

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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January 13, 2021
Start: 1:12 p.m.
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing (Virtual Room 2)

B E F O R E: Alike Ampry-Samuel
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Diana Ayala
Laurie Cumbo
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Vanessa Gibson
Mark Gjonaj
Carlos Menchaca
Kevin Riley
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Mark Treyger
Jimmy Van Bramer

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

Maria Forbes, TA President
Clay Avenue Tenant Association

Crystal Glover, NYCHA Resident

Aixa Torres, Resident Association
President
Alfred E. Smith Houses

Hector Vazquez, Resident
Fulton Houses

Joel Gross, President
Williams Plaza Houses

DeReese Huff, New York City Resident

Sandra Gross, President
Baychester Houses

Jonathan Gouveia, Executive Vice
President for Real Estate Development
NYCHA

Lisa Bova-Hiatt, Executive Vice President
for Legal Affairs and General Council
NYCHA

Lakesha Miller, Executive Vice President
for Leased Housing
NYCHA

Leroy Williams, Director for Community
Development
NYCHA

Simon Kawitzky, Vice President for
Portfolio Planning
NYCHA

Marissa Schaffer, Vice President for
Portfolio Planning
NYCHA

Lamar Fenton, Vice President for Asset
Management
NYCHA

Matthew Turney, Vice President for Design
and Construction
NYCHA

Brian Honan, Vice President of
Intergovernmental Affairs
NYCHA

Gale Brewer, President
Manhattan Borough

Mary McGee, Resident
Fulton Houses

Jackie Lara, Resident
Fulton Houses

Miguel Acevedo, Tenant Association
President
Fulton Houses

Manuel Martinez, Resident and Council
President
South Jamaica Houses

Sophonie Joseph, Community Planner and
Advocacy Coordinator in Equitable
Neighborhoods Practice
Take Root Justice

Victor Bach
Community Service Society

Lucy Newman
Legal Aid Society

Debbie Dominguez Higgins, New York City
Resident

John Forrester, Representative
Local 375

Danny Cabrera, Policy Analyst
Citizens Housing and Planning Council

Nikki Lucas, Founding Member
Coalition to Save NYCHA

Paola Martinez, Director of Social
Services Program
Catholic Charities

Elizabeth Gyori, Staff Attorney
Citywide Tenants Rights Coalition
Legal Services NYC

Yvette Kemp, Co-chairperson
Justice for All Coalition

Kristen Hackett, Executive Committee
Member
Justice for All Coalition

Margaret Massac, New York City Resident

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Live stream.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: PC recording is
4 underway.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Backup is ready.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All right. I don't see
8 the cloud as of yet.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Hold on one second.

10 We're just having technical difficulties. We will
11 begin shortly. Just one second. Sorry, everyone.

12 We are just having technical difficulties. Just give
13 us a few minutes and we can try to fix the problem.

14 The live stream is up for sergeants to begin their
15 recordings.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good afternoon and

17 welcome to the New York City remote hearing on the
18 Committee on Public Housing. At this time, we ask

19 that all Council members and Council staff please

20 turn on your video for verification purposes. Please

21 place cell phones and electronic devices to silent or
22 vibrate to minimize disruptions throughout the

23 hearing. If your testimony that you wish to submit

24 for the record, you can do so by emailing it to

25 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again, that is

2 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Chair, we're ready to
3 begin.

4 [Gavel]

5 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: The hearing is
6 coming order. Good afternoon and I thank you for
7 coming to today's hearing on NYCHA 2.0. I am Council
8 member Alika Ampry-Samuel and I chair the Committee
9 on Public Housing. I am joined this afternoon by my
10 committee members, Council member Van Bramer, Council
11 member Perkins, Council member Reverend Diaz Sr.,
12 Council member Salamanca, and I would like to welcome
13 Council members Dharma Diaz and Council member Kevin
14 Riley to the public housing committee. I look
15 forward to working with you. And I also want to
16 recognize that I see our Honorable Gale Brewer,
17 Manhattan borough president, with us, as well. So I
18 just wanted to recognize the Manhattan borough
19 president. Again, thank you all for being here.
20 Before we begin before I begin my formal remarks
21 about today's hearing, I just want to talk a little
22 bit about today in black history., Which will know,
23 is an important part of American history, the
24 historic Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc. was founded
25 on the campus of Howard University on January 13th,

2 1913 by 22 collegiate women who stepped forward and
3 used their collective strength to promote academic
4 excellence and to provide assistance to those in
5 need. The beginning of their work was their
6 contribution to the women's suffrage. Today, Deltas
7 can be seen throughout the country standing for
8 social justice and public service. How appropriate
9 that today's hearing falls on Delta Sigma Theta is
10 100th anniversary of service. As I am a member of
11 this distinguished organization for 25 years, I am
12 delighted to be in this role as Chair of the Public
13 Housing Committee as I am committed and dedicated to
14 public service. So, going now and my formal remarks.
15 Today's oversight hearing is on NYCHA development,
16 NYCHA 2.0, and the PACT-RAD program. I clearly
17 understand that RAD PACT is included in NYCHA 2.0.
18 This is not redundant, but simply to highlight that
19 the bull of discussion today will be around RAD PACT
20 conversions. After all, that is the majority of the
21 concern coming from our residents. Although
22 residents make up, in my district, the 41st Council
23 District, NYCHA residents make up 10 percent of my
24 constituency. 10 percent of my constituency. But
25 NYCHA calls-- the calls that come into my office--

2 make up 70 percent of my constituent services and the
3 use OR legitimate constituent service complaints.
4 And RAD PACT is no different from those complaints.
5 My constituency is experiencing the fullest extent of
6 NYCHA to point out. We have PACT to preserve, we
7 have built to preserve, and we have transfer to
8 preserve and they are all contentious discussions.
9 In my own district, we have examples of all three
10 strategies. We have to build to preserve projects in
11 one development, Van Dyke Houses. And on my Howard
12 Houses campus, we have an upcoming transfer to
13 preserve program. And when I look across my entire
14 district, we have PACT to preserve that are coming up
15 in Saratoga Village, Reid Houses, Ocean Hill-- and
16 let's not forget Saratoga Square was one of the
17 original PACT type programs before the actual program
18 was in the city of New York. So, well over two years
19 ago, NYCHA and the Mayor announce the launch of a new
20 development plan, NYCHA 2.0, which was a revamp of
21 its original 2015 plan NexGen. A major component of
22 the plan, PACT-RAD, involves converting 62-- or at
23 the time 62,000-- section 9 units test section 8
24 unit-based vouchers with the goal of raising much-
25 needed capital to repair and renovate NYCHA's

2 distressed properties. It's a good goal and we all
3 agree that something needs to be done to fix NYCHA's
4 crumbling infrastructure, but this committee is also
5 here to make sure that goal is being met in a way
6 that puts the rights of NYCHA residents first. We
7 have heard mixed feedback about PACT-RAD and there
8 are still many questions about what, quote/unquote,
9 privatizing their housing actually means. We
10 shouldn't lose sight of the fact that all plans,
11 presentations, and discussions have an impact on
12 peoples' real lives. Since the launch of NYCHA 2.0,
13 our city has been hit hard by coronavirus that has
14 shown little signs of letting up. And while Covid-19
15 pandemic brought so much of our city to a grinding
16 halt, the business of the city continues. So, today,
17 more than two years and two pandemics later, this
18 committee is ready for answers. What's the status of
19 NYCHA 2.0? How are sites selected? What's happening
20 to properties once they are converted? Who is
21 responsible for making repairs? And how do we ensure
22 that repairs are actually being done? And what kind
23 of impact is this plan having on the overall
24 neighborhoods? And how do we guarantee rent will
25 remain deeply affordable? And, most importantly, how

2 are the rights of the NYCHA residents being
3 protected? And so, I look forward to today's
4 discussion and I am hoping that today is informative,
5 productive, and, most importantly, that we're able to
6 come out with some solutions to real problems that
7 have plagued the NYCHA developments for decades.
8 We're in a new day and time and we should be looking
9 at real answers. And so, with that, I would like to
10 kick things off by hearing from the, first, residents
11 themselves. But right now, before we proceed to the
12 opening panels of the NYCHA residents, I will briefly
13 turn it over to committee counsel, Audrey Sun, to go
14 over some procedural items. Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Good
16 afternoon. I'm Audrey Sun, counsel to the city
17 Council's Committee on Public Housing. Before we
18 begin, I want to remind everyone that you will be on
19 mute until you are called on to testify. Please
20 listen for your name to be called. When it is your
21 turn, I will call your name and you will be on muted.
22 We will now proceed with two panels of NYCHA
23 residents. After each panel, there will be a time
24 for questions from Chair Ampry-Samuel and from
25 Council members. We will then hear testimony from

2 NYCHA. If Council members would like to ask a
3 question, please use the zoom raise hand function and
4 I will call on you in order. We will now hear from
5 the first panel residents, followed by Council member
6 questions. In order to hear from everyone, the clock
7 will be set to two minutes. The first panel will
8 consist of Maria Forbes, Crystal Glover, Aixa Torres,
9 and Hector Vasquez. We will begin with Maria Forbes.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time will begin.

11 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Before Maria
12 Forbes begins, I also want to let everyone know that
13 we have been joined by Council member Menchaca,
14 Council member Gibson, as well as Majority Leader
15 Laurie Cumbo, and we've also been joined by Council
16 member Inez Barron. Thank you.

17 MARIA FORBES: Good at all. My name is
18 Maria Forbes. TA president for Clay Avenue Tenants
19 Association. Claremont Consolidated is the group of
20 seven tenant association presidents, but currently
21 there are only four operating in the four of us have
22 met, but we had to fight to meet with NYCHA in person
23 to discuss our concerns regarding the RAD process
24 because there is just so much to consume at one time.
25 It's a complicated situation. Some of the questions

2 that I have brought up was there was no report card
3 in place to the existing developers that they have
4 now to assure us that the services that needed to be
5 addressed for the residents would be taken into
6 consideration. Second, that the RAD TA president
7 should be allowed to join together to submit their
8 disagreements and concerns for removal of any
9 developer who is not addressing the needs of the
10 residents, but it shouldn't just be that we have to
11 join together and there have to be five tenant
12 associations. If it was a tenant association
13 dissatisfied with the services of the developer, it
14 should be just a null and void situation. My last
15 concern is how could NYCHA proceed forward with
16 moving to address, implemented RAD right now with the
17 Covid in existence? Major repairs, but you're going
18 to have a developer, and, take Windows out, world
19 move stoves, kitchens, and then the city could get
20 shut down. Regardless to whether there is an
21 antidote out or not right now, how could you open
22 tenants' apartments in the middle of this Covid
23 situation and think that we should be acceptable to
24 it?

