
19 remove them from our calendar. The Application has  
20 been withdrawn. I now call for a vote to file the  
21 preconsidered LU's for the Special Natural Resource  
22 District Text and Map Amendments to approve with  
23 modification LU's 0550, 0551, 0552, 0553 and 0554 for  
24 the Peninsula Hospital Proposals and LU's 559 and 560  
25 for the 44-01 Northern Boulevard Rezoning.

Council, please call the roll.

COUNCIL CLERK: Chair Moya?

CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Aye on all.

COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Levin?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I vote aye.

COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Richards?

COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I also neglected to thank Shawn from the Deputy Mayor's Office, but I vote aye and thank you to all.

COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Reynoso?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Congratulations Council Member Richards. I vote aye on all.

COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Grodenchik?

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: With congratulations to my colleague Donovan Richards, I know that this is an issue that has been percolating for decades, not just years. For many, many decades and I congratulate him on reaching this point and I vote aye on all.

COUNCIL CLERK: Council Member Rivera?

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Aye.

COUNCIL CLERK: A vote of six in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions, the items are referred to the full Land Use Committee.

2           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, we will now move forward  
3 and as we go to Preconsidered LU's 0564-0567 with the  
4 associated ULURP numbers N 190433 ZRM, C 190434 ZMM  
5 and C 190435 ZSM and C 190436 ZSM for the proposal  
6 relating to property in Council Member Perkins's  
7 district in Manhattan. The applicant seeks approval  
8 for a Zoning Map Amendment to rezone existing R7 and  
9 R8 districts with a partial C 14 overlays to a  
10 proposed C 19 District.

11           A Zoning Text Amendment to establish a mandatory  
12 inclusionary housing area utilizing Options 1 and 2.  
13 A Zoning Special Permit to waive accessory parking  
14 requirements and a Zoning Special Permit to modify  
15 various heights and setback regulations.

16           The height and setback special permit was  
17 approved with a modification by the City Planning  
18 Commission which reduced the total proposed new  
19 building heights by shifting floor areas to the lower  
20 floors. These approvals as modified by the CPC,  
21 would facilitate a mixed-use development and that  
22 would include community facility space and a 340-foot  
23 building with approximately 131 dwelling units  
24 including approximately 52 affordable units.



2           I now want to open the public hearing on this  
3 Application. I'd like to call up Jennifer Dickson,  
4 Dan Kaplan, Gloria Feliciano, Daniel Feliciano and  
5 Alexa Smith.

6           Council, if you could please swear in the panel,  
7 we can begin.

8           COUNCIL CLERK: Please raise your right hands and  
9 states your name for the record.

10          CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Make sure that the microphone  
11 is turned on. The red light should go on, yeah.

12          DANIEL KAPLAN: Daniel Kaplan.

13          JENNIFER DICKSON: Jennifer Dickson.

14          DAN FELICIANO: Dan Feliciano.

15          GLORIA FELICIANO: Gloria Feliciano.

16          ALEXA SMITH: Alexis Smith.

17          COUNCIL CLERK: Do you swear or affirm that the  
18 testimony that you are about to give will be the  
19 truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and  
20 that you will answer all questions truthfully.

21          PANEL: Yes.

22          COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you.

23          JENNIFER DICKSON: Good morning Council Members.

24 My name is Jennifer Dickson from Herrick Feinstein  
25 here on behalf of the applicant La Hermosa Christian

1 Church, joined today by the Reverend Daniel  
2 Feliciano, Pastor of La Hermosa Gloria Feliciano who  
3 deals with programing at La Hermosa. Dan Kaplan from  
4 FX Collaborative, the architects for the church and  
5 Alexis Smith from the Manhattan School of Music.  
6

7 We're going to walk you through a brief  
8 presentation today that deals with the church,  
9 specifically the churches programing that they  
10 envisioned for the site as well as the actions that  
11 are before you today.

12 I just orient you the church is located at 5 West  
13 110 Street. That's at the corner of Central Park and  
14 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue as well as Duke Ellington Farley Circle.  
15 You can see it here highlighted in red. The property  
16 is owned by La Hermosa and they have been at this  
17 particular location since 1960.

18 So, at this point, I'm going to turn it over to  
19 Daniel and Gloria.

20 DANIEL FELICIANO: Good morning Council Members.  
21 Thank you for welcoming us here today. It's an honor  
22 for us to talk to you about our proposal to  
23 revitalize La Hermosa Church and to elevate the lives  
24 of our congregants and our local residents.  
25

2           Our church, La Hermosa Church, has deep roots in  
3 Harlem and in New York City. We are the mother  
4 church for the disciples of Christ congregations in  
5 the Hispanic ministry in the United States. The  
6 disciples of Christ has over 3,600 congregations in  
7 the United States, 34 in New York. La Hermosa  
8 Community of 90 congregants reaches hundreds of  
9 people every year through its ministries and events.

10           Hundreds of our neighbors just helped us two  
11 weeks ago to celebrate our 81<sup>st</sup> anniversary. People  
12 from all over the city. Thank you for this  
13 opportunity. Gloria will be talking to you about our  
14 situation and our plan of action.

15           GLORIA FELICIANO: Hello, this project is about  
16 the survival of La Hermosa and like so many churches  
17 in Harlem and in New York City, our capital needs  
18 have grown beyond our ability to manage them.

19           If we don't do something soon, we may have to  
20 close our doors and that's not what we are here  
21 about.

22           Our community needs La Hermosa but right now, we  
23 are very limited to what we can do for our community.  
24 The building is an 88 accessible in the state marble  
25 steps to the sanctuary are hard for the older and

1 disabled congregants of our church. Our old HVAC  
2 system means the services are too cold in the winter,  
3 too hot in the summer and we have been brought to use  
4 only one third of our building, so that we could be  
5 comfortable. Right now, we only use the first floor.

6 We are proud of this proposal because it  
7 maximizes the potential of the site for ourselves and  
8 also to work with our community. It secures the  
9 future of our congregation creating an inspiring  
10 space to connect with the community and our faith.

11 It establishes a partnership with the world renown  
12 Harlem Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, which  
13 Alexa will be speaking about in a minute or so.

14 It brings the streetscape Of Duke Ellington  
15 Circle to life for every Harlem resident. Most  
16 importantly, the proceeds from the projects will be  
17 reinvested directly back into the community. Either  
18 by community services or for the church itself. With  
19 new funding and staff, we will be able to not only  
20 relaunch but expend many of our beloved programs that  
21 we have had to pass in the past. Like our soup  
22 kitchen, childcare center and food pantry. And we  
23 will be able to recommit ourselves to our most  
24 important mission, Harlem's children.  
25

1  
2 Harlem kids don't always have the access to the  
3 same kinds of opportunities that our neighbors to the  
4 south do. We feel a real obligation to create a  
5 wholesome afterschool activities that will engage  
6 young minds in our community. We're looking forward  
7 to our partnership with Manhattan music like we say,  
8 but that's not the only thing we want to do, we want  
9 to be able to retake the mission of the church that  
10 we have had to drop services as we go along.

11 On Friday evenings, we want to provide that space  
12 for community kids to have a place for sports,  
13 because we do have Central Park across the street,  
14 but in the winter and in the evening, there is no  
15 place for our children to congregate. We want to be  
16 able to help our local residents in emergencies by  
17 formalizing referred programs for drug and alcohol  
18 treatment of shelters.

19 Within the first year, we would also like to  
20 create some job fairs and resume assistance and  
21 perhaps shortly after that, some cooking classes and  
22 health workshops, so that our congregation can live  
23 fuller and healthier lives.

24 In the longer term, we want to be able to help  
25 new arrivals in the U.S. by reinstating our ESL

1 classes, hosting immigration assistant workshops and  
2 facilitating connections to pro bono lawyers. We  
3 will be hiring a volunteer coordinator who can  
4 oversee these efforts and recruit volunteers.  
5

6 So, truly this is only a start. Underneath our  
7 proposal, it's our deep commitment to providing  
8 services to our community. And Alexa will be talking  
9 about our connection with Manhattan School of Music.

10 ALEXA SMITH: Good morning, I am Alexa Smith; I  
11 am the Chief of Staff at Manhattan School of Music  
12 and I'm also the head of the Cultural Inclusion  
13 Program at MSM. I'm also a constituent at the 9<sup>th</sup>  
14 District and I live on 112<sup>th</sup> Street. You are looking  
15 here at product of public-school music education.

16 I got my first violin in fourth grade for free.  
17 Something my parents wouldn't have been able to  
18 afford at the time and I spent all my free time  
19 practicing and looking forward to my classes.

20 I went on to earn two Degrees in classical music  
21 including one and master's degree from Manhattan  
22 School of Music where I now work.

23 Music more than anything gives students,  
24 especially young people a place to belong and I want  
25 to read you a quote from one of our favorite Alums,

1 you might know him, New York Yankee Bernie Williams.  
2 He said, I made the connection that if I could put  
3 the effort and practice into it, eventually I could  
4 play better and better. I started applying it to  
5 everything I did. Sports, certainly baseball, and  
6 more than anything academics.  
7

8 I understand how powerful music is as a language  
9 and how you can change people's attitudes and do a  
10 lot of good especially with kids.

11 So, while this project does seem like it's just  
12 about building a new high rise, Manhattan School is  
13 happy to tell you that we can ensure we stay true to  
14 the mission of so many notable neighborhood  
15 establishments including many famous musicians who  
16 have crossed 110 and 5<sup>th</sup>.

17 We're hoping that our afterschool program can  
18 reach up to 1,000 kids in its first year and we'll  
19 offer curriculum in areas including jazz, classical,  
20 afro Cuban music theater, hip hop with ensembles like  
21 choirs, orchestras, small ensembles and individual  
22 lessons.

23 The school will serve children K-12 afterschool  
24 and will not only provide a safe and educational  
25 space for children to spend their hours after school

1 but would also afford parent who work a traditional  
2 workday, free care after school.  
3

4 This could save a family anywhere from \$30 to \$50  
5 per day in childcare totaling thousands of dollars  
6 per academic year.

7 This is a huge impact for most family budgets and  
8 it's sustained income impact beyond the walls of the  
9 building.

10 In contrast, our existing precollege program at  
11 MSM which is one of the four most conservatories in  
12 the world, cost a parent about \$10,000 per child per  
13 academic year.

14 As a Harlem resident and someone who until  
15 recently depended on music to pay my rent, I  
16 understand the need for affordable housing and I also  
17 believe wholeheartedly that as a community, we  
18 understand the need for programs like what we're  
19 planning for our youngest community members.

20 So, I invite you all to come up to Manhattan  
21 School of Music if you like on 122<sup>nd</sup> Street to see  
22 what we do. We started as a community school in this  
23 district in 1919 on East 104<sup>th</sup> Street and we look  
24 forward to returning to roots with La Hermosa at Duke  
25 Ellington Circle.



1 So, we're going to turn now to the redevelopment  
2 plan itself. So, you've heard why this is so  
3 critical for La Hermosa, why they cannot continue in  
4 their current space and why we are embarking on this  
5 process to redevelop the site.  
6

7 Turning to the site zoning, you can see it circle  
8 there in red, it's split between an R72 in an R8  
9 district. Here is a closer view of it. The site  
10 itself has this seven-sided shape which is right on  
11 the circle here, so although it's a very important  
12 and prominent location, it's also very constrained by  
13 the awkward shape of the site and also by the split  
14 between the R72 and the R8 zoning district.

15 Here are some context photos, you can see the  
16 church in the upper left-hand corner, the three-story  
17 building that exists on the site today as well as  
18 Schomburg Plaza which is directly across the street  
19 with the two 34 story towers right there. Here are a  
20 few other views of recently developed buildings in  
21 the neighborhood and you can see down 111<sup>th</sup> Street in  
22 the two lower pictures.

23 So, the objectives really for the church and for  
24 this project are of course to provide this 35,000 to  
25 37,000 square foot community facility space. This is

1 envisioned to be a very large flexible use space  
2 which is going to be used most importantly by the  
3 congregation for their community programming that  
4 Gloria just walked through. Of course, critically,  
5 also, by the Manhattan School of Music in order to  
6 provide their free onsite school program and also the  
7 residential development will come behind this space  
8 and will provide that critical funding for these  
9 programs and for the church to stay on this site.

11 We looked at the existing zoning, a development  
12 under that zoning really does not work for this  
13 purpose. It results in a very inefficient uneconomic  
14 building. It does not have space for these community  
15 facility programs and of course under the existing  
16 zoning, there is no mandatory inclusionary housing  
17 component.

18 The actions that we are requesting are the  
19 expansion of the C 19 Zoning District, which is  
20 currently across the street at Schomburg Plaza, we're  
21 asking to pull that across 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue 200 feet into  
22 the site. This will allow the building forum that  
23 we're proposing here. We are also mapping an MIH,  
24 Mandatory Inclusionary Text Amendment. We are  
25 proposing Option 1, which is looking at 25 percent of

2   the floor area at 60 percent and 40 percent AMI. We  
3   are requesting a special permit; Dan will walk  
4   through the details of the building. That special  
5   permit was modified at the Planning Commission and we  
6   are asking for a parking waiver. We do not think  
7   that parking is necessary here, it's very well served  
8   by transit, so we're asking to waive the parking on  
9   the site.

10           DAN KAPLAN: Good morning. I'll just walk you  
11   quickly through the building and proposal itself.  
12   There are three main opportunities that this project  
13   will provide. One is space for the church and the  
14   music school state of the art, above grade, light  
15   filled with presence of Duke Ellington Circle and  
16   identity from the park.

17           The second is new residential units and  
18   affordable housing along with that. And third is the  
19   opportunity to create a significant building at this  
20   very important location. And as you can see from  
21   this image, the tower is set midblock halfway between  
22   110<sup>th</sup> and 111<sup>th</sup> Street allowing lower scale elements  
23   to create both the street wall along the circle in  
24   110<sup>th</sup> street as well as on 111<sup>th</sup> Street.

2 The massing is created to establish a very strong  
3 civic and urban presence at this very important  
4 location at the northeast corner of the park on Duke  
5 Ellington Circle and as a gateway to Harlem.

6 As was noted before, the building itself has gone  
7 through a re-massing during the City Planning portion  
8 of the ULURP process and has been reduced by 59 feet  
9 and more bulk has been put along the circle itself.  
10 The tower is now just a couple of floors, two and a  
11 half floors above the height of Schomburg Towers and  
12 it is an appropriate height.

13 The summary of area is shown, the total floor  
14 area is about 226,000 zoning square feet and 11.29  
15 FAR. The church is about 37,000 square feet, 1.85  
16 FAR. The residential is 9.44 FAR, and as was said  
17 before, the height is 30 stories and 339 feet.

18 We are proposing Option 1 in the MIH, the  
19 preliminary mix is shown on the screen, 25 percent  
20 studio's, 25 percent ones and 50 percent two bedrooms  
21 and this was a preliminary unit mix.

22 Just two more slides, one this is the presence  
23 view of the building from the circle itself. On the  
24 left is 110<sup>th</sup> Street in Central Park. On the right  
25 is 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue going up and you can see that the bulk

2   has been redistributed to create a strong presence on  
3   the circle and at night, great care was taken to  
4   create activity along the circle itself, including  
5   the ground floor which will have a school and church  
6   lobby and event spaces and of course, on the second  
7   floor, the major spaces for the school and the  
8   church. That together with the entrance to the  
9   residential building itself will create a very  
10  vibrant corner at this very important spot in the  
11  city where today is really a parking lot and an  
12  undistinguished two-story building.