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
3 now hear from Crystal Glover followed by Aixa Torres.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

5 CRYSTAL GLOVER: Good morning, Chair
6 Alika Samuel and the rest of the committee. I didn't
7 come to this meeting to babble on my frustrations or
8 for two minutes of fame and I didn't come to talk
9 about RAD, either. I came to talk about-- going to
10 start here. Residents of the New York City Housing
11 Authority are going to have to create a movement to
12 change their image. When I look in the mirror, I see
13 an image of what I look like. I've been in NYCHA
14 apartments that look like something out of a magazine
15 and some of those same people believe that the
16 grounds around their building doesn't matter to them,
17 but when people look at those grounds and they say,
18 look at those animals and how they live, they see an
19 image that reflects us, the tenants, and the
20 caretakers have been given the order to stop
21 cleaning. The order must've come from the top
22 because anyone that works and doesn't do their job is
23 normally fired. I'm showing throughout this meeting
24 pictures of building 1809 Third Avenue [inaudible
25 00:13:42] 101st Street and Third Avenue. What self-

2 respecting person paying rent would sit and allow
3 their development where they have to raise their
4 children to just sit there and do nothing? One
5 tenant told me she sent pictures to Gale Brewer, she
6 sent them to the Chair, to her manager, and nothing
7 is changed. Let me continue. How does the caretaker
8 punch in at 8:40 a.m. on a Saturday, the on the clock
9 until 7 p.m. and the building is still filthy?
10 Sometimes, maybe they are given more than one
11 building and Covid 19 is the excuse of the day for
12 employees not to work and giving--

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

14 CRYSTAL GLOVER: and giving residents
15 hand sanitizers and masks is not going to help when
16 the floors in the buildings are filthy and
17 disgusting. Something as-- this is ridiculous. It
18 starts in management. It starts at the top and, but
19 these people-- we are paying rent. Whether you
20 work, whether you are retired, whether you get SSI,
21 SSC, whatever you're doing, you are a United States
22 citizen. You are human. And back in the day,
23 management would complain and terminate tenants and
24 [inaudible 00:15:00]. Now you want us, the
25 residents, to snitch on one another about the smoke-

2 free policy and how they are not being enforced by
3 NYCHA and we are supposed to snitch on one another
4 and nothing gets done. So, the bottom line is to
5 even be discussing RAD and PACT in those kind of
6 things, what right minded person would even invest
7 any kind of money in buildings where residents tear
8 down the doors, smoke [inaudible 00:15:26] and chuck
9 stuff out of windows? Who is going to actually put
10 money into a PACT, a RAD, or anything to preserve
11 these buildings when you don't even start with the
12 resident associations and having them realize that
13 they have the power? Resident associations have
14 always had the power from way, way, way back. We
15 have the power to defend ourselves and to organize--
16 because that's where our power is. And so, I can go
17 on, but respectfully I'll stop there.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
19 we will hear from Aixa Torres followed by Hector
20 Vasquez.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

22 AIXA TORRES: Good afternoon, everyone.
23 Thank you for allowing me to speak. My name is Aixa
24 Torres and I am the Resident Association president
25 Alfred E. Smith Houses. I am here today to talk

2 about and invite all the members of the committee to
3 attend a town hall meeting that Residence to Preserve
4 Public Housing will be having on January 27th at 6
5 p.m. so that you can hear from residents what our
6 issues are with the blueprint, with the 201, with the
7 RAD and we can continue to do-- work together. I am
8 really tired of-- there are so many plans that have
9 been put forth and yet there has really been no real
10 input from the residence and that is blueprint that
11 is now being-- moving forward, why, I have no idea
12 and so, I ask you all to join us. You will get an
13 invite on January 27th to attend our town hall
14 meeting so that you can hear from the residents in
15 public housing, the leaders of how we feel about a
16 lot of things. And to show that we are clear and
17 that we know what we want and what we don't want and
18 what we don't want is not to be included. In terms
19 of repairs, we need to be very careful with the
20 repair issue because the reality of it is that, even
21 though I have a good manager and a good
22 superintendent, if we don't have the funding for--

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

24 AIXA TORRES: what really else us, and
25 nothing is ever going to get better. And so we look

2 to supporting the Velasquez-- Congresswoman
3 Velasquez's bill so that we can get the money for
4 repairs and have a true oversight on how these
5 repairs are done. I thank you for your time.
6 Everyone have a good afternoon.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
8 now hear from Hector Vazquez followed by questions
9 from the Chair and Council members.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

11 HECTOR VASQUEZ: Hello, everybody. Thank
12 you, Council, for having this meeting. My name is
13 Hector Vazquez. I am a resident-- a longtime
14 resident of Fulton houses and I have lived in NYCHA
15 residents is for over 25 years and I have been a
16 disabled veteran and I've been raising my two
17 children in housing who were born in housing-- you
18 want to bring attention to the PACT-RAD program. I
19 understand it has been around for a long time and
20 there's been a lot of hesitancy. A lot of the
21 residents are against it. I am also against it to an
22 extent the way it is in its present motion. I am a
23 part of the Chelsea Working Group that is been--
24 which is a collaboration of over 50 community
25 leaders, politicians, NYCHA representatives and I've

2 been privileged to be a part of that for over a year
3 and a half and we've been working towards making
4 changes towards the PACT-RAD program which,
5 basically, secures our homes and it's totally
6 different than the PACT-RAD program that exists now.
7 And actually, this blueprint for changes is
8 actually-- there are pieces of it that have been
9 adapted from the new rule and regulations and
10 protections that our work group has gotten together
11 over the past year and a half. I'm happy to say that
12 the-- after many months of working through Covid and
13 the pandemic and everything that has been happening
14 over the year and a half, the plan should be
15 submitted, hopefully, by the end of this month and,
16 hopefully, this will be a model for the other PACT-
17 RAD programs that are going to be put forward
18 throughout the whole city. I wish that we had
19 completed this before the other ones throughout the
20 city have been started and maybe the other residents
21 can use this as a model to, hopefully, adapt to any
22 future changes that may happen because I think it's a
23 really good program that we put together. It is
24 really unlike what's already been--

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: put forward and what
3 you're going to here today and you are going to hear
4 a lot of naysayers that are against it and I get it.
5 There is a lot of fear in our community about it. A
6 lot of uncertainty. But we have put so many
7 protections in place that I really feel good and
8 confident that this is a good plan moving forward as
9 long as these protections that the work group put
10 together are implemented. Okay. Thank you very much
11 for your time. I appreciate it.

12 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Audrey,
13 is Mr. Vazquez the last for that panel?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Okay.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chair Ampry-Samuel,
17 did you have any questions for the first panel?

18 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Yes. Thank
19 you. I just-- so, first, thank you so much for all
20 of your testimonies. I would like to first just
21 state that there's an overarching, reoccurring theme
22 from what I'm hearing and everyone is saying the same
23 thing: that there should be more input from the
24 residents. And so, you know, that is something that
25 we will-- we'll clearly flush out during the

2 testimony, but, Mr. Vazquez, I wanted to just ask you
3 can you give us a little more information about your
4 involvement with the Chelsea Working Group and what's
5 happening at Fulton Houses. I know there was a
6 conversation about a build to preserve or like an
7 infill conversation and then you also mentioned RAD
8 and PACT. So, can you just give us a little synopsis
9 of what your actual involvement was as a resident.

10 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: As a resident, I was
11 asked to voluntarily put a lot of time with this,
12 along with many other residences and other leaders in
13 the community. Basically, what was asked of us is
14 what we needed. We were asked what was our biggest
15 fears and our biggest problems and issues that were
16 existing everyday by leaks, rats, criminal activity
17 in the neighborhood, poor management, poor ticket
18 handling-- from A to Z. And not only that, you
19 know, I'm also a member of the Tenants Association
20 [inaudible 00:23:29] Chelsea where I resided before
21 the-- the beginning of all this for the first 20
22 years. And, basically, as being a resident and a
23 member of the Tenants Association, I was exposed to a
24 lot of the issues that we have been dealing with day
25 in and day out, like many of these other four folks

2 here on this testimony today and-- or you're going
3 to hear a little later. Anyway, we were asked to put
4 in these issues that we are having and we were also
5 asked to look at other ideas that have been
6 implemented through other PACT-RAD programs
7 throughout the US and even internationally. We
8 looked at the way that housing was approached in
9 England and also in Russia, as well, and we actually
10 had a member of the work group who traveled there and
11 brought back some reports and showed up video and
12 pictures and gave us a thorough report on how that
13 went. Basically, what--

14 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: You said you
15 traveled--

16 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: we did was we took--

17 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: You said you
18 traveled where?

19 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: No. I didn't travel,
20 but we had one of the work groups members who
21 actually had some-- went back there and brought back
22 a report and we also had some folks present on a
23 certain given workshop. Some of the ideas that were
24 implemented throughout-- were basically we're had
25 ideas thrown around where residents took on the

2 management role and what were the downfall and the
3 pitfalls of that and some of the successes of that.
4 We also looked at other ideas that were used in
5 Russia that were also similar in scope. And,
6 basically, we found that it was-- they were all well
7 and good, but it took a lot of time and you needed a
8 large, talented pool of people that actually wanted
9 to put in the time and, let's face it, I mean, the
10 sad fact is that we have a lot of hardworking people
11 in the community and they sometimes don't have a lot
12 of time to even show up to the Tenants Association
13 meetings, I'm sad to say. I know we could certainly
14 use a lot more support and we try to reach out to
15 everybody that we can, but, unfortunately, people
16 work and they have lives and they have families to
17 raise. So the scope getting residents to self-
18 manage, it's somewhat doable, but it's a long-- and,
19 unfortunately, we are suffering here and it will take
20 many years to--

21 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. We're
22 having a little difficulty with your sound, but thank
23 you for--

24 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: Yes.

2 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: It's going in
3 and out, but thank you so much for--

4 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: Yeah.

5 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: you know,
6 providing us with that feedback. Ms. Forbes? So
7 based on what you-- on what Mr. Vazquez was saying
8 and based on your testimony, can you explain what the
9 difference is with your experience?

10 MARIA FORBES: I want to tell you that
11 NYCHA is not very receptive. So we got our contact
12 memo from them sometime late August. I had a death
13 in my family, so by September, they were trying to
14 proceed to push the meeting on myself and the other
15 three Tenant Associations presidents. And when I say
16 pushed, to push to say that they didn't want to have
17 a seat at the table with us. So we had already
18 submitted documents to the request of documents.
19 From them, it was a very, very difficult task in
20 receiving that information. Whether it was a 17
21 document request or not, they should've had it
22 prepared to package because there nothing that they
23 were doing but passing it on and on and on to each of
24 the other developments. At least I assume. But then
25 when we-- I don't even know what convinced Chairman

2 Russ, who gave us the whole spiel about having
3 contact with the staff in a stadium-- a stadium--
4 when I said to him there's only four TA presidents
5 and how much staff could you possibly be sending to
6 meet the four TA presidents to discuss or address the
7 complicated package that it is? But that didn't
8 happen-- I don't think-- maybe sometime until
9 November, if not the second meeting partaked in
10 December. But then it's still like it's a push
11 situation that they're rushing us through the whole
12 process of going through-- they contacted the
13 residents to say they were ready to go. It's like
14 we're ready to go right now. And I said, how could
15 you do that when you're not even finished explaining
16 it to the presidents? The presidents as to what's
17 partaking with this whole process. Even from 2016
18 when I became enlightened to this, I said please,
19 address us as elementary as you can. They should be
20 assisting Tenant Association that they already have
21 in the package that have not been selected yet to
22 educate the presidents, the executive boards, and
23 maybe a few residents that could be selected for any
24 said committees to be prepared when it does get here.
25 But not to just say, okay. You've been selected.

2 Come on and let's move forward. I just think that
3 NYCHA is not taking their time in educating the
4 residents. I want training for my residents. Once
5 departments are in whatever transition that it needs
6 to go, I think that tenants need to learn the
7 training of new material and things of such that
8 they're going to be receiving so that then when the
9 recertification comes, you don't have that landlord
10 that now you're under Section 8 that's going to
11 mandatory come into your apartment and say, hey,
12 you've got poor housekeeping. I don't want to renew
13 your lease because of your poor housekeeping. So,
14 NYCHA is really, really pushing it to shoving it to
15 pushing it down the Tenant Associations and, through
16 this pandemic, I really don't think anymore steps
17 need to proceed any further. It just should be on
18 hold from-- if it takes you all to get the whole
19 rest of the nation inoculated with the vaccination
20 before you have construction workers coming into
21 peoples' houses from wherever. Wherever to wherever.
22 So I just feel like we are being pushed to accept
23 something, but I just want to end with this, Alika,
24 is that more so I want to make sure our protection is
25 in place, that our protection and our rights are in

2 place and that the developers is going to respect
3 that and NYCHA is not going to leave us out in the
4 cold because if two Tenant Associations are saying
5 they are having the same problem with the same
6 developer and they haven't even done a report card on
7 the developers that they have? Why should we allow
8 you to shove something down our throat and you don't
9 even have your own-- the rest of your situation
10 settled to address this overall RAD PACT or whatever
11 it is that you want to call it. And thank you for
12 allowing me to share.

13 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you so
14 much. And I just wanted to highlight-- and everyone
15 knows that when we have public housing hearings, it's
16 critical for residents to speak first so that we can
17 frame the context of the discussion and be able to
18 just really hear from the residents as to what's
19 happening so that NYCHA can, during their testimony,
20 address those issues and concerns, you know, when
21 they are doing their testimony and answering
22 questions. And so, I want to just thank you for
23 that. And we've also been joined by Council member
24 Gjonaj who was actually one of the first members to
25 log in and I didn't see his name and I didn't see his

2 name, so thank you, Council member Gjonaj, for being
3 one of the first member at the hearing this
4 afternoon. Audrey?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
6 now take questions from Council members who have any
7 beginning with Council member Barron followed by
8 Council member Menchaca and, finally, Council member
9 Gjonaj. If any other members have questions, please
10 use the zoom raise hand function and I will call on
11 you in turn. In the interest of time, we will keep
12 these questions to two minutes. Council member
13 Barron?

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.
15 Council member Barron, you're muted.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you. Can you
17 hear me now?

18 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Thank you so
20 much. My questions are not for this panel. My
21 questions are for the administration, so if you could
22 shift my name over to that list, I appreciate it.
23 And to the panelists that did come, thank you for
24 your participation. Thank you so much.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Council member
3 MENCHACA?

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you to
6 the Chair who has been working tirelessly to
7 represent the public housing community and to this
8 committee. We have a lot of work to do and as we hit
9 the next budget, we're going to have to make some big
10 decisions about how we take care of our public
11 housing community and I hope that we have the courage
12 in this Council to put our courage into action and to
13 bring the necessary improvements without having to
14 privatize our public housing. And so my question to
15 Ms. Forbes, if you could, you mentioned two things
16 that I think are really critical. It's the
17 protection of construction that is happening already
18 on site between residents and the workers. I want to
19 give you the opportunity to give examples of what we
20 can do to further protect because, and Red Hook, we
21 have a massive construction project, as well. It's a
22 result C project. It's not an RED project, but it
23 feels the same. So, want to kind of get ideas from
24 you on that. And then the second question is when we
25 think about RAD, do you feel like if we moved through

2 an RED project and an RED program for anywhere in
3 public housing in the city, would you still consider
4 it public housing?

5 MARIA FORBES: So--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: The question
7 is to Ms. Forbes.

8 MARIA FORBES: I have to say [inaudible
9 00:34:25]-- I would have to say no and I will tell
10 you why. I come from operating from 10 years ago to
11 maybe 15 years [inaudible 00:34:37] and I was
12 responsible for taking out the garbage and we had
13 residents. You understand my parents still a lot to
14 ensure that the place was sanitary. I learned to mop
15 the hallways, take out the garbage, then shovel the
16 snow had a very early age. I'm very sorry for that.
17 Then we learned that on a very early basis so that
18 then, you know, we had to have some tenants evicted.
19 I even learned at a very early age what was one shot
20 deal. These people came every time, every time
21 asking for a one shot deal. So now, do you think
22 that if people come into this new administration of
23 private management and stuff like that, that they're
24 going to understand that there is a difference
25 between--

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: You're
3 breaking up.

4 MARIA FORBES: public housing and
5 section 8 [inaudible 20:35:36] have to open the door
6 for leaks. They don't have to open the door for a
7 lot of things, so there would be no differentiation
8 between the private management to public housing
9 because my interpretation of it is that now it's
10 taken over by developer and it is a mandatory
11 requirement that, for your recertification, that
12 landlord is allowed into your apartment and under any
13 other circumstances if they respond to the repairs.
14 Let's get that. If they respond to the repairs that
15 you've got a leak from above that then they are going
16 to go into that tenant's apartment where NYCHA has
17 not enforced that for years and years and years to go
18 into tenant's apartments where leaks and things are
19 coming from. So, now, tenants need to be educated to
20 understand that this is private management. This
21 ain't public housing. You're playing with a whole
22 other different party of people who may be been
23 looking to move you out so that they probably could
24 sell the apartment at-- rent the apartment at value
25 market rate or what have you. It's just going to be

2 a very difficult thing and explaining. And that
3 takes some time to educate people. I'm not only
4 asking for training for residents to understand the
5 new property that they have gotten. They need to
6 understand the new changes that a section 8
7 certificate is different from a Housing Authority
8 certificate. Now, in construction, I want to say
9 that that is a very sticky situation. Let's deal
10 with it on the PACT shoe first. Then I'm not seeing
11 Red Hook in those areas on the news surrounded by
12 dust and dirt and dirt and dust that's like how could
13 you even begin to address that in this Covid
14 situation? But, with them forcing the PACT on us and
15 now you've got a developer coming in and saying,
16 among time. I've got a schedule. Let's take out the
17 windows today. Well, then suppose the whole city
18 gets shut down today regardless to whether this
19 immunization is out. I mean, maybe some tenants
20 windows still have not been ordered and now the
21 windows are on the floor or on the ground and then
22 you've got the radiators disconnected being the
23 heating season. Whatever the situation may be,
24 that's not a good situation to be in whether it is
25 summer, spring, winter, or fall. I just don't think

2 that right now, with the pandemic, should this be
3 forced upon us. Not at this time. Not at all. So--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I just want to
5 say that, for time say, that that is probably one of
6 the most clear renditions of the understanding that
7 we should pause this conversation and get to funding
8 the beads now before we move into a massive change.
9 So I don't support RAD. So, thank you. Thank you so
10 much for your time today and I look forward to the
11 conversations that will happen in the future. Thank
12 you, Chair.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
14 now take questions from Council member Gjonaj
15 followed by Council member Gibson.

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. We will move
18 to Council member Gibson and returned to Council
19 member Gjonaj.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you so much.
22 Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you, Madam Chair,
23 and the members of Public Housing Committee and all
24 of the tenants who are on today's call. Those that
25 are watching certainly the members of the

2 administration, thank you, thank you, thank you. A
3 very important conversation we are having and I
4 appreciate this first panel of tenant leaders giving
5 us your opinions, your thoughts, and suggestions on
6 how we move forward. I, too, like many of you, have
7 a lot of grave concerns about how we move forward in
8 the middle of the global pandemic. I am very
9 concerned about the outreach and the engagement on
10 the ground and I want to thank all of you tenant
11 leaders for really putting your opinions forward. I
12 have a question for his expandable validity will can
13 answer. In the efforts of trying to find a balance
14 and realizing the situation that we are in, I
15 understand, Ms. Forbes, you raising the possibility
16 of a delay and I think that has a lot of validity and
17 we really should consider that because no matter
18 what, we are still dealing with Covid and, certainly
19 in my borough the Bronx, we have high positivity
20 cases right now and so, I wonder what you all for of
21 suggestions to NYCHA and the team around how we can
22 further engage. Because I remember last year in
23 those meetings that we tried to have in person.
24 There was a lot of resistance and then even the zooms
25 just student work, but I do that work had to happen

2 and conversations had to happen. So, what can you
3 offer to us in the city Council as the way to help in
4 this process? How can we be helpful? How can we
5 provide further engagement? What should we, as city
6 Council members, you do we need our districts with
7 our tenant leaders to make sure that all of you are
8 given the most accurate, up-to-date information and
9 how can we try to work together whether you support
10 or oppose. I do think we are having an important
11 conversation, so I would like to know how you think
12 we should improve this process.

13 MARIA FORBES: It needs to be addressed
14 with let's see what the new federal administration is
15 going to come in with. If we have a lot--

16 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

17 MARIA FORBES: [inaudible 00:41:42]--
18 I'm sorry. In my able to speak or not? So, can you
19 hear me? You can hear me?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: We can hear you.

21 MARIA FORBES: Okay. So, I think that
22 maybe we should put a hold on waiting to see what,
23 now that Washington is supposed to be in our favor,
24 that maybe, maybe with even the trillions of dollars
25 that are still needed to the whole United States,

2 that may be HUD could sit back at the table and issue
3 a new HUD chairperson, new person that HUD will be
4 appointed and then maybe, maybe we just need to take
5 a step back, take a deep breath let's wait to see
6 what the federal government will offer first because
7 BB there could be a bailout. Remember, we have lost
8 so many dollars due to Republican Party and through
9 the whole decision in which Washington was deployed
10 money to New York that we weren't able to do
11 anything. There is so much staff loss here in public
12 housing due to the loss of funding. So, maybe some
13 of those things may be addressed if we just hold our
14 seats and just wait a minute, take a deep breath,
15 revisited all of the ones that are pending right now
16 to see if the funding is going to become available by
17 the next fiscal allocation. If that's a good enough
18 question, answer to your question, I would just say
19 wait. Just wait a little bit. Let's see what it's
20 going to happen. If it doesn't, then we can revisit
21 this question and say, what do you think we should do
22 differently? Because, still, the city Council has
23 that been able to give NYCHA enough money to address
24 all of the other needs and neither has the state.
25 So, we are still crawling. Were still crawling, so

2 if we are crawling-- but there are major repairs
3 still to be done now. So, continue the major repairs
4 that you need to do. I'm ready to submit my letters
5 to all of my elected officials, stated city level, to
6 say these are my capital improvements that I need for
7 my development. And [inaudible 00:44:15] my windows
8 and my elevators to see where we can go because how
9 do you still ask city Council and other elected
10 officials for money when you know that RAD is getting
11 ready to come in and they are still supposed to do
12 those repairs over? I've got a big [inaudible
13 00:44:38]. I have a very big problem right now. 3.7
14 million dollars is supposed to be allocated for 13
15 fire escapes out of 39 fire escapes. You're telling
16 me you don't have the money to repair the other--
17 you're only going to fix 13. You do not have the
18 money to replace the remaining of the fire escapes.
19 You're going to only repaint 10 fire escapes and
20 leave the 16 unaddressed. That sounds ludicrous to
21 me. There's got to be a problem that all of those
22 fire escapes have to be replaced. The building was
23 built in 1926, so you mean to tell me not all of
24 those fire escapes are in danger? The tenants can
25 fall off the [inaudible 00:44:26] because they are

2 not stable. I know somebody needs to answer that
3 question for being because I think all the fire
4 escapes need to be replaced and NYCHA needs to find
5 the money to replace all of them because, when the
6 new developer gets here tomorrow and they just
7 painted the other 10 and the rest of them, they're
8 going to look at me and say, miss, you've got to be
9 crazy. That fire escape looks new to me. Because
10 the integrity and nothing. They have brought an
11 engineer here yet to still tell me why the remaining
12 26 five escapes is not going to be addressed. Why?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Thank you.

14 MARIA FORBES: So, I want to wait for
15 more money to come in. I don't know if that answers
16 your question. Yes ma'am.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: No. Thank you so
18 much. Thank you everyone for your work. Thank you,
19 Madam Chair, for your time.

20 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: Hi. Yes. This is
21 Hector Vazquez again. I just wanted to have on that,
22 basically, I am in agreement with the previous lady
23 who just spoke. I'm sorry. Her name slips my mind
24 right now. But we can't take a one size fits all
25 attitude on this. Okay? I understand that the

2 development and the developers possibly in her
3 project or some of the other projects, there may be a
4 lot of issues there. Okay? But, unfortunately,
5 there was no real transparency in the beginning. At
6 least maybe there was an attempt to be made. I don't
7 know what the background story behind all these are,
8 but, from what I've read and from the person I spoke
9 to, it was a great situation and, yeah. There wasn't
10 a good reach out to the people and the community to
11 see what they needed and what they want? Okay? That
12 was the purpose of this work group that I was a part
13 of and I'm sorry that this was not implemented
14 throughout all the other projects in the city, but
15 the hope is that similar workgroups will be put
16 together for any future projects that are put forward
17 when it comes to the RAD PACT conversions and
18 hopefully the play had that we put together will
19 hopefully be looked at. And I challenge everybody
20 here to review these thoroughly so you can see all
21 the work that we have done because, basically, a lot
22 of the stuff she had mentioned, such as the selection
23 of the developer. We fought long and hard and we
24 actually got NYCHA at the table and they agreed to
25 have tenant representation, you know, in the

2 selection process now. Okay? So, we have-- we get
3 to review the developers. We get to see the
4 background and, you know, they narrow it down to a
5 select few and then, from there, you know, we vote in
6 and we can have our-- we go through the selection
7 process and we vote in who the developers are going
8 to be. Not only that, when the developers are in
9 place, we're talking about-- you know, I know people
10 are afraid of privatization. This is not
11 privatization in the essence that we're selling the
12 land and, you know, everybody is going to go private
13 and everybody is going to lose their home. We're
14 talking about the management, okay? We all know that
15 NYCHA, unfortunately, over the many years, has not
16 done a great job of managing these properties. Okay?
17 So, why not get someone-- you know, company to come
18 in the we have agreed to and they have, basically,
19 show no sweat they can do based on what they have
20 done with the history and a lot of projects they have
21 done and trying to manage this into what better? The
22 land will still be owned by NYCHA. Okay? It's
23 least. And, yes, there may be some infill meeting,
24 and our particular instance, there will be some
25 infill in areas that are not being fully utilized