13           So, in summary, this project will create a  
14  permanent home for the church that will allow them to  
15  continue and expand their mission. It will allow for  
16  free music education provided by the Manhattan School  
17  of Music for Harlem youth and residents and three,  
18  will provide affordable housing at this very  
19  important corner of our city. Thank you.

20           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Just a couple of  
21  questions before I turn it over to Council Member  
22  Perkins.

23           Your proposing to acquire air rights from lot 30  
24  correct?

25           JENNIFER DICKSON: Yeah.

2 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Are you looking to require  
3 additional air rights from the residential buildings  
4 on Lot 40 and 42?

5 JENNIFER DICKSON: No, so we're just looking to  
6 acquire air rights from the Bethel property, which is  
7 next door to us, as you said. The zoning lot was  
8 established under the special permit application at  
9 City Planning, so it's those two parcels, our parcel  
10 and the Bethel Property.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, and I understand the  
12 church will be looking to bring on a development  
13 partner on this project, can you explain the rationale  
14 for moving through the public review at this point  
15 when project details are not yet firmed up. There is  
16 more uncertainty about the final program like will  
17 the housing be rental or home ownership, bedroom  
18 mixes? Are we going beyond MIH to deliver more  
19 affordable housing?

20 JENNIFER DICKSON: So, understood and we have had  
21 a number of questions about that. You know the  
22 program details are certainly set to a certain  
23 extent. You've heard a lot about the community  
24 facility programming. We have a special permit with  
25 the Site Plan Approval but I'm going to turn it over

2   to Gloria to talk a little bit about their experience  
3   and why they made this decision at this point to go  
4   forward as the applicant.

5           GLORIA FELICIANO:   Okay, we took since 2014, the  
6   end of 2014, the church made the decision to move  
7   forward and for a year and a half, we spent  
8   interviewing developers, interviewing church pastors  
9   in other congregations throughout the city that have  
10  been in a development project.

11           We decided to take our own destiny in our own  
12  hands because after a year and a half of dealing with  
13  developers, we've realized that we would never get  
14  what we needed and, in the end, we would end up  
15  losing what we do have.   This way, we went about  
16  getting a professional team to advise us and to move  
17  forward with the ULURP process ourselves.   That way  
18  the church can make sure that we have a say in how  
19  much space we need and what kind of programs we want  
20  to work with.

21           CHAIRPERSON MOYA:   Okay, the church currently  
22  utilizes around 8,000 square feet and has about under  
23  100 congregants I'm told.   Can you explain the  
24  rational for significantly expanding the church  
25  footprint to over 37,000 square feet?

2           JENNIFER DICKSON: So, the churches exiting  
3 building is about 22,000 square feet. They did  
4 historically use that entire building. Over the  
5 years, as the systems and the steps have become a  
6 problem, they have been further and further reduced  
7 to that 8,000 square foot footprint.

8           They ran quite a bit of community programming out  
9 of the church when they had the physical ability to  
10 do so. So, the idea behind this is that the  
11 expansion and the size of the building will  
12 accommodate them to return to that level of community  
13 programming that they did and will also allow for  
14 this partnership with the Manhattan School of Music,  
15 who will also be utilizing the same space.

16          CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And do you have any plans  
17 concerning local hiring?

18          JENNIFER DICKSON: We are for the churches space,  
19 committed to local hiring for the fit out of that  
20 space and you know, in continued conversations about  
21 the rest of the project.

22          CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, yes, or —

23          JENNIFER DICKSON: For the churches space. So,  
24 we have the churches space and we have the



2 residential portion of the building. So, we are  
3 making a commitment to local hiring for that.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: For the church?

5 JENNIFER DICKSON: The church, correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. I'm going to turn  
7 it over to Council Member Perkins.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Thank you. I just have  
9 a question or two. So, I want to congratulate you on  
10 you project and we're neighbors, Schomburg Plaza, so  
11 we are very happy that you are moving forward with  
12 this project and we want you to know that whatever we  
13 can do to be helpful towards that end, which I'm  
14 pretty sure you got it under control already. But  
15 nevertheless, don't hesitate to give us a call to let  
16 us know how we can be helpful.

17 Thank you so much for your work. What has been  
18 in the past, but in the future, it's even going to be  
19 greater.

20 JENNIFER DICKSON: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: And I know Council Member  
22 Barron has some questions.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr. Chair and  
24 thank you to the panel for coming presenting your  
25 project. I just have a few questions. So, the

1 church presently owns that site and they want to  
2 expand to mixed use. So, it's similar to a church  
3 that owned property in my district, and they came  
4 with a plan that said they wanted to have mixed use  
5 for the church and some community facility space on  
6 the lower level and residential above.  
7

8 But they came with a developer. They came with a  
9 specific plan because they knew once they brought the  
10 project they were on the clock. So, do you think  
11 that this is not premature to be here without a  
12 development team that would be able to answer the  
13 questions that the Chair had posed, knowing that you  
14 are on the clock?

15 JENNIFER DICKSON: So, we understand the  
16 questions about that, and you know, as Gloria talked  
17 about, they really believe that this is the way in  
18 which to really get the churches needs met under this  
19 plan. You know, there is a very large team behind  
20 this project who is looking you know, at the  
21 development of the site as a whole and the plan is  
22 that you know, right after ULURP, that there will be  
23 a competitive process to partner with the developer  
24 and that there will be somebody who signs on to the  
25

1 plan. You know, that has been approved and something  
2 that works for the church.

3  
4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: How many units are you  
5 looking to build?

6 JENNIFER DICKSON: It's about 180 units right  
7 now.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And how many parking  
9 spaces?

10 JENNIFER DICKSON: We're not proposing parking.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Do you see that as a  
12 problem or an issue bringing 180 units and no parking  
13 facility. Have you considered perhaps building, so  
14 that there will be some underground capacity for  
15 parking?

16 JENNIFER DICKSON: We have considered parking.  
17 You know, this area is an area that is very well  
18 served by transit. Most of the congregation itself  
19 walks to the building and uses mass transit to get to  
20 the building.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And what is the proposed  
22 height, how many stories?

23 DAN KAPLAN: It's 30 stories and 339 feet.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, one last question.  
25 Would the church be what's called a condominium

2 partner in this development or is there another  
3 proposal that the church would have, and would they  
4 have a part of the ownership of structure?

5           JENNIFER DICKSON: Yeah, so at the end of the  
6 day, the church would continue to retain ownership  
7 probably in a condominium parcel, so they would have  
8 the church unit.

9           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Would there be any market  
10 rate apartments in this building?

11          JENNIFER DICKSON: Yes.

12          COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: There would be.

13          JENNIFER DICKSON: Yes.

14          COUNCIL MEMBER BARRONS: Thank you, thank you Mr.  
15 Chair.

16          CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

17          COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: I have some questions as  
18 well.

19          CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah, I'll turn it over to  
20 Council Member Reynoso.

21          COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: And I'm sorry, I stepped  
22 out for a couple of seconds, so I couldn't hear but  
23 I'm just going to ask some very general questions to  
24 understand the project.

2 So, how many units of housing are we talking  
3 about here overall?

4 JENNIFER DICKSON: 180 approximately.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, and how many are  
6 we assuming are going to be affordable?

7 JENNIFER DICKSON: We're looking at about 50.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: 50 of the 180 and you  
9 are choosing Option 1 as the one that you want to go  
10 with?

11 JENNIFER DICKSON: Correct.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Which is - so this is  
13 the 50 or 25 percent of the units at?

14 JENNIFER DICKSON: So, they would be at an  
15 average of 60 and then 10 percent of the overall  
16 floor area needs to be at 40 under that option.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, do you know what  
18 60 percent AMI accounts for when we talk about the  
19 price of rent?

20 JENNIFER DICKSON: So, 60 percent of AMI right  
21 now is 856 for a studio, 1081 for a one bedroom and  
22 1309 for a two bedroom.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: 1309, and I just want to  
24 ask, 60 percent, what does that account for in  
25 income?

2 JENNIFER DICKSON: 60 percent of AMI is 44,820  
3 for one person and 64,020 for a family of four.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, and just to put in  
5 context today, it seems like the median household  
6 income in East Harlem is 29,000 a year and in Harlem,  
7 it's 43,000.

8 So, even the affordable portion of this project  
9 seems a little out of reach for even the residents  
10 within central Harlem and east Harlem. And it seems  
11 like the only portion of this project that would be  
12 affordable would be the MIH option. Have there been  
13 any conversations about more of the project being  
14 affordable outside of the MIH?

15 JENNIFER DICKSON: Yes, this is a comment that we  
16 have received. So, that the original proposal is  
17 trying to balance a number of needs. There is the  
18 churches, congregation, the community facility space,  
19 the music school but certainly this is a comment that  
20 we have received, and we are looking at the  
21 affordability levels.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Okay, just to put it  
23 into perspective, all those spaces would be great but  
24 should you build an apartment complex that has more  
25 than 70 percent of the structure market rate, the

2   people that would be enjoying the amenities that you  
3   are talking about are probably not going to be the  
4   people that are there right now.

5           So, I just want to talk about the affects of  
6   gentrification and how market rate attributes that or  
7   contributes to that and in this project, it just  
8   seems like a very large project with 180 apartments  
9   and for 50, it just seems like we could do better  
10   here.

11          Especially, you are talking about the fact that  
12   you are owning it and then for the ownership to  
13   continue at the — you said the condoed out, is it  
14   only the church that's going to be condoed out?

15          JENNIFER DICKSON: The church will have its own  
16   condominium. It is not yet decided whether the  
17   residential units will be condominium or rental.

18          COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Can you repeat that?

19          JENNIFER DICKSON: So, the structure of the  
20   building will be such that the church will continue  
21   to own their parcel, so there will be most likely a  
22   condominium for the church in order to do that. And  
23   then the residential building maybe condo or maybe  
24   rental.

25          COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Owned by who?

2 JENNIFER DICKSON: Well, there will be a  
3 residential developer who will build the residential  
4 portion of the building.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Right, there's contracts  
6 in my district for example where the none for profits  
7 obtained 51 percent of the property including the  
8 market rate portions of the apartment and given that  
9 they own the land, I just see the equity being a lot  
10 higher than the basic condominium of a new church.

11 Pretty much think about just putting it in  
12 perspective. You're about to get almost 180 units of  
13 apartments to build them a new church. The give back  
14 on that seems really low. Like, let's just put it in  
15 perspective, 180 and you're talking about best case  
16 scenario those apartments, worst case scenario let's  
17 say those apartments are worth a half a million  
18 dollars each. You are looking at almost \$70 million  
19 going to the developer lightweight and I want to be  
20 very clear, very conservatively \$70 million to go,  
21 I'm pretty sure they can build their church with \$2  
22 million let's say, a beautiful church.

23 So, that means that you would leave with \$68  
24 million instead of \$2 million. Like when you just  
25



2     put the numbers in perspective, it really feels like  
3     the church is getting a raw deal here.

4           JENNIFER DICKSON:   So, one thing I just want to  
5     make clear and all understood, is that what is really  
6     critical for the church is to establish funding for  
7     the church to continue to survive.   So, part of  
8     what's going on here in terms of the residential  
9     development is to allow for that funding so that the  
10    congregation can remain on the site.   Not only that,  
11    there is the churches community programs that Gloria  
12    talked about which will be completely free and open  
13    to anyone in the community, not just the people who  
14    are living in the building certainly and then there  
15    is also the music school program which will be funded  
16    by this and that will also be a free onsite community  
17    program.

18           So, these are all elements of this project.

19           COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO:   Yeah, but just with all  
20    due respect that's chub change compared to what you  
21    are going to be making on the market rate housing  
22    side.   When you really put it in perspective, if you  
23    guys were to take this building and get a developer  
24    or contractor to just build the building, just a  
25    contractor and you maintain or retain complete

1 ownership of this project, you can fund 200 churches  
2 all over this country with your message. Like the  
3 give back is just not there and I'm just saying, this  
4 is the initial meeting. I'm going to rely heavily on  
5 the guidance of Council Member Perkins, but just  
6 initially seeing this, this looks like a land theft  
7 from my eyes. It's something that as is, is very  
8 concerning. The amount of profit and the amount that  
9 you are going to gain from this and the return that I  
10 see is stealing.  
11

12 So, I'm going to be very clear that whatever you  
13 guys are putting together here, I know that the  
14 church is coming forward with a good idea. I'm not  
15 saying the church is stealing, by the way, I want to  
16 be very clear. I think you are being robbed.

17 If you do this project and you don't retain at  
18 least 51 percent ownership of this project, I think  
19 that you guys would be losing.

20 So, I just want to have more insight on exactly  
21 what's happening and I'm going to meet with Council  
22 Member Perkins, and we'll have a discussion, but  
23 these projects have been done already in different  
24 districts.  
25

1  
2 Council Member Barron talked about something  
3 similar in her district and you should use that as  
4 models, so that you can see how you can take  
5 advantage of the property and the equity that you  
6 have. It is yours and we've seen people come out far  
7 better than this.

8 I'm sorry, I'm just giving you a heads up. We're  
9 not trying to be antidevelopment or anything like  
10 that, what we're saying is we're trying to be pro  
11 your institution and pro your church and I think that  
12 the return could be much higher than this. And just  
13 looking at it is just concerning and the last  
14 question I have is, how do you expect the breakdowns  
15 to be related to apartments; studios, one bedrooms,  
16 two bedrooms, what's the breakdown that we're looking  
17 at?

18 DAN KAPLAN: So, I'll tell you the breakdowns in  
19 a second. I just want to clarify one thing. There  
20 is a total of a proposed 180 apartment units, of  
21 which 50 are affordable. So, the affordable housing  
22 component and the community facility component is  
23 north of 37 percent of the floor area of this  
24 project. I just don't want to give you the  
25

2   impression that is a larger market rate project than  
3   it really is.

4           In terms of the unit mix itself, it's on this  
5   screen. The preliminary mix that we're proposing are  
6   25 percent studios, 25 percent ones and 50 percent  
7   twos.

8           COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Yeah, so can you do me -  
9   do you have proforma? I want to know how much you  
10   are going to make off of this project, straight up  
11   cash. I want to know how much you are going to make,  
12   and I want the church to know that. That's what I'm  
13   asking. I want the church to know exactly how much  
14   the other side is going to make in a contract, I want  
15   to make sure that when you get your contract and you  
16   give this ownership to the developer that you know  
17   how much you are getting in cash and how much they  
18   are getting in cash. And then it puts it all in  
19   perspective and then you can make a decision off of  
20   information.

21           But if you don't have that information it's  
22   purposeful but this project, it's total - the  
23   Performa will tell you exactly how much it's making.  
24   And I just want to ask, did you talk to HPD about  
25   this project yet?

2 JENNIFER DICKSON: Yes, we did.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: And what did HPD say?

4 JENNIFER DICKSON: So, because this is a mixed-  
5 use project, you know, with the community facilities  
6 space, there was not a funding program that HPD had  
7 that was available for it.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: There was not a funding  
9 program that HPD had available for it. Also,  
10 something that I want to dig deeper in. HPD makes  
11 itself available in all sorts of facets that are  
12 remarkable. They go out of their way to try to  
13 figure something out and if they can get affordable  
14 housing given that that's their number one priority  
15 since the Mayor has been elected for them not to want  
16 to give funding to this project, it just sounds odd.