2 like a parking lot, okay, or a dumpster area which is
3 what we have looked at, okay, and there's a trade-off
4 here. There's always a trade-off here. And that's
5 why it was so important that residences had a clear
6 line of communication with NYCHA and the leaders and
7 this whole process and that's been the problem all
8 along. There's not-- There hasn't been resident
9 involvement fully in this. And when this work group
10 was formed, that's exactly what happened and I'm not
11 going to say it was a marriage made in heaven in the
12 beginning. We had a lot of issues. We were fighting
13 half the time in the beginning when we started all
14 this. We didn't want to hear about PACT RAD, okay?
15 But when we modified it and we made these changes and
16 put these protections in place, it made a lot more
17 sense, okay, and we had a really large-- I mean, we
18 had folks from the legal aide society here, okay?
19 Community Board Four involved, as well, along with a
20 lot of other people, not just NYCHA at the table.
21 So, when you've got a lot of talented individuals
22 pulled together in the same room like this, something
23 magical is going to happen and that is exactly what
24 happened here. Okay? And it was a long process, but
25 I'm pretty happy with the results, okay? And we are

2 still working at it. We are still making changes
3 even now before we can present it at the end of the
4 month, okay? So, I really challenge everybody to
5 maybe follow our lead and say, hey, you know, we need
6 to get these workgroups together before we even put
7 RAD PACT into these projects. We don't want to force
8 these onto the tenants here, okay? I don't want to
9 be forced into any kind of situation, but with the
10 proper leadership, which is what's happening here in
11 this case for Elliot, Chelsea, and Fulton Houses,
12 okay, we've basically been able to put together
13 something really good, okay, and honestly,
14 unfortunately, there's-- you have to learn from
15 these experiences and we have to teach the tenants
16 what they need to know about all this. Okay? I
17 didn't know anything about RAD PACT in the beginning,
18 either. I didn't even know what it meant. Okay?
19 But after all this process, I've learned so much and
20 that is a long process and we have had five town hall
21 meetings we assume, okay? We have also had a
22 Community Board Four meeting where we presented our
23 findings and we proposed the plan and it is all out
24 there for everybody to review on the Community Board
25 Four website and, basically, I really-- and were

2 talking about hours and hours of information in Q&A
3 sessions where we opened up to folks and you talk
4 about reaching out to the community and the neighbors
5 in the tenants that are involved here. We have
6 people, NYCHA, go door to door with us and try to do
7 Q&A's there if we could in a safe manner. We have
8 left flyers. We have scheduled zoom meetings way in
9 advance of all this. We had tabling where,
10 basically, we were handing out flyers to folks or,
11 you know, saying, hey, these are the dates of the
12 zoom meetings. It's going to be in Chinese, Spanish,
13 English, Russian. We had translators, okay? So, it
14 takes a lot. It takes a village to do all this,
15 okay? And, really, it's a great effort that has to
16 be put forth with everybody involved and it can't be
17 just, say, all on NYCHA because, obviously, NYCHA
18 needs help here and for us to say, hey, we're going
19 to hope for the new legisla-- government to come in
20 and save the day-- hey, I'm glad that, you know,
21 we've got a new president coming in and things are
22 going to change, but let me remind you, folks, this
23 RAD PACT was implemented way back in the Obama era,
24 as well, okay? And even before that. So the money
25 that we're hoping for is pie in the sky kind of

2 stuff. We're wishing for some superman to come save
3 the day here and I just don't see it happening and
4 I'm not willing to gamble here. And let's be honest
5 here. Even if we get the developer in place, it
6 takes time. The RFP process, the request for
7 proposal process which is, basically, where you
8 select the developers and you vet them and, you know,
9 we get bids back and we see if it's a good fit and if
10 we like the plans they are going to put forward and
11 the tenants are for it. It takes time. Okay? So
12 let's say, hypothetically, okay, we present the plan.
13 Everyone likes it. The Mayor signs off on it. NYCHA
14 signs off on it. We won't see anything probably
15 until the end of the year just to get a developer in
16 place, possibly, if we're lucky. So we're talking
17 about a two year process here, okay? Now, God
18 willing-- God willing, I'm hoping that this vaccine
19 gets put out and we all get vaccinated and we're over
20 this hump with this terrible disease, terrible virus,
21 that's having us, you know, in its grips for the past
22 year and it will be over, hopefully, in a year-- by
23 the end of this year or next year. So--

24 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you, Mr.
25 Vazquez. I'm going to have--

2 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: Oh, I'm sorry. I'm
3 sorry. I'm just trying to say it's a long process.
4 Okay?

5 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: No. I
6 appreciate it.

7 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: You know, but--

8 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: I appreciate
9 your input and that was the purpose of this because a
10 lot of times, we don't have an opportunity to hear
11 from the residents in a public setting. You know?
12 There are so many zooms that we are having and not
13 everyone is able to jump on in this is an opportunity
14 to be able to be heard--

15 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: No. I appreciate that.

16 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: and have the
17 public hear what's happening and for it to be on the
18 record. So I appreciate you and your comments and
19 everyone else--

20 HECTOR VAZQUEZ: I just wanted to make it
21 clear that it will take about two to four years to
22 get this done, okay? So think about that, all right,
23 when we decide on all this stuff. And saying, let's
24 put this all on hold, we're just in the planning
25 process right here for at least our developments,

2 okay? So, this one-size-fits-all attitude saying,
3 oh, I'm not going to-- you know, I'm against PACT
4 RAD, let's put everything on hold, is going to affect
5 us here. Okay? And I would love to wait, but, I
6 mean, our homes are crumbling around us and we can't
7 wait any longer. Okay? Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Audrey?

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Great. Thanks very
10 much. We will now take questions from Council member
11 Riley that we will hear from the second panel of
12 NYCHA residents. Council member Riley?

13 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you, Chair
15 Samuel, and I would like to thank everybody here.
16 The residents. I don't have a question. Actually
17 just have a statement from one of the resident
18 Association presidents, Robert Hall from Gunn Hill
19 Housing from my community in District 12. Brother
20 Hall, he does like the plan, but what he is stressing
21 to us is that the educational part of the plan to
22 educate his residence is becoming very challenging,
23 especially that we are during this pandemic. He is
24 trying to get a consensus from his residence, but, in
25 order to do so, he needs to create a plan where he

2 can educate them with, you know, being, you know, 6
3 feet away from everybody and making sure that he gets
4 their input on if they do support this plan. So, he
5 just suggests, if we could hold this off or if we
6 could create a thorough educational plan so he could
7 have something to bring back to his residence to
8 educate them on how the PACT and RAD program will
9 affect them. He does know that we are going from
10 section-- I believe section 8 to section 9 and so he
11 even wants to educate his residence on that aspect of
12 it. With that plan, I just wanted to express that
13 from him being that he could not be here today.
14 Thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very
16 much. Will now hear from the second panel of
17 residents followed by NYCHA. The second panel will
18 consist of DeReese Huff, Joel Gross, and Sandra
19 Gross. We will begin with DeReese Huff.

20 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. DeReese Huff
22 appears to be unavailable at present so we will move
23 to Joel Gross followed by Sandra Gross.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

2 JOEL GROSS: Good afternoon, Madam Chair.
3 Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Joel Gross,
4 the president of Williams Plaza Houses. We are now
5 in the 11th month after our development has already
6 went the PACT process. We have new management for
7 the day-to-day operations. So, when NYCHA approached
8 us with the PACT program, it was hard for everybody.
9 For our executive board, for all of our residents.
10 Then we come to NYCHA that has come to the table and
11 we start our good, professional communication with
12 NYCHA, with elected officials to work hand in hand
13 and really understand the program. I request from
14 NYCHA I would like every single resident should have
15 the opportunity to read and understand the program.
16 Every meeting and all the documents were translated.
17 We have interpreters. We have multiple meetings. I
18 would say between 15 and 20, for sure, meetings. I
19 was having my own meeting with the residents and
20 every month, twice a month. Right now, after 11
21 months, we are in the process, even the leases. We
22 got our draft for the leases. We have, I think, in
23 eight languages. So we had out the lease in eight
24 languages for every single resident to have the
25 opportunity to come and pick a draft of the lease and

2 read it. And then we have a meeting, a question and
3 answer meeting, every resident was having the
4 opportunity to raise any questions. And right now,
5 11 months after the PACT, what we see in our
6 development, the main issues of what all NYCHA
7 developments have is the mold [inaudible 00:59:16]
8 and the leaky pipes. The heat and hot water issues.
9 Right now, as our new developer just came in 11
10 months ago, even with the pandemic, we have new
11 rooftops--

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

13 JOEL GROSS: We have right now they fix
14 like 90 percent of the water supply lines and the
15 waste lines was fixed, was repaired shower caps and
16 old plumbing is done. Right now, they are going to
17 the sources for why we have mold because of the leaks
18 and also the ventilators in the bedrooms is clogged.
19 They are 60 to 70 years old, the exhaust fans is not
20 working. Right now, they are doing our ventilation
21 system, brand new fans, exhaust. They are cleaning
22 the exhaust right now. I was having on a daily basis
23 multiple complaints for mold. Right now, no
24 complaints. No complaints. The process, I think we
25 have great communication and right now, after even

2 we-- last year in December, I had a personal meeting
3 with the Chairperson. We have Brian Honan. We have
4 Johnathan Gouveia. We are still in communication
5 with NYCHA and we still-- and we have very good
6 communication with the new management team. We have
7 weekly meetings with the construction people to
8 address any issues and we always are in communication
9 with elected officials, with NYCHA, with our
10 management. So far, as of now, everything runs
11 really well. A lot of repairs was done. Everybody
12 was receiving new appliances. We have new
13 refrigerators-- bigger sizes from NYCHA-- 30 inch
14 stoves, new windows. The new windows first. What we
15 have with the windows, no water is penetrating and
16 also the new windows give us a seal when most of the
17 NYCHA residents has an issue when it is windy. You
18 have the old windows that are old-- like 30 years--
19 is already broken and in the Pens Tower, we have a
20 new boiler. In the Pens Tower, running 10 years on
21 temporary boilers. Every year, we have numerous
22 complaints and, for most of the winter, no heat and
23 hot water. Right now, with the new management, they
24 came in and in 10 months, we have a brand new state
25 of the art boiler system. We have right now heat and

2 hot water throughout the entire family-- throughout
3 our entire development. We have talked with NYCHA
4 about the boiler issues. Everybody knows the answer.
5 Money. They don't have the money. With the new
6 management in place, we are already accomplishing a
7 milestone with upgrades in our development.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Great. Thank you
9 very much. We will now hear from Sandra Gross
10 followed by DeReese Huff.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. It looks
13 like there are some audio issues, so we will hear
14 from DeReese Huff followed by Sandra Gross.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

16 DERESE HUFF: Hello? Hello? Hello.
17 Good afternoon, everyone. This is DeReese Huff. I'm
18 the chair president from Campos Plaza and I'm calling
19 in because I totally agree with PACT. I'm one of the
20 ones that got-- I got remodeled under section 8
21 under the section 8 RAD. I live in section 8 and we
22 got remodeled on the RAD. I feel every resident that
23 lives in housing has the right to live properly
24 without walking over stuff over the elevator, feces,
25 whatever. When these new owners came in my

2 development, they came in. They remodeled our
3 hallways. They made the hallways look brighter, more
4 warmer, more conservative, more energetic, more
5 everything. They came into our apartments. They
6 rewired our electrical. They redid our bathrooms
7 which we, as tenants, we requested [inaudible
8 01:04:16]. That's, pretty much, what we requested
9 because we didn't want our bathrooms to be condemned
10 or not be able to use our bathrooms for weeks at a
11 time. They came in. They remodeled our kitchen I,
12 gave us new windows, gave us new boilers, gave us new
13 roofs and we all know any housing development that I
14 been so many years of disrepair or non-repair are in
15 desperate need of this. Yes. Were the tenants
16 afraid and scared in the beginning? Yes, they were.
17 And they have a reason to be. We all were scared,
18 but I'm telling you we've been here now for four
19 years under this new-- under the new privatization.
20 My rent is exactly the same. 30 percent of my
21 income. NYCHA is still in ownership of 50 percent of
22 the buildings. So, I just want people to understand
23 it is a good thing. It's not a bad thing at all.
24 And that's all I have to say. Thank you so much.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very
3 much. We will now hear from Sandra Gross.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

5 SANDRA GROSS: Hello? Hello?

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. We can hear
7 you.

8 SANDRA GROSS: Oh. Hi. My name is
9 Sandra Gross. I'm the TA president of Baychester
10 Houses. How are you doing? First of all, I would
11 like to thank NYCHA for turning Baychester over to
12 the PACT program because, as the last two persons
13 spoke-- presidents spoke-- me and my residents, we
14 are very satisfied with our new management. We were
15 having the same issues with NYCHA and the hot water.
16 Elevators weren't being repaired on time. Roofing
17 leaking. Mold. It's been two years since we had our
18 new management and we had a much, much big
19 improvement. When they came in, they came in with a
20 lot of issues, you know, with the tenants and NYCHA,
21 as you had a lot of tenants owing rent and, you know,
22 it was hard for them to get the records from NYCHA so
23 they could get their money and what they did was they
24 took over the whole bill whereas the tenants didn't
25 have to pay the back money. We received new

2 appliances, new floors. I worked very, very well
3 with the management team. The tenants are very, very
4 happy. We're very satisfied. If you would take a
5 tour in Baychester today, you wouldn't even know this
6 Baychester. We're modernized. I'm very, very happy
7 with the PACT program. And, me, I would suggest, you
8 know, if they are offering you PACT program, sit down
9 and speak with your tenants, you know, and get their
10 input like I did because in the beginning, you know,
11 I was against the PACT program. You know, but as a
12 resident-- you know, there's nothing we can do going
13 against NYCHA. But like, again, I'd like to say I'm
14 very satisfied and happy and I'm speaking for my
15 tenants, too. They came in and a new laundry room,
16 new elevators and refrigerators, stove, new kitchen,
17 new hallways, lobbies. We have the new bathrooms.
18 We have recycling rooms now. We have less activity
19 with dogs on the grounds. They came in and gave us
20 new landscaping. Baychester is very, very happy.
21 Very happy. We are very satisfied. So, I would
22 suggest that, you know, you would look into it and go
23 along with the program. Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Great. Thank you
25 very much. We will now hear testimony from NYCHA

2 followed by testimony from the remaining members of
3 the public. A reminder to Council members, if you
4 have a question for the administration, please use
5 the zoom raise hand function and I will call on you
6 in order. And we will liberate Council member
7 questions to five minutes. We will now proceed with
8 testimony from the administration, which is being
9 represented by Jonathan Gouveia, Lisa Bova-Hiatt,
10 Lakesha Miller, Leroy Williams, Simon Kawitzky,
11 Marissa Schaffer, Lamar Fenton, Matthew Turney, and
12 Brian Honan. I will now administer the oath. After
13 I say the oath, please wait for me to call your name
14 and respond one by one. Please raise your right
15 hand. Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
16 truth, and nothing but the truth before this
17 committee and to respond honestly to Council member
18 questions? Jonathan Gouveia?

19 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Yes. I do.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lisa Bova-Hiatt?

21 LISA BOVA-HIATT: Yes.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lakisha Miller?

23 Lakesha Miller? Okay. We will proceed and return.

24 LAKESHA MILLER: Yes. Sorry.

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2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Could we get that
3 one more time for the record?

4 LAKESHA MILLER: Yes. I do.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Leroy
6 Williams?

7 LEROY WILLIAMS: Yes.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Simon Kawitzky?

9 SIMON KAWITZKY: Yes. I do.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Marissa Schaffer?

11 MARISSA SHAFFER: Yes.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Lamar Fenton?

13 LAMAR FENTON: Yes.

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Matthew Turney?

15 MATTHEW TURNEY: Yes.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: And Brian Honan?

17 BRIAN HONAN: Yes.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may
19 begin when ready.

20 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: There should be a slide
21 deck up. Is that visible?

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. We will have
23 that up shortly.

24 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Chair Alike Ampry-
25 Samuel, members of the Committee on Public Housing,

2 other distinguished members of the City Council,
3 NYCHA residents, and members of the public, good
4 afternoon. I am Jonathan Gouveia, NYCHA's executive
5 vice president for real estate development. I'm
6 pleased to be joined-- Sorry. I am pleased to be
7 joined by Lisa Bova-Hiatt, the executive vice
8 president for legal affairs and general counsel,
9 Lakesha Miller, executive vice president for leased
10 housing, Leroy Williams, director for community
11 development, and member of the real estate
12 development team Simon Kawitzky, vice president of
13 portfolio planning, Marissa Schaffer, vice president
14 for transactions, Lamar Fenton, vice president for
15 asset management, Matthew Turney, vice president for
16 design and construction, and Brian Honan, the vice
17 president of intergovernmental affairs. Thank you
18 for this opportunity to discuss our efforts to
19 stabilize a critical source of affordable housing in
20 New York City, make investments that support resident
21 health and prosperity, and engage more deeply with
22 our communities and planning for the future. It has
23 been clear for several years that a new direction is
24 needed for public housing in New York City. In an
25 effort to begin comprehensive repairs and put our

2 buildings on a more solid and secure footing, the
3 NYCHA 2.0 program, which is a comprehensive strategy
4 to rehabilitate and preserve over 62,000 units in our
5 portfolio, was launched in 2018. NYCHA 2.0 consists
6 of three key tools: pack to preserve, build to
7 preserve, and transfer to preserve. Since the
8 launch, NYCHA in advancing the NYCHA 2.0 program. As
9 I will describe in greater detail later in the
10 testimony, we are bringing comprehensive repairs test
11 several thousand apartments across the city through
12 the PACT program. We have also closed to transfer to
13 preserve transactions and are working towards a build
14 to preserve project in Manhattan, as referenced by
15 Hector earlier today. Despite the progress made to
16 date, we know residents and elected officials have
17 questions and concerns about our programs,
18 specifically related to resident rights and
19 protections and oversight of our PACT partners. And
20 this was made quite clear during the opening panels
21 and I thank the residents for their participation
22 early R. Thus, in addition to updating you today on
23 the progress of our repairs, we want to update you on
24 a very concrete steps we are taking to better engage
25 with the residents, meaningfully incorporate their

2 input, maintain and strengthen resident rights, and
3 provide strong oversight of our project and our
4 partners. Next slide, please. The NYCHA 2.0 program
5 is managed by a NYCHA real estate department and
6 supported by a number of other NYCHA departments,
7 including community development, law, and leased
8 housing which administers the HUD section 8 subsidy.
9 Since 2019, we have been building a team of real
10 estate professionals, public housing experts,
11 architects, planners, and urban designers to develop
12 fresh approach to our work. We now have four
13 verticals in the department: portfolio planning,
14 design and construction, transactions, and asset
15 management. Each of which is led by the vice
16 presidents on the panel today. The real estate
17 department is fully committed to preservation of
18 NYCHA's deeply affordable housing stock, a protection
19 of resident rights, creation of complete and healthy
20 communities, oversight of our development partners,
21 continual improvement of our policies and procedures,
22 and customer service to our residents. The design of
23 our department and the concepts to which we are
24 committed are the driving force behind the critical
25 improvements that we have launched, which I'm happy

2 to share with you today. Next slide, please. First
3 and foremost, we want to stress that we put residents
4 first. We recognize that residents need to play a
5 more significant an active role in our projects. As
6 our residents were living with the unacceptable
7 conditions of aging buildings with failing systems
8 that have been neglected by the scarcity of federal
9 funding. NYCHA's residents are the backbone of New
10 York City, something that has become only more
11 evident during the pandemic as countless NYCHA
12 residents have stepped up like so many other New
13 Yorkers to keep the city running as essential workers
14 delivering the essential services such as parents,
15 grandparents, and caretakers attempting to do the
16 impossible homeschooling in caring for children while
17 working are most central to what we'll focus on today
18 as residents expecting safe, healthy, and livable
19 homes for their families. Next slide, please. The
20 real estate department approaches centered on three
21 key principles. First, improving residents lives
22 through comprehensive repairs, relevant social
23 services, and the creation of complete communities.
24 Second, maintaining and strengthening resident rights
25 and protections and meaningfully engaging communities

2 and planning for the future of their homes. The
3 third, building partnerships and collaborative
4 working relationships with the residents, elected
5 officials, housing rights advocates, nonprofits,
6 general contractors, developers, and property
7 managers. This approach will be brought forward and
8 amplified in all of our work and NYCHA is relevant
9 real estate department will undertake moving forward.
10 Next slide, please. As was mentioned, NYCHA's 2.0
11 was launched with three distinct tools as identified
12 earlier in the testimony. PACT to preserve, build to
13 preserve, and transfer to preserve. I will now
14 provide an update on each of the programs. Next
15 slide, please. PACT to preserve. Through the
16 permanent affordability commitment together
17 initiative, we will address nearly 13 billion dollars
18 in desperately needed and long overdue repairs and
19 62,000 apartments, a third of our portfolio and home
20 to about 140,000 New Yorkers by the year 2028. PACT
21 is New York City's implementation of the federal
22 rental assistance demonstration program, or RAD. To
23 date, we have converted eight PACT projects totally
24 nearly 1.8 billion dollars in capital improvements.
25 More than 9500 are in construction or rehabilitated

2 and another nearly 12,000 are part of projects that
3 are in the process of resident engagement or pre-
4 zoning and there's more to come. Next slide, please.

5 We heard earlier about concerns around ownership and
6 oversight. I wanted to emphasize the fact that this
7 is not privatization and it is not a path towards
8 privatization. NYCHA continues to own the land and
9 the buildings converted through PACT and all

10 apartments continue to be subsidized through HUD.

11 Accordingly, NYCHA and HUD both have a regulatory and
12 oversight roll. For example, affordability is a

13 requirement of the PACT program that runs with the
14 land and cannot be done without NYCHA and HUD

15 approval. I will go into a bit more detail on this

16 point and explain how PACT developments remain under
17 public control and oversight. NYCHA remains involved

18 in the developments after PACT conversions through a

19 few different and significant roles. First, as I

20 mentioned earlier, NYCHA is the section 8

21 administrator for the entirety of the PACT program.

22 This means that NYCHA administers the section 8

23 waitlist. Private developers cannot lease up a new

24 apartment outside of the NYCHA-administered section 8

25 waitlist. In this role, NYCHA also controls the

2 release of the HUD section 8 subsidy. This means
3 that PACT developers do not receive a rental subsidy
4 from the government without NYCHA oversight and
5 without meeting federal standards in each apartment
6 for which they seek some city. Second, NYCHA
7 monitors the condition at the development and ensures
8 that developers adhere to their obligations to
9 residents. The PACT projects are monitored through
10 numerous reporting and tracking efforts, including
11 monitoring the construction scope and progress of
12 repairs, creating new strategies to prevent
13 displacement, monitoring ongoing maintenance and
14 repairs at the property, and job placement and
15 training related to the section 3 program. MWBE
16 contracting and monitoring the financial health and
17 financial performance of each transaction.
18 Strengthening these efforts is integral to our design
19 and construction and asset management strategies as
20 we build out those teams, processes, and supporting
21 technology to support those efforts. Finally, we are
22 also supported by the asset management infrastructure
23 of our PACT financing partners, the sister agency,
24 New York City Housing Development Corporation, or
25 HDC. Next slide, please. So let's recap some

2 resident rights. PACT preserves resident rights in
3 the following ways: rent remains at 30 percent of
4 household income: residents continue to have
5 secession rights, residents and tenant associations
6 continue to have the right to organize and receive
7 funding: residents will not be rescreened before
8 signing a new section 8 lease which means that, so
9 long as the household is in good standing, it can
10 transition to section 8 regardless of income or
11 family composition. These rights are codified in
12 that HUD RAD program requirements and also through
13 the PACT section 8 lease, which has been strengthened
14 based on feedback from resident leaders and housing
15 advocates such as the work that we get done with the
16 Fulton Working Group as Hector alluded to earlier.
17 NYCHA requires that PACT developers all use the same
18 PACT section 8 lease and do not have discretion to
19 revise it without NYCHA's approval. Next slide,
20 please. Let's talk about the scope of
21 rehabilitations. It is an HUD requirement of the
22 PACT program and the developments are fully and
23 incomprehensibly renovated. We work closely with our
24 development partners and residents to craft
25 comprehensive rehabilitation plans that address

2 building systems such as elevators, boilers, roofs,
3 windows, and façades. The ground, including
4 landscaping, lighting, security, playgrounds, and
5 public spaces. Common areas including lobbies,
6 hallways, stairwells, community spaces, and, of
7 course, the resident apartments where kitchens,
8 bathrooms, and flooring are all typically replaced,
9 among other improvements. Next slide, please.