17 JENNIFER DICKSON: So, we're certainly open to  
18 that. There is a continuing conversation there. I  
19 want to make it clear, HPD themselves made themselves  
20 very available to us, there was just not a funding  
21 program that was identified during the conversation.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: That you weren't  
23 comfortable with or that HPD offered?

24 JENNIFER DICKSON: That was offered for this  
25 building.

2           COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO:   Okay, alright, so, Chair  
3   I just want to say I think that you know, we have to  
4   be very careful about especially when it comes to  
5   houses of worship.   There has been an epidemic in the  
6   City of New York or because they are in financial  
7   hardship they are being taken advantage of by  
8   developers and they're pretty much giving away their  
9   churches for very little in return and I just want to  
10  make sure that we start protecting these  
11  establishments that have very little experience in  
12  development and very little experiences in equity  
13  just to have a deeper conversation about what we're  
14  doing to protect them.

15           And there should be some basic principles and  
16  remember what I see so far that was offered today is  
17  the bare minimum that someone could offer for  
18  development of this type and I just don't think that  
19  I came into this business to do bare minimum for my  
20  community and I'm looking forward to more  
21  conversations regarding this project.   Thank you.

22           CHAIRPERSON MOYA:   Thank you.   Thank you for your  
23  testimony today.   We're going to be moving onto the  
24  next panel.

2                   Magdalena Garcia, Maria Rivera, Antonia Sodo,  
3                   Wanna Ramos[SP?] and Lasona Acouchi[SP?].

4                   JENNIFER DICKSON: I just also wanted to note  
5                   that I'm submitting about 200 letters into the record  
6                   in support from congregants and other people.

7                   CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

8                   JENNIFER DICKSON: Thank you.

9                   CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Maria?

10                  UNIDENTIFIED: Council Members, I will be  
11                  translating. She will be speaking in Spanish.

12                  CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Maria? Oh, Magdalena okay, do  
13                  we have Maria Rivera? Maria Rivera? Antonio Soto?  
14                  Wanna and Lasona[SP?] right. Yeah, okay.

15                  You are going to be translating correct?

16                  UNIDENTIFIED: I am going to be translating, yes.

17                  CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, why don't we begin.

18                  TRANSLATOR FOR MAGDALENA GARCIA: Magdalena  
19                  Garcia Shavis[SP?] speaking. I am here to support  
20                  the plan for La Hermosa Church. I can compare this  
21                  plan like a child that when you have a child and you  
22                  have them as a boy and then as a young man and then  
23                  innocent adult.

24                  La Hermosa has been in that area 81 years and we  
25                  have been united in working with the community of

2   Harlem.   And what I would like to express today if  
3   this plan is approved all our hearts will be in it.  
4   To work with the families and the children of our  
5   community so that we can in the future have more  
6   children that are happy and productive.

7           The decision is in your hands, but we promise  
8   that if this plan is approved, we will work hard for  
9   our community.

10           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Gracias, gracias. Thank you.

11           TRANSLATOR: Thank you.

12           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Maria?

13           TRANSLATOR FOR MARIA: Maria Rivera; I have been  
14   a member of La Hermosa since 1947.

15           SPEAKING IN SPANISH 1:41:37-1:42:32

16           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Gracias. I can translate.  
17   She is in support.

18           TRANSLATOR FOR MARIA: Thank you for helping me  
19   out.

20           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, moving on, Lasona, if you  
21   can go.

22           LASONA ACOUCHI: Good morning Chair Moya and  
23   members of the Subcommittee. My name as you already  
24   have stated is Lasona Acouchi and I have been a  
25



1 member of SEIU Local 32BJ for more than seven years.  
2  
3 And I've also been a long-time resident of Harlem.

4 I'm here on behalf of my union and the 2,500  
5 members who live and work in community district 10 to  
6 testify in support of this project.

7 We are pleased to report that La Hermosa  
8 Christian Church has made a credible commitment to  
9 provide prevailing wage building service jobs for the  
10 future workers at this site.

11 Since local members of the community typically  
12 fill most of these jobs, the new jobs created by this  
13 project will allow workers and their families to  
14 continue to afford to live in our increasingly  
15 expensive community.

16 We see this project as an example of responsible  
17 development with it's creation of much needed  
18 permanently, permanently affordable housing and the  
19 churches commitment to community benefits.

20 The community benefit that stands out the most to  
21 me is the churches partnership with the Manhattan  
22 School of Music. The churches current building holds  
23 a rich jazz history and I believe this partnership  
24 will help continue to carry Harlem's musical spirit  
25 and influence.

2 The residents historically called Harlem home  
3 feel this culture and history. Our resiliency is  
4 what makes Harlem special.

5 La Hermosa's Christian Church is an institution  
6 in Harlem and should be granted this rezoning, so it  
7 can continue to provide the neighborhood with its  
8 ministries and services for those less fortunate. We  
9 are happy to stand with them in support throughout  
10 this process and respectfully urge you and all of  
11 your colleagues to support this project. Thank you  
12 very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, thank you for your  
14 testimony. Wanna Ramos[SP?]

15 TRANSLATOR FOR WANNA: Wanna Ramos.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Speaking in Spanish. 1:46:43

17 TRANSLATOR FOR WANNA: I am here to thank God for  
18 this opportunity and to ask you to help us out in  
19 anything that you can do for our proposal.

20 I am here as a member of the church and also as a  
21 member of the community many years in the community  
22 and in the church. And this church has taught me how  
23 to see who is who in Harlem and what Harlem needs.  
24 Working in different services and events in the  
25 church and the community.

2 La Hermosa has been a blessing to me in my  
3 personal life and it has helped my family able to  
4 bring also my children and my family to the church.  
5 And also, to give people, to help people in many ways  
6 both in the spiritual and the natural way.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Gracias, gracias. Antonio  
8 Soto?

9 ANTONIO SOTO: SPEAKING IN SPANISH 1:50:11

10 TRANSLATOR FOR ANTONIO: I have lived in Harlem  
11 for 50 years. La Hermosa has been a blessing to me.  
12 I have a son 45 years old and he was diagnosed with  
13 cancer. And thank you for the church, their prayers  
14 and today, my son is completely healed. The church  
15 has been a blessing to me. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Gracias, gracias. SPEAKING IN  
17 SPANISH 1:51:20. Thank you very much for your  
18 testimony today.

19 I'm going to be calling up the next panelist,  
20 Bruce Jacobs.

21 BRUCE JACOBS: Bruce Jacobs; Coalition of  
22 Rockaways. Supporter of medical and religious  
23 freedom, U.S. Navy Veteran, 9-1-1 first responder.

24 Before I start, what that Councilman was saying,  
25 he's not totally right. There are people that do

2    have money and they should be able to have places to  
3    live also.

4           My neighborhood in Rockaway is destroyed, okay.  
5    So, now getting to why I am against this. First of  
6    all, a church being in charge of it without a  
7    contractor. The church is a beautiful church but  
8    what about the other different peoples? When a  
9    church wants to help their church, they are going to  
10   obviously want to get mostly people that are members  
11   of their church in there.

12           What about the Muslims? What about the Jewish  
13   people? What about all the different races? Where is  
14   the person, the developer. Without the developer, we  
15   don't know what's going to happen. A developer is  
16   going to go to this church and they're going to offer  
17   whatever the church wants. The problem with it is,  
18   is that I understand building the church, but a  
19   church to run a development, I don't like that idea  
20   because it could turn into to build up your church.

21           I would like to see who the developer of this  
22   project is going to be. The idea of the different  
23   incomes is really no problem because development,  
24   there are people working in this city. Not everybody  
25   is dirt broke. The man was talking like everybody

1 doesn't have money. There are people with money, and  
2 they deserve housing to, and they really want good  
3 living.

4  
5 But I would like to see who the developer is. In  
6 my neighborhood, in Rockaway, we have a destruction.  
7 I want to see built up neighborhoods, but I also want  
8 to see -

9 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Bruce.

10 BRUCE JACOBS: The right development.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony  
12 today.

13 I'd like to call up the last panelist, the  
14 Reverend Ralph Rodriguez.

15 You may begin, thank you.

16 REVEREND RALPH RODRIGUEZ: Good morning, my name  
17 is Reverend Ralph Rodriguez and I'm the Associate  
18 Pastor of Manhattan Grace Tabernacle. A Christian  
19 nondenominational church for all and I am here to  
20 give and lend support to the project with La Hermosa  
21 Christian Church. The denomination is disciples of  
22 Christ.

23 We have absolutely no affiliation with the  
24 disciples of Christ. The reason that we are here to  
25 support La Hermosa and their project is they have

1                   SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES                   62  
2    been very, very kind to us as a congregation. We  
3    currently have been in existence for 30 years and  
4    we've been like nomads in the city. We were 17 years  
5    in the west side of Manhattan, 12 years now, 12-13  
6    years on the east side in Harlem where we really,  
7    really love being. The problem again, we don't have  
8    location of buildings, so we meet in a public-school  
9    Piers 57 on East 115<sup>th</sup> Street between 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and  
10   Lexington Avenue where we try to outreach the  
11   community with various programs.

12           In the meantime, we don't have access to  
13   facilities that are really suited for it. We have  
14   approximately 500 church member congregation and we  
15   don't have great facilities obviously because we're  
16   in a public school. However, La Hermosa has been so  
17   gracious to us in loaning us space. We do various  
18   events there, we've done marriages, we've done  
19   baptisms. We've done women's fellowships. We're  
20   going to do a men's fellowship in two weeks, it's  
21   open, it's free and La Hermosa has been very  
22   gracious, very kind. We also have office space in  
23   their location.

24           We feel that in their gracious and their  
25   hospitality, they will bring us forward. My

2 testimony here is contingent on nothing. We got no  
3 deals going on, we just throw our support behind our  
4 La Hermosa Christian Church.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you very much for your  
6 testimony. Okay, I'm just going to turn it over to  
7 Council Member Barron, who would like to say a few  
8 words.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr. Chair. I  
10 just want to make a comment. The project that was  
11 referenced in my district was in fact, property that  
12 was owned by the church and they needed money to be  
13 able to continue to operate. They made a partnership  
14 with a development corporation and they will have  
15 condominium space in the final project. The name of  
16 the project is Ebenezer Project and all of the  
17 housing that will be in this project is affordable.

18 And we have to be very clear when we say  
19 affordable because I heard the first panel talk about  
20 affordable. The city says affordable can go up to  
21 130 percent of the AMI.

22 Okay, that's more than \$100,000. The project in  
23 my community Ebenezer Project is a project that goes  
24 from formally homeless to 30 percent, 40 percent, 50  
25 percent, 60 percent of AMI.

2 So, the total project is affordable to the people  
3 who live in the community because my commitment is to  
4 make sure that we don't have gentrification.

5 So, I just want to offer that to the panel that  
6 came. There are projects that you can look at where  
7 the church will maintain a reasonable amount of the  
8 profit and where the apartments will be affordable to  
9 the people who presently live there who will not face  
10 displacement. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council Member and  
12 are there any other members of the public who wish to  
13 testify?

14 Seeing none, I now close the public hearing on  
15 this Application, and we will move to Preconsidered  
16 LU items C 190409 HAK, C 190410 ZMK, N 190411 ZRK and  
17 C 190421 ZSK for the 515 Blake Avenue project  
18 relating to property in Council Member Barron's  
19 District in Brooklyn. The applicant seeks approval  
20 of a series of actions to facilitate the replacement  
21 of an existing shelter with 195 family units and four  
22 mixed-use buildings with approximately 324 affordable  
23 housing and supportive housing units.

24 The applicant seeks approval for the designation  
25 and project approval of an urban development action



2   area project and disposition of city owned property.

3   A series of contextual zoning map amendments, a

4   Zoning Text Amendment to establish a Mandatory

5   Inclusionary Housing area utilizing Option 1 and a

6   large-scale general development special permit to

7   modify certain bulk regulation across the development

8   site.

9           I want to now open the public hearing on this  
10   application. Councilwoman, do you have any opening  
11   remarks?

12           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr. Chair.  
13   Yes, this is a project that's being proposed of which  
14   I have many, many concerns. The project came before  
15   us, I think it was first in perhaps April. We had  
16   some preliminary talks, some of the persons who were  
17   here on the panel were at that first meeting.

18           We had I think one subsequent meeting where we  
19   again laid out what we wanted to see in terms of  
20   having benefit to our community and the president, or  
21   vice president of HELP was there at that meeting and  
22   we were very pleased that participation was  
23   happening.

24           We did say that there were still major concerns  
25   that we had about the project and wanted to have

1 those addressed before it moved forward and we were  
2 surprised when our land liaison came and told us that  
3 the project had been filed without further discussion  
4 or further opportunity to see how we could come to  
5 some resolution, so that I could support the project  
6 in the form that it was presented that would have  
7 reflected negotiations between the two parties. That  
8 did not happen.  
9

10 So, that was very disturbing that there was not  
11 further discussion to be able to come to some kind of  
12 agreement before the project was filed. So, I want  
13 to put that on the record. Our concern is that east  
14 New York is saturated with shelters. I believe there  
15 are 11 stand alone identifiable shelters in east New  
16 York.

17 East New York has gotten more than it's "fair  
18 share". There's a term that's called fair share,  
19 where each community should have a fair  
20 representation of shelters that are located within  
21 that community. We have more than our fair share, we  
22 have written a letter to that regard, highlighting  
23 the inequities that exist in east New York. We have  
24 not received a response. We know that the Mayor has  
25 said that he is concerned about the homeless

1  
2 population and we said to the Mayor and to those  
3 agencies that are involved, bring permanent housing  
4 so that people are not relegated to staying in  
5 temporary shelters. Bring permanent housing so that  
6 people are not relegated to staying in temporary  
7 shelters.

8       Additionally, going back, we've been addressing  
9 this issue for more than 30 years. Going back to I  
10 think 1994, there was an issue where there was a  
11 concern that genesis homes at that same location was  
12 not supporting a program that was being operated by  
13 community persons and I think they asked for \$200 to  
14 be able to have a culminating activity and it just  
15 couldn't happen in terms of that money being given to  
16 them.

17       There was a protest, we had to demonstrate, we  
18 had to go to Wall Street where the offices were for  
19 \$200, which did eventually come. But it set a kind  
20 of tone that says what you have is good enough and  
21 that's not sufficient for us.

22       So, we're very concerned that there was not this  
23 opportunity to continue to dialogue to get a project  
24 that we could both feel comfortable with to move  
25 forward and move forward in unison and that we need

2   to provide decent housing, permanent housing, not  
3   tear down one shelter and build another shelter,  
4   along with other affordable housing.

5           We're saying the entire project should be  
6   affordable, permanent housing and that's what we are  
7   proposing. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Lacey Tauber,  
9   David Cleghorn, Matt Borden and Stephen Mott.

10          COUNCIL CLERK: Please raise your right hands.  
11   Do you swear or affirm the testimony you are about to  
12   give will be the truth, the whole truth and nothing  
13   but the truth and that you will answer all questions  
14   truthfully?

15          PANEL: Yes.

16          COUNCIL CLERK: Thank you.

17          LACEY TAUBER: Okay, I'm going to kick it off  
18   from HPD and then turn it over to the Development  
19   team. Land use numbers 572-575 are related ULURP  
20   actions seeking UDAAP designation, disposition  
21   approval for one vacant city owned lot, project  
22   approval and zoning changes for a project known as  
23   515 Blake Avenue in Brooklyn Council District 42.