10 Continually raising the bar and demanding more from
11 our partners. For example, we were also prioritizing
12 project plans that foster sustainability and better
13 connect our communities to their surrounding
14 neighborhoods through good improvement design. We
15 are committed to not only repairing these
16 developments, but improving them by delivery-- by,
17 for example, the improvement of the delivery of heat
18 and hot water by repairing and replacing integrated
19 systems and distribution lines behind the walls,
20 reducing outages while simultaneously reducing our
21 energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

22 Next slide, please. And implementing security plans
23 that provide new cameras, doors with remote access
24 that work, and are calm systems, better lighting's,
25 and other enhanced security measures, and also

2 improving for our senior and changing residents. I
3 want to emphasize that, because PACT results in a
4 comprehensive renovation, it is the primary tool that
5 allows NYCHA to address the underlying causes of
6 issues that plague NYCHA residents for decades such
7 as leaks, mold, lead, and pests which will improve
8 the health and safety of our residents. In addition
9 to physical upgrades, PACT brings other resources
10 into the community. For example, we require that
11 PACT developers partner with community-based
12 nonprofits to deliver social services and community
13 programming space on the needs of specific community.
14 Service providers are required to staff dedicated on-
15 site social workers. Second, NYCHA is asking PACT
16 partners to implement programs such as affordable
17 broadband Internet and credit building initiatives.
18 NYCHA also requires the PACT developer to create
19 employment opportunities for NYCHA residents through
20 the PACT construction scope and ongoing property
21 management. We are proud of the work we have been
22 able to accomplish for residents and, in advance of
23 this hearing, I provided some photos of the upgrades
24 we have completed so far. Next slide, please. So,
25 let's talk about engagement. Residents have been--

2 Residents must be meaningfully engaged in planning
3 for the future of their homes and communities. To
4 ensure our pact investments achieve community goals
5 and priorities, we have built a new team of planners
6 to learn directly from residents and their lived
7 experiences and conditions about their developments,
8 educate them about the PACT program, and work
9 directly with residents in shaping our final plan. I
10 will summarize the number of important changes we are
11 making to our engagement approach. First, we have
12 created a new planning process that is transparent
13 and starts much earlier in the past. In the
14 beginning of each process, we will layout whole
15 project timelines and all of the key milestones. We
16 want every meeting, workshop, and engagement activity
17 to have a clear purpose and agenda. In this way, we
18 are striving to make the best use of valuable, but
19 limited time that residents have to take out of their
20 busy lives to engage with us. Second, we're making
21 resources available to support residents during the
22 planning stages. Specifically, we recently announced
23 the creation of an exciting new initiative called a
24 Resident Planning [inaudible 01:22:36] to provide
25 residents with free technical assistance by trusted

2 third parties. As part of the new program, residents
3 will be allocated a pool of funding that they can use
4 at their discretion. For example, residents can hire
5 a local community based organization to serve as an
6 independent advisor or attend an advocate to mediate
7 and resolve tenancy issues, the financial or legal
8 consultant to vet NYCHA's plans or an urban design
9 consultant to help craft a community vision for
10 public spaces, just to name a few ideas. We released
11 the RFP in December to select a consultant team to
12 help us build out and implement this new program and
13 look forward to getting it up and running later this
14 year. We are also providing free legal services in
15 connection with PACT lease signing so that residents
16 can get independent, professional advice regarding
17 their new PACT lease and ensure a seamless transition
18 into the section 8 program. What is recently at the
19 PACT in Manhattan bundle, the legal aid Society
20 participated in information sessions and set up a
21 free hotline that residents could call for
22 assistance. We plan to continue making free legal
23 services available at all PACT developments going
24 forward. And, third, we are giving residents a
25 greater voice in the planning process. Going

2 forward, we will be inviting residents-- resident
3 leaders to participate in selecting the developers,
4 general contractors, property managers, and social
5 service providers that will be renovating and
6 maintaining their development. Resident leaders will
7 have the opportunity to review proposals, interview
8 development teams, and provide feedback before final
9 selections are made. This is the step we have never
10 taken until now and are excited to bring residents
11 closer into this critical element of the program.
12 Lastly, we recognize that information sharing and
13 clear communications are key factors to success.
14 Next slide, please. We have created new print
15 materials, videos, web resources, to ensure that
16 residents have the latest information about PACT and
17 their development and that they understand their
18 rights and protections, the rehabilitation process,
19 and other programming elements. We are now hosting
20 monthly PACT information sessions so any resident or
21 member of the community can learn more and get their
22 questions answered at times that are convenient for
23 them. Since mid-November, we have already hosted for
24 PACT information sessions with attendance ranging
25 from approximately 80 to 420 participants. Next

2 slide, please. We heard earlier about engagement
3 during the pandemic, so let's address that issue.
4 Earlier last year, the Covid pandemic effectively
5 ended our ability to continue hosting in person
6 meetings and forced us to rethink and expand upon the
7 ways we connect with residents. Currently, all
8 resident meetings are taking place over resume and
9 phone conference. To address the digital divide and
10 advance of a resident meeting, we mail hardcopies of
11 our presentation materials to every household in the
12 development. We follow that up with pre-recorded and
13 personal phone calls to every phone number we have on
14 record. Staff running the phone lines make sure that
15 residents receive meeting information and answer any
16 specific questions residents may have about the PACT
17 program. During the zoom meeting itself, which
18 residents can also join by phone conference, we run
19 conference lines in multiple languages and residents
20 who write down their questions can have them answered
21 immediately by a staff member monitoring the chat
22 instead of waiting for the live Q&A at the end of the
23 presentation. Anyone who doesn't get that question
24 answered can't reach us via a dedicated email address
25 or telephone hotline. Messages received and returned

2 later that-- messages are received and returned
3 later that day. Any recordings of the sessions are
4 immediately posted online. I tell you all of this to
5 say that, while adapting to this new reality has not
6 been easy, I believe that were actually connecting
7 more people and, with greater efficiency than we ever
8 have before. Next slide, please.

9 Now I will quickly update you on build to
10 preserve and transfer to preserve. With the build
11 to preserve program, NYCHA can generate funding for
12 NYCHA developments while creating housing and other
13 neighborhood amenities where they are desperately
14 needed. This is done by creating new buildings on
15 underused land with the proceeds first going to
16 repair buildings in the surrounding development.
17 Only residential buildings will be subject to the
18 city's mandatory inclusionary housing levels of
19 affordable housing for New Yorkers. NYCHA is
20 exploring a build to preserve program at Manhattan's
21 Chelsea neighborhood with working group residents,
22 elected officials, community representatives, and
23 housing organization, as you heard from Hector
24 earlier today. Except for a pause in the spring--
25 or summer 2020, due to Covid, this working group has

2 been meeting since the fall of 2019 to produce
3 community driven recommendations to address the
4 future of Chelsea, Chelsea addition, Elliott, and
5 Fulton Houses. The working group aims to publish a
6 list of recommendations soon which would then inform
7 the subsequent RFP issued by NYCHA's [inaudible
8 01:27:03] development partners. Build to preserve at
9 these developments will be combined with PACT to
10 leverage each of these transactions to bring
11 [inaudible 01:27:10] repairs.

12 With respect of transfer to preserve, in
13 2020, NYCHA successfully completed our first two
14 standalone transfers of excess development rights
15 known as [inaudible 01:27:19]. The one at Ingersoll
16 Houses in Brooklyn and another at Hobbs Court in
17 Manhattan, generating approximately 27 million
18 dollars in proceeds for capital repairs at the
19 neighboring NYCHA properties. Earlier last year,
20 NYCHA released their request for expressions of
21 interest for further air rights transfers with the
22 hopes of generating additional revenue for capital
23 repairs at NYCHA developments. The RFEI established
24 criteria for how NYCHA will evaluate the proposals
25 and consultations with the president. While the

2 amount of revenue, each proposal generates is of
3 significant importance, we also consider how the
4 proposed development directly benefits NYCHA
5 residents and the developer's experience completing
6 similar projects and how well the proposed
7 development integrates into the surrounding
8 neighborhood. We are currently in the process of
9 evaluating several air rights proposals and we will
10 be reaching out to NYCHA residents soon about these
11 opportunities. Next slide, please. With all of
12 these initiatives and the hard work applied to them,
13 we are transforming and preserving our buildings so
14 they can better serve residents today and for
15 generations to come. We are proud of our mission and
16 improving the residence quality of life while
17 protecting their rights, but we will only succeed if
18 we come together in service to our shared goal of
19 strengthening NYCHA and ensuring that it remains a
20 vital source of affordable housing for New Yorkers.
21 Thank you for your support. We are happy to answer
22 any questions.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very
24 much. We will now begin with questions from Chair

2 Ampry-Samuel followed by questions from any Council
3 members who raised their hands on zoom.

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Thank
5 you so much. Jumping right into it, because we were
6 just looking at the slide presentation, I just want
7 to point out that slide number two--

8 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: state program
10 management.

11 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Correct.

12 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And that was
13 page two, right? And is there a way that we can put
14 that back up?

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. One moment.

16 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you.
17 Okay. So, program management. This is slide number
18 two. This is the first slide that you started
19 talking about, right? This is your-- the start of
20 your presentation.

21 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Correct.

22 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And it says
23 our team of real estate professionals, housing
24 experts, architects, and urban planners help us

2 fulfill our commitments. And then you go through
3 this list of commitments, right?

4 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Uh-hm.

5 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: What is
6 missing from this first slide?

7 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, I mean, this slide
8 is meant to talk about our-- the real estate group
9 and the things that we are--

10 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Yeah.

11 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: committing to and
12 [inaudible 01:30:19].

13 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, this is a
14 problem for me from the beginning and this is what I
15 want to point out.

16 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Because right
18 after-- Audrey, can you go to the next slide?
19 Putting residents first. You cannot put residents
20 first if you don't talk about them first and they are
21 not seen as experts and what is happening in their
22 housing development. So, from the jump, from the
23 start-- I'm going to tell you right now I wasn't
24 even going there. Going to tell you right now
25 because I have a whole lot of colleagues with a whole

2 lot of comments related to deals in their districts,
3 but I want to point out that you started off from and
4 the reason why I point that out is because this is
5 what we talk about time in time and time again. The
6 theme that I even mentioned when the residents were
7 speaking, when they were testifying, was the fact
8 that they have not been part of the initial-- and
9 not just the conversation, but a partner in all of
10 this and seen as experts with the new developments.
11 So, I just wanted to point out, as we go through the
12 questions right now, that from the beginning, the
13 first slide, program management slide did not at all
14 mentioned residents, but you said we are going to put
15 residents first in the next slide. And I just want
16 to emphasize that putting residents first is not just
17 saying it, but actually doing it in this first slide
18 is problematic. So, I just wanted to highlight that
19 and just-- that took me to a different place. And I
20 also would like for you to just clear up the comments
21 that Mr. Vazquez stated because Mr. Vazquez kept
22 referencing RAD within his development and he kept
23 talking about what was happening in Fulton Houses and
24 Chelsea. So, can you just explain what is actually
25 happening in that RAD because I just saw on the slide

2 it was under the build to preserve and so I just
3 wanted to kind of figure out what is actually
4 happening just for context.

5 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: So, at the Chelsea
6 developments, we are looking at is a combination of
7 build to preserve and PACT and so, Hector was
8 correct. It is the mix. The project started
9 primarily as a build to preserve project, but, what
10 is are noted, it will also combine an element of
11 PACT, as well, and Chelsea.

12 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. And so,
13 that is going to be, you know, clearly a topic of
14 discussion like later on in the questioning. You
15 know, just related to how each development and
16 looking at their capital repair needs, are being
17 repaired based on what is projects that are taking
18 place and to see if that particular development
19 project or that deal will actually renovate all of
20 the units in a way to address all of the capital
21 repair needs. So, I just wanted to make that
22 distinction because some developments are just, you
23 know, a conversation about RED. Some are just a
24 conversation about build to preserve, the infill.
25 And so, I wanted people to know, for the public

2 audience to now, that that is a different type of
3 situation because it is a combination of both. So,
4 wanted to make sure that people understood that.

5 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: That's correct.

6 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: so, now, as we
7 look at what you presented with in NYCHA to point
8 out, can you give us just a quick vision statement as
9 to whether this is realistic given the current
10 economic conditions that we are facing now? Because
11 everything that you presented was something that we
12 have heard before and now that we have been rocked by
13 the pandemic and everything that we are seeing
14 playing out across the country, is NYCHA 2.0 that was
15 laid out, something that is actually realistic in
16 accomplishing this?