24          LU Number 572 is related to the proposed UDAAP  
25   project. The Development team for 515 Blake Avenue

1 HELP USA will undertake the development of the  
2 project under two HPD programs. A portion of the  
3 disposition area will be conveyed under HPD's  
4 extremely low- and low-income affordability program  
5 or ELLA, which funds the new construction of  
6 affordable multi family rental projects.  
7

8 The remaining portion will be conveyed under  
9 HPD's Supportive Housing Loan Program or SHLP, which  
10 provides for supportive housing for the homeless and  
11 people with special needs as well as affordable  
12 housing available through the HPD Housing Connect  
13 Lottery.

14 The sponsor proposes to demolish an existing 192-  
15 unit transitional housing facility and then construct  
16 four buildings in three phases as follows:

17 Phase One will include the construction of a new  
18 195-unit transitional housing facility for families  
19 with approximately 17,621 square feet of community  
20 facility space and approximately 20,345 square feet  
21 of commercial space.

22 Phase two will include the construction of a 70  
23 unit building plus one superintendent unit to be  
24 conveyed under SHLP. 60 percent of the units in this  
25 building will be set aside for the formerly homeless.

As part of SHLP, HPD works with the Department of Homeless Services and other public agencies to match clients coming out of the shelter system based on need and to ensure that the completed projects meet programmatic guidelines.

The remaining 40 percent of units will be available through HPD's Housing Connect Lottery and will be available to those making up to 60 percent of the area median income or AMI.

HELP USA will provide onsite supportive services for all building residents including counseling, crisis prevention and health and mental health services focused on recovery.

Phase three will include the construction of two buildings with a total of approximately 254 units plus one superintendent unit with approximately 2,106 square feet of commercial space to be conveyed under HPD's ELLA program.

Half of the units in the building will be available to those making 50 percent of AMI or less including 30 percent of units set aside for the formally homeless and 20 percent available through the HPD Housing Connect. The remaining half will be

1 available through Housing Connect to those making  
2 from 57 to 100 percent of AMI.  
3

4 In total, it is anticipated that the entire  
5 project will include 324 affordable rental dwelling  
6 units plus two units for superintendents.

7 Housing Text will include studio, one bedroom,  
8 two bedroom and three-bedroom apartments. Mandatory  
9 Inclusionary Housing or MIH Option 1 will be mapped  
10 which requires 25 percent of residential floor area  
11 to be permanently affordable where MIH is layered  
12 with HPD subsidy and additional 15 percent of the  
13 residential floor area, 40 percent of the total will  
14 be permanently affordable.

15 The updated transitional housing facility will  
16 include a 12,000 square foot daycare center designed  
17 to serve children ages three months to four years and  
18 capable of serving up to 120 children from both the  
19 facility in the surrounding community as well as  
20 computer training room that can be used for classes.

21 Uses for the commercial spaces are yet to be  
22 determined. The Complex will also feature a  
23 landscaped courtyard, with play equipment, bike  
24 storage, laundry rooms and a community room. All  
25

1 buildings will include elevators and will have 24-  
2 hour security.  
3

4 LU Number 573 is related to an amendment to the  
5 zoning map. The site is currently zoned R6 with  
6 commercial overlays, a zoning change is proposed to  
7 map and R7D zoning district along Blake and Sutter  
8 Avenues and an R6A zoning district in the midblock  
9 which will require mapping the site with a MIH area.

10 LU number 574, seeks an amendment of the zoning  
11 resolution for the purposes of establishing an MIH  
12 area. The sponsor intends to map MIH option 1 on the  
13 site which requires 25 percent of floor area to be  
14 permanently affordable up to 60 percent AMI including  
15 at least 10 percent of square footage of 40 percent  
16 AMI.

17 LU Number 575 is related to the grant of a  
18 special permit to allow the distribution of total  
19 allowable floor area without regard to zoning  
20 district lines in connection with the proposed mixed-  
21 use development within a large-scale general  
22 development bounded by the development area.

23 In order to facilitate the development of 515  
24 Blake Avenue, HPD is before this Subcommittee seeking  
25 approval of Land Use Numbers 572-575.



2 STEPHEN MOTT: Hi, my name is Stephen Mott; I am  
3 the Chief of Staff of HELP USA. Thank you for  
4 meeting with us and hearing our proposal.

5 I want to apologize; our President and CEO Tom  
6 Hameline was supposed to be here today. He had an  
7 unforeseen health event and so, he couldn't make it,  
8 so I am filling in.

9 I want to give everyone a sense of the site and  
10 the context for the building. You can see it  
11 outlined here in red. At Sutter Avenue to the north,  
12 Blake to the south, Hinsdale on the east and Center  
13 on the west. And you can see that to the east there  
14 is row houses, some multifamily midrises and then  
15 there are six and seven story NYCHA developments and  
16 then to the west, you can see the elevated L Train  
17 cuts through and then farther out there is eight to  
18 sixteen NYCHA apartments.

19 So, in terms of context and height, that just  
20 gives you a general sense of where we're proposing  
21 this.

22 I want to give you an idea of the project. I  
23 want to give an overview of what we're trying to do  
24 here and why we came to what we're trying to do.

2           HELP USA is an organization that for 33 years has  
3 been focused on homelessness and specifically family  
4 homelessness.

5           For a long time, we thought as did the field that  
6 the answer to homelessness and family homelessness  
7 was shelter. I think now we understand that shelter  
8 is important and it's important for moments of crisis  
9 but that ultimately the answer is permanent housing  
10 and permanent supportive and affordable housing. The  
11 problem is that you still need shelter to catch  
12 people.

13           It's almost impossible to move people directly  
14 out of a situation of eviction, a situation of into  
15 permanent housing in New York City. There's just not  
16 enough capacity and so, what you need is a place for  
17 people to land, a place for people to look for new  
18 housing and so that's why you need shelter and you  
19 know, one of the things that we faced as an  
20 organization and I think as a city is, is there a  
21 trade off between building affordable housing and  
22 building shelter. Do you take one piece of land and  
23 trade one for the other? Do you trade the long-term  
24 solution for the short-term solution?

1  
2 And the reason that we are so excited about this  
3 building and the reason that we're here today is  
4 because working with all of our city partners we  
5 found a way to do both and we think both are  
6 important.

7 So, what we're proposing to do is on this site  
8 we're just currently the Home of Help line which is  
9 the first homeless shelter that we ever built in New  
10 York City. We'll take that shelter down, replace it  
11 with four different buildings all fully accessible  
12 with elevators. We're going to replace the shelter  
13 portion with a modern shelter facility that will fit  
14 on one third of the land.

15 And then around it, we're going to build 326  
16 additional affordable and supportive apartments. So,  
17 what that does is it makes this site, the solution to  
18 homelessness in the city. It provides for shelter  
19 for crisis and permanent housing for the long-term  
20 solution.

21 And in addition, what we're doing is on the  
22 ground floor and in the cellar level, we're going to  
23 provide a bunch of community amenities.

1                   So, that we'll do a daycare center, computer  
2 training, after school programs. Things that face  
3 outwards as well as inwards.  
4

5                   I want to tell you a little bit about HELP USA.  
6 Who we are, how we got our start. We began in 1987,  
7 our first building was in east New York Brooklyn.  
8 Our history is in family homelessness; we've since  
9 expanded to do homelessness prevention, permanent  
10 housing. We operate roughly 55 programs and  
11 residences; that's mostly in New York City but we  
12 also do work in Buffalo, West Chester, Long Island,  
13 and then New Jersey, Maryland, D.C., Pennsylvania and  
14 Nevada.

15                   Who are we in the community? We've been working  
16 in this community for the entire existence of HELP  
17 USA. We think of ourselves in three or four  
18 different ways. First of all, we're builders right.  
19 So, we invest in almost \$159 million in east New  
20 York. We've built a renovated 491 apartments across  
21 five buildings. We're also employers. So, we  
22 currently employ 201 employees in the neighborhood,  
23 50 percent come and live in east Brooklyn. We have a  
24 payroll that's around \$10 million annually in the  
25 neighborhood and we're also service providers.

1                    So, I think some of the people who provide the  
2 services for us are here today and they are going to  
3 speak a little bit about what they do. But we  
4 provide child and youth services, a street soccer  
5 program, daycare, after school programs. We also  
6 provide domestic violence treatment and family safety  
7 programs and in addition, we have brought in partners  
8 to do medical and dental work.  
9

10                  So, we're proud of our track record in the  
11 community. We're proud of the work that we've done,  
12 and we've been there for quite a while. My colleague  
13 David is going to talk a little bit about the  
14 permanent housing on the site. I'm going to talk a  
15 little bit about the shelter.

16                  The shelter is very exciting for us. It's how we  
17 got our start and it's an opportunity for us to  
18 update a building that's currently aging. When we  
19 built HELP One, the original shelter in 1987, we  
20 built it in a world of New York City where people  
21 were trying to figure out how to get homeless  
22 families out of hotels and into shelters that were  
23 more appropriate for them. It's a world that sounds  
24 pretty similar at the moment actually.  
25

2           This building was built to solve a lot of the  
3 problems with hotels. So, it has individual  
4 apartments, a playground, it's safe, it has offices,  
5 it has daycare, it has space.

6           The problem with this building currently is that  
7 it was built 30 years ago to last for 15 years. And  
8 the idea then was that we would solve family  
9 homelessness. We would be done with it in 15 years  
10 and we wouldn't have to worry about this building.  
11 That didn't happen and so, now we're back and we're  
12 trying to figure out what it is that we're going to  
13 do.

14           So, first I want to talk a little bit about  
15 homelessness as it stands in the city. There are  
16 12,000 families in the DHS system, which is about 21,  
17 22,000 children. And when we looked at it as in the  
18 shelter, what we wanted to do was forefront the  
19 children.

20           You know, if you think about the average that  
21 they like to stay in one of our shelters, it's  
22 between 16 and 18 months. If you come in and you are  
23 one year old or two years old, by the time you leave  
24 you've spent about half your life in shelter. And  
25 shelter is a traumatic experience. It's not

1 traumatic necessarily because of the space but it's  
2 traumatic because losing your home is traumatic.

3  
4 It's traumatic to go to intake, go to path, get  
5 on a bus, come to a new place, enter a new facility.  
6 That's traumatic for adults and it's traumatic for  
7 kids.

8 And so, as we design this new shelter, what we  
9 wanted to do was focus on how could we possibly  
10 reduce that trauma and how could we create a space  
11 that was good for children and for parents. In going  
12 through the design, what we did was, we talked to all  
13 the people that have worked with us over the last 30  
14 years in shelter. We tried to figure out what they  
15 thought worked.

16 We talked to clients, we talked to academics, we  
17 talked to people in the neighborhood and our goal  
18 was, if we need shelter, because shelter is important  
19 in moments of crisis, how do we build the best  
20 possible shelter that we can? And this is it, and I  
21 want to make a point here that all the things that  
22 I'm about to mention about the shelter are possible  
23 only because we're building it from the ground up.

24 We operate many different shelters in the city.  
25 Some are leased from the city, some are older

1 buildings that the city's done forever, some owned by  
2 landlords. Those buildings you do the best that you  
3 can with the space that you are given. This is an  
4 opportunity to build the space that's best for  
5 families in crisis and that's what we're doing.

6  
7 So, you know, as we thought about the four things  
8 that are important for family shelter, this is what  
9 we came down to. The first is, that smaller shelters  
10 are better shelters and so, what we did with this  
11 building is we split into two shelters. So, it's 195  
12 units of shelter but it's split into two entrances,  
13 two sides, two staffing patterns. And that's  
14 important because smaller shelters are more  
15 comfortable for families and seeing the same people  
16 every day when you walk in the door is better than  
17 having a rotating staff of safety monitors or  
18 rotating staff of maintenance people.

19 And so, if you split it up, you get more of a  
20 connection between staff and clients. The other  
21 thing we did is we split the services into four pods.  
22 So, each person enters a shelter and is assigned to a  
23 pod and that service team serves just them and the  
24 other 49 families in their pod. It further reduces  
25



1  
2 the field of bigger shelter and makes it less  
3 institutional.

4 The other thing we wanted to do is create the  
5 sense of place. We don't want people to feel like  
6 they're entering an institution. We want people to  
7 feel like they are entering a place where they can  
8 feel comfortable. And so, you can do that a number  
9 of ways. One is by splitting the pods, the other way  
10 is by creating design queues that do that. So,  
11 double height lobby, signs that say reception and not  
12 security, reduction of bullet proof glass, quality  
13 residential materials.

14 And the other thing I want to specifically focus  
15 here is that we're building an intake room, so when  
16 you come into shelter as a family, you have to go  
17 through an intake process. You have to sign forms;  
18 you have to understand what the facility looks like  
19 and how you get around it. For the most part, we do  
20 these intake wherever we can and the problem with  
21 that is that people's first experience of shelter  
22 becomes sitting in the side of a multipurpose room  
23 with people running around, sort of crazy trying to  
24 figure out what they are doing.

1           The intake room we're proposing for this shelter,  
2 is specifically built for this. It has a kitchen, it  
3 has snacks, it has toys for kids to play with, it has  
4 a window that looks out onto the playground. And the  
5 whole idea is to create an environment that instead  
6 of retraumatizing families over and over again, it  
7 allows them to relax. It allows them to let down  
8 their guard, it allows them to feel comfortable.

9           The last thing I want to talk about is the  
10 service provision and so, what we've done here and  
11 talking to everybody that does this work, what we've  
12 figured out is that, if you move service providers  
13 and you move social workers and case managers up near  
14 clients, people engage more and form relationships.

15           If you keep them behind closed doors that are  
16 locked, people tend to engage less. And so, what  
17 we've done is we've moved all of our service staff up  
18 into the residential area of the building and we  
19 think that's important because it will allow the  
20 people to do the work that they need to do, to search  
21 for housing to figure out what's going on in their  
22 lives in a more comfortable way. And not by coming  
23 down to a desk buzzing and going through three stores  
24 and waiting for an appointment.  
25

2 And the last thing I want to say about the  
3 shelter and something that's important to us as an  
4 organization is, we want it to be sustainable and  
5 healthy. We want it to be good for the community, we  
6 want it to be good for the world and we want it to be  
7 good for the environment.

8 We're proud that we won a \$1 million NYSERDA  
9 grant for the ecological features of this building.  
10 We have mechanisms that create clean interior air  
11 that regulate the temperature. We have a solar array  
12 on the roof. We are using the highest-level  
13 materials to make sure that we are as efficient as  
14 possible.

15 So, the goal here with this shelter is to do it  
16 as best as we possibly can for our clients, for the  
17 community and for the earth. We're going to turn it  
18 over to David Cleghorn who is going to talk a little  
19 bit about the other important portion of this, which  
20 is the permanent housing.

21 DAVID CLEGHORN: Thanks Steve, good afternoon now,  
22 I guess. My name is David Cleghorn, I'm the Chief  
23 Housing Officer for HELP USA. I've been working on  
24 this project for a number of years with my colleagues  
25 at HELP.

1                   As Steve went over the shelter, I wanted to spend  
2  
3 a little time going over the permanent housing that  
4 this project would leverage by freeing up the  
5 underutilized land that currently is there.

6                   So, in addition to the new shelter, the rebuild  
7 shelter, as others have said, we will be building two  
8 new buildings under the HPD ELLA term sheet which  
9 will be 255 affordable apartments for families and  
10 then one affordable housing building which will be an  
11 additional 71 apartments on that site.