17 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Yeah. Yes. Absolutely.
18 The program, you know, is still funded by HUD. We
19 are still getting the subsidy. Instead of section 9,
20 it is through section 8. And that subsidy continues
21 to flow and so, you know, just the way the program is
22 structured, it allows us and the development teams
23 to, you know, construct some financing around that
24 flow of income and then we can use those proceeds
25 that are generated upfront to actually make the

2 repairs. And so it is-- you know, we are still the
3 Manhattan bundle, over 1700 units in late November
4 and, despite what is going on with the pandemic or
5 the economy, we have been able to continue to move
6 forward with these transactions.

7 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. I know
8 that my colleagues have some questions about that, so
9 I will leave the follow-up for them. The PACT to
10 preserve aims to address a 12.8 billion dollars in
11 overdue repairs at the 62,000 apartments. And I am
12 just referencing Twin Park West, [inaudible
13 01:35:29], High Bridge, Franklin, Hope Gardens,
14 Brooklyn PACT, and the four remaining LLCs, to
15 developments were selected for the PACT to preserve
16 program. How did NYCHA conclude that these buildings
17 were a good fit for the PACT to preserve program?

18 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: So, over the years, the
19 methodology has evolved a bit. In the very early--
20 I mean, the threshold issue has always been about
21 addressing physical needs. Urgent physical needs.
22 So, that is issue number one. In the earlier days of
23 the programs with Ocean Bay and some of these earlier
24 ones, we were looking at addressing the issue of
25 bringing renovations to some of the scatter sites.

2 We were also looking at bringing reservations to the
3 unfunded sites and we are largely, through a lot of
4 that process now, we have just a couple of the
5 unfunded just about to be finished and through that
6 whole process. In 2019, we actually launched a new
7 methodology. We went through this whole process
8 where we started to look more comprehensively at some
9 other metrics, not just the ones that I had mentioned
10 before. And, just by way of example, we started to
11 look more at NYCHA operations, which sites are we,
12 you know, do we struggle to maintain compared to
13 others and which would be a good fit, you know, four,
14 perhaps partnering with a partner to actually do that
15 property management on an ongoing basis. So, we have
16 revived the methodology and that is the methodology
17 that we are going to use going forward.

18 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Oh, man.

19 Dang, Jonathan. I didn't hear anything about
20 speaking to the residents and--

21 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, yes. Absolutely.
22 Absolutely. I mean, that was the technical piece of
23 it, but, as I mentioned in my testimony, the central
24 piece of this is the engagement. Then I went into
25 some detail about the engagement throughout the

2 testimony. I mean, we have an enhanced community
3 engagement process now. You know, we have always
4 done it, I think, fairly good work around boots on
5 the ground and canvassing. The door knocking and all
6 that kind of good stuff. But now we are frontloading
7 a lot of work around the education piece which I
8 spent some time speaking about in the testimony and
9 we are really trying to frontload these
10 conversations--

11 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: The education
12 piece of educating the residents as to what is
13 happening? What is going to happen?

14 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Yes. Exactly. We want
15 to talk to folks about what is going on in their
16 development, what are the conditions? What are the
17 challenges? Explain what some of the solutions are.
18 You know, I will turn it over to leave in a minute
19 and Simon you can talk to some of the details of what
20 we have been doing in more recent projects that we
21 have initiated. But the goal is to really, as I
22 mentioned in my testimony, to really spend a lot more
23 time up front educating folks so that they understand
24 and they can ask questions. We can address the

2 issues make sure that people feel comfortable and are
3 clear about what is going on. I mean, you've heard--

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: going to stop
5 you right there. What is helpful-- I think what is
6 helpful right now is for you to start talking about
7 the plans around-- and I think you mentioned funding
8 residents to hire legal experts to step in and work
9 with them on, you know, different issues within their
10 developments to-- in using your terminology, but I
11 hate when folks say like educate residents as if they
12 don't know. You know, this is an opportunity to kind
13 of flesh that out. And the reason why I am
14 mentioning that is because, you know, again, the
15 complaints are related to educating residence after
16 the fact. This is what is happening. This is what
17 we have decided. You know, this is what the experts
18 and slide to have decided and now, you know, it's
19 like are we going to put you first by educating you
20 on what we have decided and what is moving forward?
21 And so, you know, this is an opportunity to talk
22 about that piece of it.

23 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Absolutely. So, I would
24 invite Leroy and Simon to provide some insight around
25 what we are doing around those issues.

2 LEROY WILLIAMS: do you want me to? You
3 can start, Simon, then I'll commit.

4 SIMON KAWITZKY: Sure. Sure. Thank you,
5 Council members. Thanks, Jonathan and Leroy. So,
6 you know, when we started up this team within the
7 real estate department, we really focused on how we
8 can improve engagement with residents, not only to,
9 again, yes, educate them and make sure that we are
10 sharing the right information, but also really
11 partner with them to make sure we understand what
12 their goals and priorities are for their communities
13 and we are working and partnering across our agency
14 with so many people, including Leroy and others who
15 have really those strong relationships with
16 residents. Whenever we start a project or have
17 identified a project that we feel could be a good fit
18 for the PACT program, we always talk to the resident
19 leaders first. That is the number one thing. And we
20 have started doing that now, you know, during the
21 pandemic when creating that additional space and time
22 before we get to the work of starting large resident
23 meetings and workshops. We really want to sit down
24 and we do multiple briefings with the TA leaders and
25 with elected's to make sure that we can address any

2 questions that they may have. Urgent concerns, their
3 priorities. That is always the number one thing that
4 we do before we move into, you know, larger series of
5 resident meetings, specifically focused on their
6 development. Another thing that we have been doing
7 just on the education piece generally is establishing
8 more of a regular routine information session so that
9 we run throughout the year now where people can learn
10 about, you know, how they PACT program works
11 generally, their rights and responsibilities, as what
12 the design and construction program-- process looks
13 like, and all the other things that are really
14 important to folks. Another-- Council member, just
15 to address some of the questions that you had around
16 how residents are involved in decision-making, as
17 well, you know, we are starting to change the
18 approach that we take in terms of selecting
19 development teams. In the past, we have never really
20 allowed for residents to participate in that process
21 of selecting the partners that we work with.

22 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Oh, I know.

23 SIMON KAWITZKY: The contractors.

24 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Oh, I know.

2 SIMON KAWITZKY: The property managers,
3 social service providers. You know, we want to open
4 that up because we really feel that, in order to the,
5 you know, build that trust and make sure that we are
6 setting ourselves up for success here, that residents
7 have an opportunity to interview and meet and provide
8 feedback on, you know, who those people are going to
9 be that take care of their development over the long
10 term. Another thing that you mentioned that we are
11 trying to do and really improve is providing free
12 technical assistance to our residents. So, you know,
13 so many residents that I have worked with so far in
14 my time here really know their stuff. Many of them
15 have been on the panels today so far, but many others
16 have expressed that, you know, they need a little
17 help in support and understanding complex issues
18 related to real estate development. We all have very
19 busy lives and can use that additional assistance in
20 making sure that, you know, I am really tailoring my
21 feedback and my participation in ways that are
22 meaningful. So, we recently launched the new program
23 called the Resident Planning Fund and hope to have it
24 more built out by the end of this year, but it will
25 dedicate free assistance to all the developments we

2 are involved in with PACT and residents can choose
3 how they want to spend the money. Whether it is for
4 legal services, hiring urban designers or financial
5 consultants, attorneys, anything helping to do their
6 own planning process or advising them and providing
7 that objective advice. That is another really key
8 thing that we are excited to be launching, as well.
9 Maybe I will stop there and let Leroy jump in and
10 talk a little bit about, you know, not just those
11 different programs and the processes that we are
12 setting up, but also those direct conversations that
13 we have. There is so much that goes into this work,
14 especially now during the pandemic and making sure
15 that we are reaching as many--

16 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Well--

17 SIMON KAWITZKY: people as possible.

18 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: before you go,
19 I mean, because I have some other questions before we
20 get to like that community engagement piece of it.
21 What I was trying to pull out was, you know, again,
22 seeing residents as experts and looking at the front
23 end of it and, when I asked the question how did
24 NYCHA conclude that these buildings were a good fit
25 for the PACT to preserve program, you know, some

2 residents actually want to see their development
3 converted and, you know, I know they particular
4 development where the majority of the residents want
5 to see RAD take place because they can't stand NYCHA.
6 They want nothing to do with NYCHA ever again and
7 they would rather roll the dice with the different
8 management company. Right? But that particular
9 development was never on the list and so, you know,
10 again, I am constantly asking this question. You
11 know, the how are you reaching out to residents and
12 asking them? What would you like to see? You know,
13 what are your ideas or what you would like to see in
14 order to have change in your particular development?
15 You know, and what I am continuing to hear it is,
16 when we have decided that there should be an RAD PACT
17 program, then we reach out to residents and then
18 explained to them. Or, you know, once-- and correct
19 me if I'm wrong. I'm not sure if I actually just
20 heard you say this particular, you know, Potter
21 funding that can possibly be put in place by next
22 year, by the end of the year, are for residents that
23 may be going through the RAD program is supposed to
24 all development in order for them to take a look at
25 what is happening with their housing stock and figure

2 out what is the best program and best fit. And then
3 look at your portfolio from there. You know what I'm
4 saying? And so, I think sometimes government-- the
5 bureaucracy, folks tend to do things asked backwards
6 and create problems that may not necessarily exist if
7 you just go to the people first and get their input
8 and their expertise first. So, that was the reason
9 need for that question because--

10 LEROY WILLIAMS: Chair, can I just say
11 something a little bit about that?

12 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

13 LEROY WILLIAMS: So, we do marry
14 developments that have asked for the program. And I
15 am sure there are developments that have asked for
16 the program, like you said. Recently, we have put
17 Metro North as part of the PACT program and they have
18 been asking for the particular program. We also
19 marry that with, of course, the needed developments,
20 right? The ones with the highest needs. So, I get
21 when you say that, you know, we want to-- we should
22 go to developments where residents want this
23 particular program, but I think it should be a
24 combination, right, of what residents want, of
25 course, because they are the experts, as you say, and

2 I have been working many, many years with residents
3 and they know what they want. They know their
4 developments better than anyone, but then we also
5 have to look at the needs. Like an unfunded
6 development, right? So, we know we have our city and
7 state developments that were federalized and there
8 were eight developments that had no core funding.
9 So, that is in need that we have to put in place so
10 that they can have ongoing funding and upgrades for
11 their development. We are working to make sure that
12 developments that do want to go through the process
13 is engaged Shirley and make sure that they are part
14 of the process. Though, if there is any development
15 that any city Council person that knows that
16 residents want to be involved in, please make sure to
17 share that information with us because we definitely
18 want to engage them now.

19 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Just a
20 quick question. Has there ever been a systemwide,
21 portfolio wide questionnaire or survey to every
22 single resident task than the questions about their
23 development? Do you want RAD PACT or bill to
24 transfer-- you mean, build to preserve or transfer
25

2 to preserve? Has there been like an overall question
3 asked?

4 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: I defer to Leroy. I
5 don't know if that type the survey has been done.

6 LEROY WILLIAMS: So, that survey has
7 never been done. I would say that, you know,
8 definitely it is something that we can look at the
9 suggestion from you. I think that, again, we look at
10 developments with the high needs. We looked at
11 developments aware they actually asked for the
12 particular program and they have written letters to
13 us stating that they wanted-- like the Fred Samuel
14 houses, Metro North houses, that. And we try to
15 marry the two. We want to make sure that, again,
16 like all life in NYCHA for 20+ years have been
17 working with residents and I know the strength of
18 residents and, you know, if they think that that is
19 something that they want to be a part of, we always
20 want to make sure that they are heard and that is
21 what we are putting in part of the program. But, we
22 have never, you know, put together a survey, as you
23 say, and ask every single resident would you want to
24 be a part of, you know, PACT or, you know, air rights

2 deals. We have never done that. So, we can
3 definitely take that under advisement.

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. All
5 right. I am going to stop there because it is 3
6 o'clock and I know that my colleagues have questions
7 I'm going to come back to my questions. So, Audrey,
8 I'm just going to stop my questions now so that my
9 colleagues can ask.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Okay. Sure. Thank
11 you. We will proceed with question from Council
12 members beginning with Council member Barron followed
13 by Council member Ayala. You will have five minutes.