12                   So, by building up and utilizing the  
13 underutilized land, we're able to leverage 326 new  
14 affordable apartments for the neighborhood.

15                   So, one of the things that HELP USA has always  
16 done on a permanent housing site is all of our  
17 housing is supportive housing in one way or another  
18 and that depends on the project and the financing  
19 sources but we always include some sort of social  
20 service component in our projects and when possible,  
21 we like to make those services available to the  
22 larger community as well and as Steve briefly  
23 mentioned, the shelter will have some service spaces  
24 that are going to be outward facing to the  
25

1 neighborhoods, so will the affordable housing  
2 buildings.

3  
4 But in specifically, we're going to have a list  
5 of services here that are on this slide that we're  
6 going to provide at a minimum which is going to be  
7 individualized case management, counseling, health  
8 and wellness services, economic empowerment services,  
9 substance abuse and mental health services, as well  
10 as youth programming, after school arts programs and  
11 other recreational activities for the children that  
12 are going to be growing up in the permanent housing.

13 So, if we take a look at the ground floor of the  
14 building, this is the street level. You can get a  
15 sense of the use of space on this block. The one  
16 corner in the upper right, which is not highlighted  
17 in any color is not part of the site. That's an  
18 apartment building that is owned by somebody else.

19 We're going to have retail on either end of the  
20 block, we intend to have that retail be priced either  
21 free or very low to encourage local businesses or  
22 nonprofits to take that space and utilize it and  
23 hopefully if there is enough demand, we can divide  
24 that space and make it for multiple users.

2           The daycare in the shelter and the community  
3 training center in the shelter are both outward  
4 facing will be available for people in the community  
5 as well as shelter residence.

6           So, we take a look at our garden level, one of  
7 the things that's interesting about this site is when  
8 it was originally built, it has an interior courtyard  
9 now, but underneath that courtyard is whatever was  
10 buried in the ground back in 1987, urban fill. So,  
11 we plan to dig that area out, we'll go down a level  
12 which will allow light and air to get into what would  
13 normally be a cellar level, so that we can put  
14 community facility spaces, community rooms, offices,  
15 the daycare, and youth programs that will open up  
16 onto this courtyard to make that an asset.

17           I want to say that you can see in the blue  
18 building which is the supportive housing building  
19 that we're intending to create space for youth  
20 services. One of the things that we've learned in 30  
21 plus years of doing permanent housing for families is  
22 that when people move in, they stay forever because  
23 it's permanent housing. When they move in with a  
24 young child, that child grows up there. So, our  
25 youth services need to grow and adapt as the children

2 grow up and adapt. And we'll be looking for local  
3 partners and collaboration on using that space.

4           So, we take a real quick look at what we think  
5 the building will look like. This first view is  
6 looking, if you are standing on the corner of Blake  
7 and Sutter or looking up towards Sutter. The  
8 building in the forefront is one of the ELLA  
9 buildings along with the midblock and the shelters at  
10 the far end.

11           The next slide is looking the opposite direction  
12 to give you a sense of what the street level would  
13 look like with what we're referring to as maisonette  
14 units. So, these are apartments that on the ground  
15 floor, the doors open up onto the street with small  
16 yards. We're doing this as an homage to the row  
17 houses across the street. It also sets the building  
18 back further from the street, so it creates a more  
19 open and airy field and allows people a little bit of  
20 private outdoor space although we do intend to take  
21 care of the landscaping of it from our side of  
22 things.

23           And then the last rendering is the other side of  
24 the street which is Hinsdale Street. So, this is  
25 looking up the street from Blake and Hinsdale.

1 Again, this is an ELLA building, the supportive  
2 housing building and then the shelter at the far end.  
3 If you look close enough, you can see some of the  
4 solar arrays, which we're really excited about that  
5 will be multiple buildings but they just come through  
6 on this particular rendering.  
7

8 As we move inside into the courtyard, we  
9 mentioned that we dug out the courtyard to create  
10 more space, more usable space for residents and for  
11 activities. So, this is one of the views; really  
12 there is not going to be any particular programming  
13 here. It will be like a park. People can play,  
14 hangout, read books, just relax outside, be with  
15 their families and their friends.

16 The next view of the courtyard is looking the  
17 opposite direction. The one interesting feature here  
18 that I think is cool anyway is I mentioned that we  
19 have the one building that we don't own. So, rather  
20 than digging down below the foundation of that  
21 building where we would have to underpin that  
22 building for them, we're going to leave the courtyard  
23 elevation where it currently is which creates this  
24 interesting little hill at the far end of the  
25 courtyard, which if any of you have children, small



1 children especially, all you need is a hill sometimes  
2 and you can have hours of enjoyment.

3  
4 The next slide really talks about the  
5 sustainability. We want these projects as we build  
6 new buildings to be green and to carry a light  
7 footprint environmentally.

8 So, to that end, the ELLA buildings are expected  
9 to meet passive house criteria and the supportive  
10 housing building will be built to NYSERDA tier 2  
11 standards and as Steve mentioned we recently were  
12 awarded a NYSERDA \$1 million building of excellence  
13 award for the shelter which allows us to do  
14 sustainability efforts at the shelter that we  
15 normally wouldn't be able to do in a non-apartment  
16 housing setting.

17 The next slide just sort of outlines some of our  
18 community outreach. These projects take a lot of  
19 hands and take a lot of collaboration. So, the dates  
20 are listed here for when we met preliminarily and  
21 informally with the community board and the borough  
22 president and City Planning and the council member.

23 And finally, we feel like the project has a lot  
24 of benefits. It helps the city address the  
25 homelessness crisis by really replacing an aging

2   shelter with a modern trauma facility. We create 326  
3   permanent affordable housing units and while it's not  
4   on here, because it's not 100 percent permanent yet,  
5   but of that 326 units, approximately 120 of those  
6   will be set aside for formally homeless. So, that's  
7   directly into permanent housing for 120 households.

8           Improving the urban design and the pedestrian  
9   experience on the block, bringing retail and  
10   community facility space to the area and creating  
11   jobs for local residents and MWBE businesses.

12           So, at that, we will stop here and take any  
13   questions that you have but thank you very much for  
14   allowing us to go through the presentation.

15           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great, thank you. Just a few  
16   questions before I turn it over to Council Member  
17   Barron.

18           On the affordability, can we just go back to  
19   that? What are the levels of affordability for each  
20   of the proposed buildings within the development?

21           LACEY TAUBER: Sure, so I can answer that. There  
22   is one building that's going to be supportive housing  
23   through our supportive housing loan program. And so,  
24   requirements for that are that 60 percent of the  
25   units be set aside for the formally homeless who have

1  
2 been identified as being a need of the specific  
3 supportive services that they'll offer and then 40  
4 percent of the units will be affordable up to 60  
5 percent of AMI. So, that's for the supportive  
6 housing building which is 70 affordable units and one  
7 super unit.

8 And then, there will be two buildings that will  
9 be financed through our ELLA term sheet. The  
10 extremely low-income affordability. So, those  
11 buildings are pretty far out from closing, so right  
12 now, we're just giving a range. We're committed to  
13 having 50 percent of the units at or below 50 percent  
14 of AMI and that's inclusive of a set aside of 30  
15 percent for the formally homeless and then 50 percent  
16 of the units from 60 to 100 percent of AMI.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Got it, okay. What are the  
18 bedroom mixes at each of these levels of  
19 affordability?

20 LACEY TAUBER: I don't think we have that level  
21 of specificity right now, but I can tell you the  
22 supportive buildings will be studios and then the  
23 ELLA's will have a range of studios one, two, and  
24 three-bedroom apartments.

2           Actually, the affordable units in the supportive  
3 will also have a range of units. The supportive  
4 units are studios and then the affordable have also a  
5 range of one, two and three.

6           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, on the commercial space,  
7 what tenants use have you considered for the proposed  
8 ground floor commercial space?

9           STEPHEN MOTT: We've not spoken with anybody in  
10 particular. We've decided to have for the process  
11 that we're in now, to have it as a commercial space  
12 rather than a community facility space, so that we  
13 have more flexibility with the end user. But we  
14 intend to work with some of our partners in the local  
15 community to find users for that space that would be  
16 hopefully, more along the lines of nonprofits or  
17 other groups that need that kind of space rather than  
18 - well, we'd be prevented from any sort of retail  
19 that wasn't a benefit to the community under our use  
20 agreements with the city.

21           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: The one that deals with the  
22 MWBE's, local hires and prevailing wage, can you  
23 describe your plan for the MWBE and the locally based  
24 contractors and subcontractors that would participate  
25 in this development?

2 STEPHEN MOTT: Sure, so, I'll start with the  
3 second part first. With the development site on the  
4 general contractors side, we're intending to work  
5 with [INAUDIBLE 2:49:00] Construction and they have a  
6 local hiring plan that they work with local community  
7 groups to source local participation for those jobs  
8 and job training programs.

9 On the building development side or on the  
10 operations side, I'm not sure, we don't have a final  
11 number of staffing yet, but with 24-hour day  
12 security, property management staff, the shelter  
13 staff will be upwards of you know, well over 100  
14 people and we expect most of those jobs will come  
15 from the local area.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: So, you can't describe your  
17 plan for local hiring now you are saying?

18 STEPHEN MOTT: On the general contracting side?

19 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yes.

20 STEPHEN MOTT: Well, it's not a final plan yet  
21 with the general contractor but it's typical with  
22 them. They would with housing authorities, local  
23 organizations, do workshops on site, accept  
24 applications on site, seek out local participation  
25 and job training opportunities.

2           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Is there a commitment to good  
3 jobs for the future property service and maintenance  
4 workers at the completed development?

5           STEPHEN MOTT: Yes.

6           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you very much. I'm  
7 going to turn it over now to Council Member Barron.

8           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you Mr. Chair. I  
9 just want to say this is very, very important topic  
10 for me, which is why for those of my associates who  
11 may be watching, I'm here on Black Solidarity Day.  
12 Because I would not be at work on Black Solidarity  
13 Day, but this is such an important project, that I  
14 felt I had to be here to share with the audience my  
15 position on this issue and to have you respond to  
16 pertinent questions.

17           I certainly commend the Chair for his questions  
18 and hope that you can become more specific in terms  
19 of what kinds of jobs and what's the hiring plan  
20 going to be moving forward.

21           Do you know how many shelters; you've been in the  
22 shelter business; do you know how many shelters are  
23 in east New York?

24           LACEY TAUBER: We have DHS here actually with us.  
25

2           MATT BORDEN:   And Community Board 5, so just for  
3 folks, my name is Matt Borden; I work for the  
4 Department of Social Services.   And within Community  
5 Board 5, as folks also know, in 2017 we launched the  
6 Turn the Tide plan which was a borough-based approach  
7 to figuring out homelessness and in Community Board 5  
8 which 515 Blake is located, we actually have right  
9 now there are 2,600 individuals from Community Board  
10 5 within our shelter system.

11           Right now, we actually only have shelter beds  
12 within Community Board 5 for about 2,200 folks  
13 including 500 hotels.

14           So, at the end of the plan, we actually look at a  
15 deficit of 914 beds.   And to your question, within  
16 Community Board 5, there are about 13 DHS sites.

17           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:   Right.   Do you think that  
18 that complies with the fair share, a requirement that  
19 the city has?

20           MATT BORDEN:   All sites that DHS opens follows  
21 the same fair share mandate and we publish whenever  
22 we open a site.

23           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:   But if they are not  
24 equitably distributed at this point, doesn't that  
25 mean that we should have fewer if in fact, the fair

1 share program is not equitably distributed now?

2 Doesn't that mean that in order to get back to that  
3 fairness that we should have fewer?  
4

5 MATT BORDEN: So, when the city is looking at  
6 actually figuring out how we could actually have an  
7 equitable plan regarding homelessness, it was sort of  
8 based in two components.

9 The first component was, make sure that we open  
10 up sites in every single community board across the  
11 city, which we're doing an impossible.

12 The second component to this plan of course, has  
13 been how can we create shelters where people are  
14 already coming from, so we actually don't further  
15 disrupt their lives. There are too many folks who  
16 are living in the Bronx and having being sheltered in  
17 Brooklyn and their children are unfortunately in some  
18 cases going to school up to two hours just to get to  
19 school.

20 So, from our position, we actually really think  
21 creating shelters where people are homeless and where  
22 their families are and where their businesses are and  
23 where their religious communities are is actually a  
24 really compassionate way to think about how to create  
25 a system.



2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Do you think that we  
3 should in fact – well, let me just say, I believe  
4 that we should move towards building permanent  
5 housing. Yes, I understand there is always going to  
6 be a need, but until we acknowledge the fact that  
7 permanent decent affordable housing is a right.  
8 We're going to continue to throw money at people, a  
9 lot of money at people who operate shelters. A lot  
10 of money at people who operate shelters.

11 Do you know what the cost is for families in  
12 shelter at this point?

13 MATT BORDEN: Well, on average for a family with  
14 children within shelter, it's probably, I don't want  
15 to give you a wrong number. I want to say it's  
16 around a hundred and – I don't want to give you a  
17 wrong number. So, I think on a rough estimate it's I  
18 want to say around \$3,000 a month, but I actually  
19 don't want to give you any –

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: \$3,000 a month. An  
21 apartment cost on average what would you say an  
22 average apartment for?

23 MATT BORDEN: I don't know.

24 COUNCIL MEMEBR BARRON: Okay, it's not for most  
25 families \$3,000 a month.

1  
2 MATT BORDEN: So, that's a really great question  
3 and that's something that I hear a lot.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: But I'm simply saying  
5 that the city is not fulfilling its obligation. It  
6 would be cheaper in the long wrong, we talked about,  
7 someone talked about the trade offs between long term  
8 and short term, to build affordable housing and  
9 maintain it in a way that's decent.

10 MATT BORDEN: So, I totally hear that, and I  
11 think one reason I'm so excited about this project,  
12 so excited, is not only are we getting a shelter  
13 that's going to be the jewel of our system, but we're  
14 creating more than 324 affordable housing units with  
15 more than 37 percent going to formally homeless  
16 families.

17 I don't in my job, and some days are easier than  
18 others, there are not many times when I can do a  
19 project and talking about giving homeless families,  
20 that many homeless families permanent, affordable  
21 housing. It's something that's desperately needed.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And my proposal is, make  
23 it all permanent housing for everyone.

24 MATT BORDEN: I totally appreciate that.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And I hear your numbers  
3 that you are talking about, that's great but I say  
4 make it all affordable.

5 MATT BORDEN: It is so frustrating because we are  
6 going to need shelter beds. 120 families last night  
7 showed up at Path in need of a temporary place to be.  
8 We are going to be as a city, we are always going to  
9 need to have shelter.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I understand.

11 MATT BORDEN: And the question is, how can we  
12 create and actually be more thoughtful and I think  
13 that you're totally right. I think previous  
14 administrations, there was not that same kind of  
15 thought that went into it and now, we're trying to  
16 move forward into a situation which you can create  
17 these kinds of models. Which I think are amazing,  
18 this is a piece of property that we're able to  
19 provide shelter, good shelter and at the same time,  
20 provide amazing affordable housing opportunities for  
21 people.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: How much does HELP USA  
23 get for the housing that they provide now at HELP  
24 One?

2           MATT BORDEN: I don't have the answer to that  
3 question. I'm happy to turn it over to HELP.

4           DAVID CLEGHORN: I'm sorry, what was your  
5 question?

6           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: How much does HELP USA  
7 get from HELP One in my district at east New York?

8           DAVID CLEGHORN: How much do we personally get?

9           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, how much, what's  
10 your revenue? It's a difficult question, how much do  
11 you get?

12          DAVID CLEGHORN: What's the contract for the  
13 shelter?

14          COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes.

15          DAVID CLEGHORN: I don't have that in front of  
16 me, I can get that to you if that's helpful. I can  
17 tell you that the contract pays mostly for the  
18 maintenance of the building and the staff that staffs  
19 that building.

20          COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, I'm sure you get some  
21 profit. I'm sure it doesn't all go to the people who  
22 are working there. So, I would like to know Mr.  
23 Cleghorn, if you can ask for that.

24

25

2 DAVID CLEGHORN: Yeah, absolutely, with all do  
3 respect, we're a nonprofit. So, we don't take money  
4 home.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I understand that, and it  
6 doesn't mean you don't make a profit. It means that  
7 the profit that you make goes to those persons who  
8 operate the business.

9 DAVID CLEGHORN: No.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It doesn't?

11 DAVID CLEGHORN: No, so, it's a standard DHS  
12 contract.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Say again.

14 DAVID CLEGHORN: It's a standard DHS contract.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

16 DAVID CLEGHORN: It's publicly available. We are  
17 reimbursed for the costs that we have.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

19 DAVID CLEGHORN: And then there is a standard and  
20 administrative fee that goes on top of it, and that  
21 administrative fee pays for information technology.  
22 It pays for HR, it pays for —

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: HR are the people who are  
24 working in the agency besides those who are working  
25 at the shelter.

2           DAVID CLEGHORN:   The support services for the  
3 people in the shelter.

4           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:   That's the only thing  
5 that HR pays for?

6           DAVID CLEGHORN:   What's that?

7           COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:   That's it?

8           DAVID CLEGHORN:   HR, no, there's a whole list of  
9 allowable expenses.

10          COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:   Okay, alright, so I would  
11 like to know what that amount is, okay.  If you can  
12 get that for me, I would appreciate that.

13          DAVID CLEGHORN:   sure.

14          COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON:   In your testimony here,  
15 you say that - you talked about half of the  
16 apartments would be for 50 percent at AMI of 50  
17 percent or less including 30 percent for set aside  
18 for formally homeless and 20 percent through Housing  
19 Connects.  The remaining half will be available  
20 through Housing Connect.  For those making 57-60  
21 percent of the AMI.  I'm sorry, 57-100 percent of the  
22 AMI.

23                 What is 100 percent of the AMI in New York at  
24 this point?

1 LACEY TAUBER: Just to clarify, that's for the  
2 ELLA buildings.  
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes, that's for the ELLA  
5 building.

6 LACEY TAUBER: 100 percent of AMI for a family of  
7 three is \$196,100.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: How much?

9 LACEY TAUBER: Oh, sorry, \$96,100.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: \$96,000.

11 LACEY TAUBER: Correct.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: So, you're talking about  
13 bringing in affordable housing and going up to  
14 \$93,000 reaching for families making \$93,000. Do you  
15 know what percentage of my community makes \$93,000?

16 LACEY TAUBER: I don't have that number right in  
17 front of me.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It's less than 5 percent.  
19 So, if you're setting aside apartments for the people  
20 making \$93,000 and I thought it was \$96,000. You are  
21 talking about less than 5 percent of the people who  
22 actually live there now, being able to move into this  
23 housing.

24 So, you're talking about a form of gentrification  
25 because it's displacing or not providing an

1  
2 opportunity for the people who presently live there  
3 to be eligible to apply for this housing.

4 LACEY TAUBER: I mean, I just want to be clear  
5 that it's going to be a range.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: A range going up to  
7 \$96,000.

8 LACEY TAUBER: 30 percent AMI all the way to 100  
9 and we're happy to continue the conversation with you  
10 about -

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, it would have been  
12 nice for you to continue the conversation before you  
13 came to this point and before you filed. Thank you,  
14 thank you Mr. Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Council Member.  
16 Thank you very much for the panel for your testimony  
17 today. Calling the next panel.

18 The next panel is, Kirk Goodrich, Iesha Whitaker,  
19 Helen Bley. I'm sorry, my apologies. I'd like to  
20 call up Assembly Member Charles Barron.

21 Assemblyman, good to have you back.

22 CHARLES BARRON: It's good to be back.

23 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: You can begin any time you  
24 want.



2           CHARLES BARRON: Well, I want to thank all of you  
3 for coming out and showing your interest because we  
4 should always be interested in what's coming into our  
5 community.

6           But I also want to caution you not to be  
7 manipulated. Don't let no one manipulate you by  
8 talking about how beneficial this is going to be for  
9 our community.

10          So, what HPD and others do, they bring you in,  
11 they give you this flowery presentation on how they  
12 are going to create jobs. On how it's going to be  
13 affordable housing for everyone. And then they  
14 talked about the millions of dollars that they put  
15 into my beloved east New York.

16          They don't tell you about the millions of dollars  
17 they made out of our beloved community and they don't  
18 let you know that when you're talking about just  
19 going by their numbers, always listen out for the  
20 AMI, the Area Median Income.

21          It's an insult when people come to our community  
22 and say they're building affordable housing and you  
23 ask them, well, what is the neighborhood AMI? And  
24 they don't even know. So, how are you going to build  
25

1 affordable housing in a neighborhood you don't even  
2 know what our income is.

3  
4 How about \$36,000 for a family of three. So,  
5 when they come in talking about, we have a range of  
6 income. If you hear the word AMI, area median  
7 income, 50 percent and below is what we can afford.  
8 That's 36,000 people making \$25,000; that's what the  
9 Councilwoman and I always try to do for our community  
10 and if you notice, east New York is one of the few  
11 communities that's not gentrified. And they are  
12 trying to do it with these housing plans that inch  
13 their way toward it.

14 So, for these units, over about 60 percent of  
15 these units are going to be at 50 percent of the AMI  
16 and up. So, if you have units at 80 percent of the  
17 AMI, those are people making \$76,000. If it's 100  
18 percent of the AMI, it's \$96,000. If it's 70 percent  
19 of the AMI, it's \$65,000. Most of us don't make that  
20 kind of money. We don't make that kind of money.  
21 And there's a lot of money, as the Councilwoman  
22 pointed out, in building shelters.

23 So, what's the new homes for Black people and  
24 Brown people in New York City? Jails and shelters.  
25 Jails and shelters, everybody else gets decent homes.

1 We get jails and shelters and oh, they're going to  
2 beautify your shelter. They are going to make your  
3 shelter pretty. This is going to be the state-of-  
4 the-art shelter. A shelter is a shelter is a shelter  
5 and if you're going to build all of these units, the  
6 Mayor is talking about 200,000 units, for the next  
7 ten years.

9 If you just do 40, 50 percent of those units for  
10 the homeless, you could almost wipe out homelessness  
11 because that would be 60, 70, 80,000 people in a  
12 permanent home. We cannot allow these developers and  
13 they're saying not for profit. Not for profit  
14 doesn't mean your not making any money. You know  
15 what not for profit does? It puts all the money back  
16 into the operating of the business and they put it  
17 into salaries.

18 So, that way they never show profit. It's always  
19 money being put back into the corporation. That's  
20 why they are not for profit making a whole lot of  
21 money.

22 So, I just wanted to come and keep it real. You  
23 know, we always keep it real to you all, no matter  
24 how many people try to bus you and tell you to come.  
25 You know, something nice is coming to your

1 neighborhood. We are not letting you; we are  
2 intelligent people in east New York and we're not  
3 going to let anybody bring us in here and sell us on  
4 a bill of goods that's not good for us.

5 So, if you're building all these units, look, 250  
6 of these units are for residential units and with  
7 this range of affordability. Which half of it is not  
8 affordable to us, more than half is not affordable to  
9 us. And over 270 of the units is for their new  
10 shelter and special housing units, supportive housing  
11 units.

12 We always support that, even again, sometimes  
13 people in my community get upset because I say no,  
14 you know, but for the grace of God, anyone of us  
15 could be homeless or we could be in need of special  
16 housing. So, we have allowed especially special  
17 housing. We've never supported shelters because you  
18 heard when the Councilwoman asked them, they said 13,  
19 14, but you know, that's not a lot. Yeah, look at  
20 Manhattan. Look at some other place. Look in the  
21 white community, how many shelters they have.

22 Oh, but they want to be nice to us. See, they  
23 want to be nice to us with shelters and jails. They  
24 are going to build them close to our homes, so we can  
25

1                   SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES                   109  
2    have convenient. Well, how about giving us an  
3    affordable apartment or affordable home close to our  
4    homes. We don't need jails closer to our homes. We  
5    don't need shelters close to our homes especially  
6    when you can afford to put every one of those 200  
7    people; look how negligent they are. 200 people take  
8    them all out and put them in those new houses that  
9    you build. We'll support that, we will support this  
10   project today if they could have gotten up here and  
11   said to you, you know what we heard from the local  
12   elected official, we heard from some of the board  
13   people.

14            You know what we're going to do, we're going to  
15   build instead of a new shelter, we're going to build  
16   another housing unit and put them in that. We will  
17   support this tonight but don't come here trying to  
18   manipulate us, bringing you here. We'll they are not  
19   going to separate us. We're going to stay united  
20   because we won't be fooled by no fancy you know,  
21   visions of something. We're not going to be fooled.  
22   We want this housing. We want it 100 percent but  
23   it's going to be on our terms. It's going to benefit  
24   our community and don't let them tell you about jobs  
25   and all of these services.

2 Let me tell you about some of the history of HELP  
3 Homes USA, whoever.

4 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I'm sorry, we're on a clock.  
5 I just want to make sure.

6 CHARLES BARRON: Okay, I'll finish in two  
7 minutes.

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, thank you.

9 CHARLES BARRON: This is governor Cuomo's  
10 sisters. She is the Chair of the Board. Mr. Cuomo's  
11 and they say like you are doing you a favor. They  
12 started off with shelters, you know why? Because  
13 there is money in shelters. You heard it, \$3,000 a  
14 month; if they can pay \$3,000 a month, then they can  
15 do \$1,400 a month, \$1,500, \$2,000 a month for a  
16 permanent apartment, for a permanent apartment. And  
17 to respect to the Chair and the time, I'm going to  
18 end it there. I have a lot more to say, we'll have  
19 some meetings in our community because remember they  
20 were the builders of Genesis Homes. You all remember  
21 Genesis Homes. I had to demonstrate to get Mark  
22 Alpine[SP?] who was the then Executive Director to do  
23 supportive services to fix up Genesis Homes every  
24 time they had repair problems; they don't want to do  
25 that.

2           We had to bring a bus load of people to Manhattan  
3 just to get them to do the right thing by the people  
4 in Genesis Homes. Eventually they did; this is about  
5 them making money. They have no great love for you  
6 in doing all of these things. We're not supporting  
7 this project until they say, we're not building a  
8 homeless shelter. We're building permanent homes for  
9 our people.

10           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

11           CHARLES BARRON: We deserve that. Thank you very  
12 much, Mr. Chair.

13           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you Assembly Member.  
14 Thank you, yes, absolutely.

15           CHARLES BARRON: You all can give me a hand clap,  
16 that's alright. Thank you.

17           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Kirk Goodrich?

18           KIRK GOODRICH: Good afternoon everybody.

19           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Hold on one second, I'm  
20 calling the next panel.

21           Iesha Whitaker, Helen Bley, Charlyn McMillion,  
22 Renee Fueller.

23           KIRK GOODRICH: Can I start.

24           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, we're going to start  
25 with you.

2 KIRK GOODRICH: Good everyone everybody, my name  
3 is Kirk Goodrich; I'm a partner at Monadnock  
4 Development and I'm here today to speak in support of  
5 the rezoning and disposition of the property at 515  
6 Blake to HELP USA.

7 The first thing I want to say is I have the  
8 upmost respect for Council Member Barron and the  
9 Assemblymen. It's because of their support and  
10 leadership that a lot of the work we've done in  
11 Spring Creek, where the east Brooklyn congregations  
12 happen. It would not have happened without your  
13 leadership and vision. We know when we work in  
14 Bronxville and east New York that we're working with  
15 informed, in visionary leaders and we got to come  
16 correct, I get that. But there is a very specific  
17 reason I'm here today. I work for Monadnock but  
18 that's not the reason I'm here today. Our  
19 construction company is building the building, that's  
20 not the reason I'm here today.

21 I'm here today because I have family members who  
22 have been in the homeless system for decades now and  
23 I acknowledge what you said Council Member that east  
24 New York and Brownsville are saturated with shelters.



2                   We have affordable housing crisis in the city,  
3                   60,000 people in shelter, 22,000 of those are kids.  
4                   We have a fair housing crisis; all poor people can't  
5                   live in east New York and Brownsville.

6                   We need to make sure that we address those  
7                   things. The problem with this project that you've  
8                   described is that it replaces a shelter with a  
9                   shelter in affordable housing and I get that.

10                  The difficulty in removing shelters, is that once  
11                  you remove them, it's hard to replace them anywhere  
12                  in the city and you have people who as a result of  
13                  that end up living in hotels in the middle of nowhere  
14                  in poor conditions, far away from schools.

15                  What I support is the co-location of a shelter  
16                  and affordable housing and reasonable people can  
17                  disagree and I totally get your point. But I'm here  
18                  today to just support folks in shelter and that  
19                  population in need. Thank you very much.

20                  CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. So, folks, we don't  
21                  like allow everybody to clap; you can wave your hand  
22                  in the air and that shows that you are supporting the  
23                  folks that are here today. So, thank you.

24                  You can state your name and you can begin.  
25

1  
2 RENE E FUELLER: Good afternoon, I am Renee  
3 Fueller; I'm the Executive Director of HELP Homebase  
4 One in the Bronx and I'm here to support this program  
5 because HELP can bring a variety of services to the  
6 community with the construction of these buildings.

7 HELP USA believes that the best way to fight  
8 homelessness is to prevent it from happening at all  
9 and as a result, we operate a large portfolio of  
10 homelessness prevention and after care programs. The  
11 HELP USA homeless prevention and aftercare network  
12 continues to perform very outstanding work to assist  
13 the city's most vulnerable populations.

14 Our programs are extremely successful, and we  
15 have about a 94 percent success rate at keeping  
16 people in their homes, so they do not have to go to  
17 shelter or return to shelter.

18 The HELP USA homeless prevention and aftercare  
19 network is an amazing conglomerate of six very  
20 successful prevention rapid rehousing and after care  
21 programs. Our network also includes special programs  
22 that help veterans and their families because no one  
23 who has served this country should ever have to worry  
24 about finding a place to sleep at night.

2 HELP USA opened one of the first and original  
3 homebased programs in New York City in 2004. Now, in  
4 2019, HELP USA operates three homebased programs in  
5 four locations in the Bronx. We have been extremely  
6 successful with appropriately targeting and providing  
7 assistance to low income families and individuals who  
8 have been identified to be at high risk for entering  
9 and re-entering the New York City shelter system.

10 We're funded by the New York City human resources  
11 administration and the outstanding prevention and  
12 after care work that HELP USA Homebased programs have  
13 done, have ensured that Bronx residents achieve and  
14 maintain housing stability by having access to rent  
15 assistance vouchers, being connected to community,  
16 city and legal service resources and have a familiar  
17 place to turn to should they ever need assistance.

18 We also have a new beginnings program that is  
19 designed to assist young heads of households in the  
20 Bronx ages 18-24 and HELP USA also honors veterans to  
21 help them to not be homeless.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you, thank you so much  
23 for your testimony. Thank you.

24 IESHA WHITAKER: Hi, good afternoon. My name is  
25 Iesha Whitaker and I am Program Director at Genesis

2   Homes which is located in east New York Brooklyn.

3   And I am here to support the rezoning of 515 Blake  
4   Avenue.

5           As a Program Director, I have seen clients that  
6   came from homelessness and they have now been able to  
7   restructure their lives. They have been able to find  
8   employment. They have been able to get linked with  
9   services that they need; mental health services,  
10   employment services, case management services. Our  
11   case managers and clinician works with our families  
12   to provide advocacy and support through many trials  
13   that the clients had to come through facing  
14   homelessness.

15           Our families have all been able to remain in the  
16   housing units that they have. No one has had to go  
17   back to shelter since entering the programs, and we  
18   work very closely with community organizations and  
19   the property management team to ensure that the  
20   clients do not have to face eviction. And we're just  
21   there; we advocate with the clients and a lot of the  
22   clients coming from the shelter, they need that  
23   support in order to maintain their housing.

24

25

2           A lot of the clients have never lived on their  
3 own, so they can't just get an affordable apartment,  
4 they need the support.

5           So, the services are much needed for the client  
6 and I have witnessed a lot of transitions with  
7 clients. I've seen them grow to the point where they  
8 don't need the support as much as they used to, but  
9 they still come up for the extra boost when they are  
10 going out for a job interview or when they are going  
11 out just to try something new.

12          But without the supportive housing services that  
13 were in place, a lot of our families would have had  
14 to face homelessness again. And that's something  
15 that we are trying not to do is we don't want people  
16 to be homeless. So, you know, I'm all in support of  
17 supportive services and the rezoning.

18           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

19           CHARLYN MCMULLEN: Charlyn Hi, my name is Charlyn  
20 McMullen; I'm the Director of Youth Family and  
21 Educational Services at Genesis Homes.

22           Under my program, I have an after-school program,  
23 a summer camp, a scholarship program, a college  
24 program and a mentoring program.

1 Under the afterschool program, we serve children  
2 between the ages of 5-13 living in HELP ONE, our  
3 shelter, Genesis Homes, Genesis Neighborhood Plaza  
4 One and two, and the surrounding community.  
5

6 We serve 65-80 children daily throughout the  
7 school year. The program operates Monday through  
8 Friday from 3 to 7 p.m. and during holiday camp hours  
9 from 8 to 5 p.m.

10 We help the children with homework help,  
11 recreational activities such as street soccer, arts  
12 and craft, board games, and most recently we have  
13 partnered with the [INAUDIBLE 3:29:53] refoundation  
14 to introduce them to our participant.

15 The summer camp operates for six weeks between  
16 July and August and we serve between 80-85 children,  
17 same age range of 5-13. The program runs Monday  
18 through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. The children  
19 are able to go on trips and they're able to engage in  
20 recreational and educational activities.

21 The scholarship program we offer to our residents  
22 living in Genesis Homes, GMPI and GMP2. This is  
23 where we give our families the ability to attend a  
24 private school for free. We currently partner with  
25 Trey Whitfield and Bishop Loughlin. Currently we

1 have three students enrolled in Bishop Loughlin and  
2 we have one enrolled in Trey Whitfield.

3 We have graduated four from Bishop Loughlin and  
4 two from Trey Whitfield. Our college program help  
5 our young adults navigate the financial aid and the  
6 college process. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Were you about to wrap up, if  
8 you are, I can give you a couple of seconds.

9 CHARLYN MCMULLEN: Yes, I was, okay. So, we  
10 basically help our families navigate the college and  
11 financial aid process. We currently have students in  
12 SUNY Buffalo, Alfred, Plattsburgh and Morrisville and  
13 one of our success stories, the first gentleman who  
14 when through that program graduated on the dean's  
15 list and was hired by Geico.

16 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Okay, thank you. Thank you  
17 for your testimony.

18 HELEN BLEY: Good afternoon, my name is Helen  
19 Bley and I'm actually a client at Genesis Homes with  
20 their supportive help.

21 I am here as a witness because I came in in 2015,  
22 I got extremely ill causing me to lose my job, a  
23 domino effect, lost my home and I had a daughter. We  
24 went from shelter to shelter to shelter and then  
25

1 finally I learned about the support staff help at  
2 HELP USA.  
3

4 So, once I got into this program, support, there  
5 should be a bigger word for how much they have really  
6 supported me. I came in very ill not knowing what I  
7 was going to do. They helped me with social services  
8 to apply for disability. They helped me with  
9 permanent housing, they helped me to pretty much  
10 start my life all over again.

11 When I finally got in there, I didn't know how I  
12 was going to get furniture or anything; they helped  
13 me with that. Basically, anything I needed help  
14 with, they were there. They constantly reminded me  
15 to tell me, whatever you need, we're here to help you  
16 and they really have helped me in more ways than one.

17 Two years ago, my daughter ended up passing away  
18 and I don't have any family here and if it wasn't for  
19 the support that they have given me from their  
20 hearts, I don't know what I - I probably would not  
21 even be sitting here today. It's been two years and  
22 they have been my main source of help. Now, I'm  
23 getting back on my feet again. I was close to  
24 getting back on my feet again, but now, I'm really  
25 moving forward and it's because of the support that



2   I've received from them. So, I'm here as a witness  
3   that the Supportive Housing really does help. Thank  
4   you.

5           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony.  
6   Thank you for being here.

7           Thank you for the panel. The next panelist is  
8   Bruce Jacobs.

9           BRUCE JACOBS: Once again, good afternoon. Bruce  
10   Jacobs; Coalition of Rockaways, supporter of medical  
11   and religious freedom, U.S. Navy veteran and 9-1-1  
12   first responder.

13           If they gave up on the shelter, as long as the  
14   name shelter is in there, no go. Why don't they just  
15   build supportive housing? It just doesn't make  
16   sense. The money that they build supportive housing,  
17   that would be the answers to everything. My veteran  
18   friends don't even want to go to a shelter. They  
19   will not walk in a shelter. They say they'll sleep  
20   in a street or they will go to prison before they  
21   will go to a shelter.

22           I don't care how fancy the building is, until  
23   they get rid of the name shelter, in my neighborhood  
24   of color Far Rockaway and the neighborhood east New  
25   York or any neighborhood shelter is not the answer.

2 The money goes into – the reason these guys don't  
3 want to give up on the shelter because that's where  
4 the money comes. The money goes to salaries, the  
5 money goes to this but hardly anything goes to the  
6 people in there. The money goes to the salaries.

7 Why don't they just build supportive housing?

8 They come with a big fancy thing, oh, yeah, yeah,  
9 yeah, fancy lawyers, fancy stuff. Everybody that's  
10 speaking is a worker. They are making big salaries.  
11 I'd like to see real clients, show me the veterans  
12 that are in your organization.

13 The Peninsula site in Rockaway was originally  
14 bought by Genesis and then there was all kinds of  
15 problems.

16 So, you say you are not connected. I'm not  
17 against supportive housing, that sounds good but  
18 shelter, I don't want it in any neighborhood  
19 especially in my neighborhood of color. Any  
20 neighborhood really, but I live in a neighborhood of  
21 color. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your  
23 testimony today. The next panel is Genesis Morgan,  
24 Laura Mascuch, Crystal Lewis, Carlos Teroza[SP?] and  
25 Catherine Trapani.

2           If you can state your name, you can begin.

3           JENISE MORGAN:   Okay, wonderful, thank you.   Good  
4   afternoon and thank you for allowing me to be here.

5   Good afternoon sir Council Member and to the  
6   Chairperson.   My name is Jenise Morgan; I am the  
7   Senior Project and Business Manager for Brownsville  
8   Community Development Corporation.

9           We do business as BMS Family Health and Wellness  
10   Centers.   We actually operate two standalone medical  
11   facilities within the HELP USA Genesis Homes  
12   Division.   We have one standalone medical facility  
13   which is located at 360 [INAUDIBLE 3:40:36] Avenue  
14   and it's been there since 2005 and we also operate a  
15   standalone dental facility at 330 Hinsdale Street,  
16   which has been there since 2013.

17           Our partnership with HELP USA has been  
18   instrumental in ensuring that vulnerable residents of  
19   east New York and Brownsville have access to quality  
20   medical and oral healthcare services.   Additionally,  
21   BMS and HEATH USA collaborates on an annual health  
22   fair which helps us to ensure that resources are  
23   available to the vulnerable residents of east New  
24   York and Brownsville.

1                   In that partnership, we address the social  
2  
3 determinants of health and we believe that this  
4 project can be beneficial to the community. Thank  
5 you.

6           CYNTHIA STEWART: Hi, my name is actually Cynthia  
7 Stewart and I'm here on behalf of Laura Mascuch who  
8 is the Executive Director of the Supportive Housing  
9 Network of New York.

10           The network is a membership organization that  
11 represents 200 groups, nonprofit groups across the  
12 state that collectively run 52,000 units of  
13 supportive housing statewide and supportive housing  
14 is affordable housing matched with support services  
15 for the most vulnerable homeless families and  
16 individuals.

17           While Supportive Housing is a relatively small  
18 part of this project, I'd like to speak about both  
19 HELP USA and Supportive Housing.

20           HELP USA is one of our longstanding members with  
21 three decades of experience across the breadth of  
22 housing and services for the most vulnerable.

23           Their Genesis neighborhood plaza which is in east  
24 New York, was deeply innovative and in fact, was the  
25 first of its kind. It provided housing and services

1  
2 to both homeless veterans as well as low income  
3 families and individuals.

4 As the Council knows, Supportive Housing was  
5 pioneered in New York City in the early 80's in  
6 response to widespread homelessness. It's a  
7 commonsense approach that offers households quality  
8 affordable apartments, matched with onsite support to  
9 help tenants stay housed and healthy.

10 As a result of the model's success, it's now the  
11 primary response to homelessness among the most  
12 vulnerable. As a result of the model success also,  
13 in ending tenants homelessness, the Mayor and  
14 Governor recently committed to two separate  
15 initiatives that together will create 35,000 units of  
16 additional supportive housing across New York State  
17 over the next 15 years.

18 And in fact, HELP One supportive housing is  
19 funded through the Mayor's initiative NYC 1515. Part  
20 of the reason for these investments is supportive  
21 housing's reputation is both the good neighbor and an  
22 engine of economic development.

23 Finally, there is no question as to the need for  
24 this housing with more than 60,000 homeless New  
25 Yorkers in the city shelters each night and thousands

1 of more sleeping on our streets and subways. If the  
2 Council seeks to help these individuals and families  
3 into stable lives in the community, we recommend that  
4 you support this groundbreaking project. Thank you.

5  
6 CRYSTAL LEWIS: Good afternoon, my name is  
7 Chrystal Lewis; I am the Program Director for one of  
8 HELP USA's newer supportive housing program sites in  
9 the Bronx. The program is HELP Woodcrest; it's a  
10 48-unit studio apartment building contracted by the  
11 New York City Department of Health and Mental  
12 Hygiene.

13 29 of the units are designated to the formally  
14 chronically homeless population with a documented  
15 disability which could be mental, medical and many of  
16 them have a cooccurring substance abuse history as  
17 well. The other 19 are designated to the senior  
18 population. All of the tenants receive a subsidy  
19 through NYCHA, and they pay 30 percent of their  
20 income towards the rent.

21 The supportive housing program was specifically  
22 in place to help the formally, chronically homeless  
23 population transition into permanency. For many of  
24 the tenants, this is their first apartment that they  
25 have ever had. So, the reaction when we first showed

1  
2 them the units are amazing. A lot of them break into  
3 tears because they are so thankful because they have  
4 never had housing like this before.

5 The building is new, it was built in 2017 and the  
6 first residents moved in in 2018 in January. They  
7 have never had amenities like this before. There is  
8 a community room for them. They have access to TV,  
9 they can go in there to eat, they have a gym on site.  
10 We have a part-time nurse who assists them with  
11 connecting them to medical services within the  
12 community. We have two master's level case managers  
13 that also provide counseling services. There is 24-  
14 hour security, the property manager is on site and  
15 the staff help the tenants resolve any issues when it  
16 comes to rental arrears. Any services that they need  
17 in the community to connect them with mental health  
18 services or medical services.

19 And the staff are just supporting the tenants so  
20 that they maintain their housing and many of them  
21 have started to have the conversations about moving  
22 on. They have transitioned well and are now thinking  
23 about furthering into a less support service  
24 community.

25 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

2 CATHERINE TRAPANI: Good afternoon, my name is  
3 Catherine Trapani and I'm the Executive Director of  
4 Homeless Services United.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: I'm sorry, could you speak a  
6 little closer to the mic. Thank you.

7 CATHERINE TRAPANI: Alright, is that better?

8 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Yeah.

9 CATHERINE TRAPANI: Okay, HSU is a coalition  
10 approximately 50 nonprofit agencies serving homeless  
11 and at-risk adults and families in New York City. We  
12 provide advocacy, information and training to member  
13 agencies to expand their capacity to deliver high  
14 quality services. HSU advocates for the expansion of  
15 affordable housing and prevention services and for  
16 immediate access to safe, decent, emergency and  
17 transitional housing outreach and drop in services  
18 for homeless New Yorkers.

19 I'm here today to speak in support of HELP USA's  
20 Blake Avenue project. HELP was a founding member of  
21 HSU when we first incorporated in 1996 and has  
22 remained active in our organization supporting  
23 innovation and a commitment to quality services  
24 citywide ever since. They have a long track record  
25 of providing high quality services and have proven



1  
2 commitment to supporting and uplifting low income New  
3 Yorkers across the city with high quality eviction  
4 prevention, shelter, housing and other services.

5 When I first learned about this project, I was  
6 immediately impressed by what it could do for the  
7 community and for the people who will call it home.

8 When one considers our most urgent public policy  
9 goals, improving the quality of shelters, increasing  
10 access to deeply affordable housing and providing  
11 supportive housing and services to those who need the  
12 most, this project fits the brief to a tee.

13 The project would provide housing for people that  
14 is truly affordable for low wage workers, have a  
15 robust set aside for people exiting homeless shelters  
16 that is even higher than many on this council would  
17 like to require. A supportive housing facility  
18 enriched with services to ensure formally homeless  
19 people with service needs can successfully live  
20 independently and would reimagine the exiting shelter  
21 facility for families to improve its design to better  
22 serve homeless families and position them for  
23 success.

24 The project will accomplish all of this while  
25 also being incredibly thoughtful about design to

2   ensure that the families and individuals that will  
3   live and work in this space will feel safe and  
4   comfortable while making sure the project is well  
5   integrated into the fabric of the community, both  
6   beautiful and welcoming.

7           We were so confident in the projects design, I'll  
8   just wrap up, that we chose to feature it in our  
9   annual symposium last year when it was in the earlier  
10   stages because we hope that more nonprofits will  
11   follow HELP's lead by providing integrated shelter  
12   and affordable housing facilities for more New  
13   Yorkers. Thank you.

14           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

15           CARLOS TEROZA: My name is Carlos Teroza[SP?]; I  
16   want to take my hat off to the Councilwoman and the  
17   Councilman over here because I am in accordance with  
18   the shelter situation as far as that's concerned.

19           I live in GMP2; I'm a veteran, air force veteran  
20   at that and they have given me the opportunity to  
21   have me as a resident okay, even though it's through  
22   Section 8 and when I moved in there back in 2012, I  
23   was paralyzed. Okay, I could not walk.

24           Through numerous operations that I had through  
25   the VA in Manhattan branch; I've been able to regain

2 my legs again, not a 100 percent but I'm working on  
3 it. And HELP USA has given me this chance to live  
4 here. I've been living in this residence now for  
5 nine years and I'm very happy that I was able to get  
6 off the streets. Okay, and very happy to have a  
7 place I could call my own.

8           Thank you very much everybody, have a good  
9 evening.

10           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you for your  
11 testimony today. I will be calling up the next  
12 panel. Henry Love, Ted Houghton, Keona Johnson,  
13 Shakeeya Davis, Gina Park.

14           Alright, just state your name and we can begin.

15           TED HOUGHTON: Hi, my name is Ted Houghton; I'm  
16 the President of Gateway Housing. We're a nonprofit  
17 that helps other nonprofits in government to develop  
18 better shelters.

19           I'm a housing guy. I agree with the Assemblyman,  
20 I often do, a shelter is a shelter is a shelter. The  
21 solution to homelessness is permanent housing. I've  
22 spent a lifetime moving the city's homeless response  
23 towards permanent housing. That's why I support his  
24 project.

1           The city and HELP USA could have just taken this  
2           and put a new coat of paint on an old shelter. They  
3           could have just built another shelter. Instead, they  
4           are using this as an opportunity to build 326 units  
5           of affordable housing. Much of it deeply affordable  
6           for homeless people.  
7

8           It also creates a state of the art shelter and  
9           the fact is while a shelter is a shelter is a  
10          shelter, some shelters are better than others and if  
11          we don't build shelters like this one, we're going to  
12          end up putting more families in hotels far from where  
13          they live, far from their communities, far from their  
14          networks of support.

15          We need this shelter. It's unfortunate but high  
16          cost cities like New York City are always going to  
17          have housing emergencies. We're always going to need  
18          some sort of shelter system. Let's make it smaller  
19          by getting out of the hotels, but we need a decent  
20          place for people to live.

21          This project creates shelter, it creates housing  
22          and it creates programs and retail services for the  
23          community. That's why I support it. I hope  
24          everybody here in this room will. Thank you.

25          CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

2 HENRY LOVE: Good afternoon, my name is Henry  
3 Love; I'm the Program Coordinator for the Tenants  
4 Matters Program at Gateway Housing.

5 A shelter intervention program laser focused on  
6 school attendance and attuned to addressing the  
7 current barriers families face in getting their  
8 students to schools as well as the PHD involvement in  
9 psychology at the graduate centers of the University  
10 of New York.

11 Because attendance matters is tailored to the  
12 circumstances of New York City's shelter program,  
13 attendance matters presents the possibility of  
14 significantly altering trajectories of the city's  
15 most vulnerable children.

16 Currently Gateway is piloting the Attendance  
17 Matters program in six different family shelters  
18 across the city. Two of which are operated by HELP  
19 USA in the Bronx.

20 Over the past year of the pilot, I have had the  
21 opportunity to work closely with leadership at  
22 several HELP family shelters in the Bronx as well as  
23 HELP One. The Attendance Matters pilot aims to shift  
24 the paradigm of shelter care and support away from  
25

1  
2 purely focusing on the head of household and to the  
3 entire family, but specially school aged children.

4 The Attendance Matter teams I help Crotona One-  
5 and Two-family shelter have been enthusiastic  
6 participants in the Gateway Housing program. Over  
7 the past year and a half of the pilot, I've been  
8 incredibly impressed by the supportive and family  
9 focus approach from each of the HELP shelters I have  
10 worked and visited in. But also, from leadership of  
11 the most senior of levels.

12 The Social Service teams that I have worked with  
13 extensively have gone above and beyond and aiding  
14 clinical support but also logistical and social  
15 support for all the clients in the respective sites.

16 At the beginning of this school year for example,  
17 HELP Social Workers went out of their way to  
18 personally escort school aged children in the most  
19 challenged families. They made sure the children were  
20 not only properly registered but also had the proper  
21 services they needed from school.

22 The Social Service teams at the Bronx sites, know  
23 every resident in the respected sites on a first name  
24 basis, including the children.

2           I have visited a pleather of shelters and each  
3 time I have walked into a HELP site; I have  
4 immediately encountered a warm, welcoming, and  
5 humanizing environment.

6           This is an incredibly important point as often  
7 events that have led a family into shelters stay can  
8 be extremely traumatizing and often dehumanizing.

9           It is with that that I am very much in support of  
10 the redevelopment plan of HELP One.

11           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

12           KEONA JOHNSON: Hi, good afternoon, my name is  
13 Keona Johnson; I am a resident at HELP One and  
14 previously I was residing in a hotel dwelling before  
15 I was transferred there with my family and we didn't  
16 have services how HELP One had offered at first.

17           So, it was very difficult coping with the  
18 changes, learning how to manage with my mental  
19 health, being compliant with the HRA demands.  
20 Finding ways to physically and financially support my  
21 family was very challenging. Seeking the support  
22 wasn't so bad because HELP One was able to offer us  
23 mental health counseling with the hospital which is  
24 on site.

1                   SUBCOMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES                   136  
2           We also have client care coordinators who by the  
3 way, are available the majority of the time during  
4 multiple days in the week. We do have case managers  
5 and they are very comfortable to be around. They  
6 know us on first name basis as well. The staff at  
7 HELP USA also assist us whenever we need anything  
8 whether it's for a job placement services, HRA  
9 issues, family planning, informational services, the  
10 food banks, donation of clothes, toys, school  
11 supplies for adults and children. We even face  
12 problems as a family. I've learned for myself that  
13 speaking up and letting our voice be heard; with HELP  
14 One, they actually sit there, and they listen, and  
15 they allow us to go ahead and allow our voice to be  
16 reached to the right people.

17           We have our freedom, we have a little privacy, we  
18 have our own keys to open our own doors when we enter  
19 the premises and because of the services they offer,  
20 they actually helped my family get into supportive  
21 housing due to some mental situations I am dealing  
22 with.

23           We will be moving out in a couple weeks hopefully  
24 and I'm very happy because this facility actually put  
25 me on the right path, on the right route to getting



1 to where I need to be along with the family, and I am  
2 so grateful for them.

3  
4 So, thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

6 SHAKEEYA DAVIS: Hi, good afternoon to the City  
7 Council. My name is Shakeeya Davis; I am a single  
8 mother of three and I'm very honored and blessed to  
9 stand in front of you all today.

10 I would like to thank HELP USA staff, Mr. King  
11 and Ms. Siaz[SP?] for their guidance and assistance  
12 on helping me to be on my way to self-sufficiency.

13 I would like to start off and say we all have a  
14 story to tell and here is a brief story of my past,  
15 present and future.

16 Before I came to HELP USA shelter, I was living  
17 in upstate New York for three years where I was  
18 suffering from pain and injuries and anxiety,  
19 insomnia, fibromyalgia, which made me stagnant and  
20 depressed.

21 So, I started to pray more and change to my state  
22 of mind and stay positive and didn't let my situation  
23 consume me because I knew it was very temporary. So,  
24 I decided to move back to New York City where my  
25 children went into the shelter, this is where I met

2   Mr. King and Ms. Siaz who I see both as my guardian,  
3   and mentors.

4           Mr. King introduced me to HELP works program in  
5   which I did graduate from. Started training and  
6   completed my internship in culinary arts. A  
7   profession I started to love and see myself  
8   accelerating and elevating in it.

9           In closing, I would also like to thank the City  
10   Council for your time, patience, and all you do for  
11   the City of New York. I commend you. Thank you and  
12   God bless you all.

13           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you for your testimony  
14   today.

15           GINA PARK: Good morning, I'm Gina Park; I'm a  
16   Social Worker and the Executive Director of the HELP  
17   One homeless family shelter located at 515 Blake.

18           As you are all well aware family homelessness is  
19   a big problem in our city. In fact, 38,000 of the  
20   almost 60,000 people living in shelters in New York  
21   City are living there as a family unit and over  
22   21,000 are children.

23           In New York City, family shelters are societies  
24   answer to a problem which on it's face is simple.  
25   Many families can't afford the rent. Each families

1                   homelessness, however, is a multifaceted problem  
2  
3                   marked by current challenges and past traumas.

4                   There are hurdles stopping families from  
5                   achieving their potential in employment and savings  
6                   and raising their children. At HELP USA, we talk  
7                   about these challenges, get our clients to recognize  
8                   their strengths and help them make decisions that  
9                   will facilitate their return to permanent housing and  
10                  their ability to go on with their lives.

11                  We can't change the housing market or the  
12                  employment market for our families, but we can  
13                  reshape the way that our clients interact with those  
14                  systems.

15                  HELP USA provides family shelters where this work  
16                  can happen. At 515, we have been providing this kind  
17                  of service for over 30 years in a building that was  
18                  built to last 15 years.

19                  When HELP One opened in the late 1980's, the  
20                  prevailing view was that family homelessness was a  
21                  passing phenomenon. This of course, has proved  
22                  untrue, discouragement of family homelessness has  
23                  persisted. And the families that we serve have  
24                  become even more vulnerable in the face of  
25                  increasingly tighter housing markets.

1  
2 One of the major problems I struggle with as the  
3 Executive Director of HELP One is that my building is  
4 no longer up to task of providing the services that  
5 our families need at the level of dignity and respect  
6 that they require. To put it simply, the building  
7 has outlived its usefulness.

8 A list of top line items that are in need of  
9 capital repairs include the following: Boilers are  
10 in need of replacement, the entire roofing system  
11 must be replaced, the heating elements in the  
12 residential units need to be replaced and windows  
13 throughout the building must be upgraded to reduce  
14 cold air infiltration in the winter.

15 Even more critically, the site does not have the  
16 spaces that are needed to serve clients in the manner  
17 that they require. There is almost no space for  
18 confidential meetings between families and staff.  
19 Social workers posted to our site by the current  
20 administration do not have appropriate offices. We  
21 don't have a dedicated family intake room where we  
22 can meet with the new families who have just arrived  
23 at our site, nor do we have group rooms where staff  
24 and volunteers can work with their residents.

2           The parents that we serve HELP One deserve the  
3 environment that will facilitate their flourishing as  
4 parents. They need a space where their children can  
5 run and play safely.

6           As a shelter director, the building that we do or  
7 work in is a tool that allows us to do our job and I  
8 am here today to ask for your support and your  
9 approval for a new and vastly improved family shelter  
10 at 515 Blake Avenue. Thank you.

11           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Great, thank you all for your  
12 testimony today. I'm going to call the next panel.  
13 Bill Wilkins, Adam Huron, Chiana Rosalis[SP?], Daisy  
14 Sedu[SP?], Ubeli Deraro[SP?]. Did you fill out one  
15 of these slips. Okay, and are you Maria Jene? Okay,  
16 and you are going to be reading their testimony or  
17 are you testifying. Which one are you -

18           Okay, understood. So, we can begin, just state  
19 your name for the record and you can start.

20           BILL WILKINS: Good afternoon, it's Bill Wilkins.  
21 Dialog and communication brings resolution, so I  
22 employ HELP to have additional conversations with my  
23 Councilwoman and also Assemblyman.

24           My name is Bill Wilkins; I am the Director of  
25 Economic Development for the local development

1 corporation of east New York; growing businesses,  
2 changing lives, strengthening communities. We've  
3 been doing this work predominantly in the east  
4 Brooklyn community for the last 40 years with the  
5 first industrial bid in New York City, the first in  
6 place industrial park, the first empire zone, the  
7 first woman's business center and one of the first  
8 EAP centers.  
9

10 By virtue of being the Director of Economic  
11 Development in Housing, it gives me a unique insight  
12 to provide my perspective today.

13 With the Manhattanization of Brooklyn finally  
14 reaching the shores of east New York, we've been  
15 plagued with rampant poaching and speculation by  
16 outsiders. However, today that is not the case. We  
17 have a community-based organization that has and  
18 remains committed to the community of east New York  
19 by providing the necessary programs, services and  
20 housing, we are most desperately in need of. Who  
21 else has the answers to the questions that plague our  
22 community than those community-based organizations  
23 that have their boots on the ground and have been  
24 fighting in the trenches every day in an underserved  
25 community.

1           The transformation of east New York has to  
2 benefit the residents, the business, and also the  
3 CBO's that are indigenous to east New York.

4           Secondly, we have the opportunity to do a two-  
5 step and that is to recycle dollars with our  
6 industrial firms in the building trade by securing,  
7 by virtually securing contracts on this project and  
8 also hire locally, and then also employees will be  
9 able to spend money locally. This will have a micro  
10 economic stimulus plan. I without hesitation or  
11 reservation support the development of this project.  
12 Thank you.

13           CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you.

14           ADAM HURON: Good afternoon, I'm Adam Huron; I'm  
15 the Vice President for Family Transitional Housing  
16 with HELP USA.

17           I just wanted to start by saying that shelter is  
18 about, and shelter services are about a connection  
19 between people. Between our staff and the residents,  
20 between the residents themselves. And those  
21 connections are really facilitated by the environment  
22 in which we provide for that to happen.

23           As you heard earlier, the environment that we  
24 have is not really up to the task that we want to do,  
25

1  
2 and we expect better results with a better  
3 environment. And I wanted to talk a little bit and  
4 to provide a letter that was provided to us by a  
5 former client at HELP ONE. And just read a brief  
6 portion of that letter, so that you can see how those  
7 interactions can really lead to results for  
8 individuals.

9 In December of 2017, I entered into HELP One  
10 Family Shelter with my wife and at the time, three  
11 children. As an undocumented family, I had a hard  
12 time finding work to support my family and was told  
13 by the shelter staff because of my Alien status, I  
14 may have challenges moving my family out of shelter.

15 In April 2018, I was able to obtain employment as  
16 a taxi driver in Brooklyn and began saving money. On  
17 December 26, 2018, my wife and I welcomed a new  
18 addition into our family, my youngest son.

19 In February 2019, I met my case manager, Ms.  
20 Williams and she inspired me not to give up and  
21 provided me with new information on an exit strategy  
22 on how to move out of shelter.

23 I began working with Ms. Williams on the exit  
24 strategy using SOTA. MS. Williams escorted me and my  
25 family to HRA to open a PA case under my youngest



1 son, so that me and my wife would be able to feed my  
2 family and qualify for the SOTA program.

3  
4 After my wife and I would be able to feed my  
5 family and qualify - excuse me, after providing an  
6 employment letter, Ms. Williams assisted with setting  
7 up a meeting.

8 After my family identified an apartment, I signed  
9 a lease with the assistance of the AED and was able  
10 to transition my family and nothing went wrong. It  
11 went well.

12 Case Manager Williams went out into the field and  
13 navigated for me and my family for the case to remain  
14 open, for us to be able to move out of shelter. I am  
15 happy to say, all went well and me and my family now  
16 reside in a three-bedroom apartment in New Jersey.

17 CHAIRPERSON MOYA: Thank you. Thank you both for  
18 your testimony today. Thank you.

19 Are there any other members of the public who  
20 which to testify? Seeing none, I now close the  
21 public hearing on this application, but before we  
22 adjourn today, I just want to reiterate that all  
23 public hearings on today's calendar are closed. This  
24 concludes today meeting.

2           I would like to thank the members of the public,  
3 my colleagues, of course the Council and Land Use  
4 Staff for the great work that they do. This meeting  
5 is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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 April 1, 2018