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you and,
16 thank you, Madam Chair, for this urgent and critical
17 hearing and thank you to the panel for coming so that
18 you can field our questions and consider them and
19 make the appropriate adjustments. So, yes. We
20 understand that the federal government and the state
21 government stopped putting money into NYCHA and that
22 there are unfunded developments. Several of them are
23 in my district in East New York and now we also
24 understand, however, that people are ecstatic over
25 the new administration. What demands are you going

2 to make of the new administration for additional
3 funds to address these problems?

4 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, we are definitely
5 in search of all capital dollars and will certainly
6 support--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Have you made a
8 request of the incoming administration for a specific
9 amount of money?

10 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, I will turn it
11 over to Brian Holden who is leading up that
12 particular effort, but yes. What I was going to say
13 is--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, because I
15 only have five minutes. Have you made a demand and
16 what is that demand?

17 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Okay. I'll turn it over
18 to Brian who can give--

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you.

20 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: the specifics on where
21 we are with that effort.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Brian seems
23 to be having problems in my time is clicking, so let
24 me move on. So, we know that--

2 BRIAN HONAN: Council member, I think I'm
3 good now. We have met with members of the transition
4 team around increasing funding both to the Public
5 Advocate side and to the section 8 side, but not a
6 specific dollar amount. But honestly--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I would suggest
8 that you look at your budget and do that. Okay?
9 Secondly, you talk about residents' rights and I am
10 being abrupt because my time is limited. You talk
11 about residents' rights. When you came to do a Zoom
12 conference last week, the first thing you said was,
13 we are concerned about resident rights. Then the
14 very next screen talked about your questions will, at
15 the end of the presentation. So, there seems to be a
16 disconnect there. We know that one of the reasons
17 that we are in the conditions that they are, NYCHA
18 buildings are in the condition that they are in is
19 because of mismanagement, yet, you want to have
20 oversight of these developers that are coming in, but
21 you don't have a record that shows that you know how
22 to manage. So, part of the problem is mismanagement.
23 Another part of the problem is outright lies to not
24 only the residents, but to the federal government and
25 a part of the problem is deception and a part of the

2 problem is fraud. So, those are major issues that
3 have contributed to NYCHA being in the situation that
4 it is in. We know when we hear that the major
5 problems are water, leaks, mold, lead, and pests and
6 that these partners that are supposedly coming in
7 with you are going to address those issues. So, this
8 is the latest iteration of movement towards
9 privatization. This is the latest iteration of
10 movement towards privatization. So, you talk about
11 residents and you want them engaged. That is a
12 wonderful word, engaged. What power to make the
13 decisions about their lives are you giving to the
14 residence? Suppose there is a consensus of residents
15 that they don't want this project. What is the power
16 to not be forced into this project?

17 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, right now, the
18 PACT program is the primary tool that we have to
19 bring the much needed repairs--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

21 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: [inaudible 01:54:09]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: But, if they don't
23 want it, what is their power to not accept the
24 project? I really can't get the long answers because
25 my time is almost gone. What is their power to say,

2 well, we've heard it and we don't want to have to
3 downsize. We don't want to be restricted from having
4 people come after we've signed our lease and have
5 them to have a-- whatever their reasons are, what is
6 there power? Not engagement. Not listening tours
7 and, no, this is great. What is there power to
8 assert themselves to determine that they don't want
9 it in the project to not go forward? What is there
10 power to make that decision on their own behalf?

11 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, we haven't had
12 that-- We have not had that situation as of yet.
13 We, as you've heard from some of the panelists who
14 have gone through the process, they're very happy
15 with the results.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Is there a
17 requirement-- I have to move because I only have 10
18 seconds. I've heard all the presentations and I
19 think the residents for sharing that. Is there
20 requirement that boilers be replaced by the
21 development team that is coming in? Because that is
22 a major problem. Heating problems are major
23 problems. Is there requirement that they replace the
24 boilers which are 40, 50, 60, 70 years old?

2 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: There is, at least, a
3 year long process where we are going in and doing a
4 full inspection of all of the elements, the
5 components, the systems of each of these buildings
6 and, if the equipment, whatever it is, boilers or
7 otherwise, need to be replaced, they absolutely will
8 be replaced.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And then, what does
10 NYCHA say is their responsibility because there is a
11 case, recent case where NYCHA is saying, listen. We
12 are no longer responsible because of the RAD PACT
13 agreement. The new developer has to take on all of
14 that. There is a case-- can you talk briefly to
15 that? My time has expired, but I'm asking the Chair
16 for indulgence.

17 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, I don't know the
18 specific case that you are referring to, but the
19 point is, what I was saying is, if residents are
20 unhappy with the type of service or response they are
21 getting the PACT partners, they can certainly reach
22 out to NYCHA. We want to ensure that the developers
23 are doing what they need to do to make the repairs
24 and provide service to each of the residents in each
25 household.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Just in
3 terms of infill projects, which you are calling build
4 to preserve and in terms of air transfer rights--
5 the rights that are being transferred, can we, in
6 fact, through this initiative to support the PACT
7 program, see that there might be a tower of her
8 height built on NYCHA property? Does the build-- I
9 seem to have confused you. Does the build to
10 preserve program allow for construction of new
11 apartment buildings on NYCHA property?

12 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Yes. It does.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. And is there
14 a requirement that those new apartments be capped at
15 60-- 50 percent of the AMI or is it eligible to have
16 market rate apartments included?

17 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: As I mentioned in the
18 testimony, it would be compliant with the city's
19 mandatory inclusionary housing program, so there
20 would be a--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Market rate.
22 Market rate. Because market rate can come in with
23 that MIH. So, let's be clear.

24 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Correct.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Not be, you know,
3 devious. I can include market rate. So people need
4 to understand that. And one last thing--

5 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Absolutely.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Thank you, Madam
7 Chair. One last thing. As an apartment in the
8 program becomes vacant, what are the eligibility
9 requirements for people coming into an apartment that
10 has been vacated either because the person left of
11 their own or they had to downsize as is the
12 requirement with RAD. Who is eligible to apply for
13 that apartment?

14 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: The developers are
15 required to go off of our waitlist. Lakesha, I don't
16 know if you would like to chime in with a little bit
17 more detail, but, basically, that is the structure.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: It's restricted to
19 your waitlist? [inaudible 01:58:27]

20 LAKESHA MILLER: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: All right. Okay.
22 Thank you. I just want to say that, as I've looked
23 at this program and come to understand it more,
24 residents have not been involved at the outset.
25 Elected officials certainly have not been involved.

2 I'm finding out about these meetings through a
3 resident calling me and saying, Councilwoman, you
4 know, they have targeted our development. We don't
5 know anything about it. And I'm talking about Penn
6 Wortman, so you can look into what I'm saying. We
7 get an email the day before a meeting as an elected
8 official. I get an email, oh, we're going to have a
9 meeting tomorrow via zoom about Pen Wortman coming
10 into the project and about Belmont Sutter coming in.
11 well, whoever targeted them or selected them prior to
12 this day before the meeting announcement? So there's
13 much to be said about the shortcomings of the RAD
14 PACT. I think it's paternalistic. I think it's
15 presumptive and I think it does not acknowledge that
16 the residents should have the authority to decide
17 what conditions they are going to live in and who is
18 going to manage it. We can have residents trained to
19 do what it is that we want to say developers are
20 doing because, certainly, as one person said, we
21 don't have a report card on these developers and some
22 of them, it appears, are trying to undermine the
23 leadership that is questioning the movement forward
24 of RAD and I will talk to you further about that
25 apparent undermining of the leadership. Thank you

2 very much, Madam Chair, for extending me the extra
3 time.

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Before you
5 conclude, Council member Barron--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Yes?

7 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: I do-- I
8 would like a follow up now to three of her-- three
9 of Council member Barron's questions and that's
10 because what's happening here is happening everywhere
11 and so it would help us in the context of this
12 discussion, this hearing. So starting backwards, can
13 you explain the Pen Wortman/Belmont Sutter situation
14 where you have a certain list of developments and
15 then, in the final hour, but it might change or
16 switch to a different development? It would be
17 helpful to know what is happening there so we can
18 better understand the process and even explain what
19 is going on to our constituents. So, can you explain
20 that Pen Wortman/Belmont Sutter?

21 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Sure. So, we-- you
22 know, I mentioned during the testimony and in
23 response to some of our earlier questions how we
24 refreshed, you know, the site selection process and
25 how we, you know, do our methodology essentially and

2 identify potential sites for the program. Then when
3 we were doing that and we sort of took a look at the
4 broader neighborhood, you know, we realized that
5 there were these sites that were approximated to
6 Linden and Boulevard and we thought that it would
7 make sense. These projects together so that you
8 would have some common management and there would be
9 a greater benefit residents in that way. Because,
10 what would be left behind are sites that are sort of
11 scattered around that NYCHA would then-- we know
12 NYCHA would struggle to manage those particular
13 properties. So, from a logistics standpoint and a
14 service standpoint for the residents, we thought it
15 would make sense to include those. I know we, you
16 know, have been making efforts to engage the
17 residents that those specific sites that were added.
18 I think, again, Leroy and Simon can sort of chime in
19 with the exact specific steps that we have taken and
20 we will do what it takes to ensure that folks
21 understand and we will incorporate their input.

22 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. And so,
23 it would be a great opportunity now to explain the
24 actual process, just a quick run through. You come
25 up with the list. You submitted it to the Mayor's

2 Office and then you submit the package or the request
3 that HUD and then that is approved based on the list
4 that was submitted or is it just units that are
5 submitted and not developments? So, can you just
6 briefly explain the process of what is actually--
7 has to be approved by HUD?

8 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Sure. But just to be
9 clear-- Sure. Long before we, you know, get any
10 approval from like HUD or City Hall or anybody else,
11 we engage the residents. And, again, I will turn the
12 Leroy and Simon to describe what we are doing. Once
13 we have identified some sites that we think makes
14 sense based on the methodology I outlined earlier, we
15 then engage with residents and we start to have the
16 conversation around what is actually needed on the
17 sites both from a physical need perspective, but
18 also, you know, social services and other amenities
19 that would be useful to the residents and then we
20 take it from there. So, Leroy and Simon, do you want
21 to sort of go through some of the specifics that we
22 go with the residents before we even get to the point
23 of submitting anything to HUD?

24 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. So,
25 wait. Stop right there.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

3 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, right
4 there, what has been submitted to HUD?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right.

6 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: With respect to what?

7 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Right now, as
8 we stand-- So, okay. In the presentation, you
9 mentioned, you know, 9517 have been converted.
10 11,860 units are in the active PACT conversion now.
11 And so, that total, 24-- whatever that number is--
12 have those-- is that the total number of units that
13 were submitted to HUD for approval for PACT? I mean,
14 for RAD PACT or-- you know, so explain that. Or is
15 there another number that had been submitted and what
16 are those units were developments that were included
17 in that particular process? Just to get an
18 understanding.

19 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: So, the 9500 and change
20 units that have already gone through and converted,
21 all of that has already been reviewed, approved by
22 HUD, and everything. So, those are done. The
23 balance are going through the process.

24 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, that's
25 11,860 active PACT?

2 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: That is correct.

3 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: That is
4 already gone through the approval process or no?

5 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, there are couple
6 categories. Some of them are earlier in the process
7 where we are just beginning engagement. Others have
8 already gone through a procurement process and we
9 have development teams that are starting to do their
10 scoping. They're going in and doing inspections and
11 starting to really frame out what the scope of work
12 is going to look like. And I would turn to Marissa
13 to speak on some of the specifics about which forms
14 may have been submitted to HUD with relation to which
15 project.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Truth time.

17 MARISSA SCHAFFER: so, the HUD approval
18 process really runs in parallel with the engagement
19 process and because, as we mentioned before, for
20 these developments, some of them are unfunded
21 developments, they all to go through various offices
22 of HUD to be approved. And so, NYCHA has what we
23 call the portfolio board authorizing the 62,000
24 units, but we are in the process of making those
25 submissions to HUD and really that HUD approvals

2 don't happen really until we get closer to the actual
3 conversion date to your question.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, Madam Chair,
5 let me ask you about Pen Wortman. Where are they in
6 this process? Because they have had people coming in
7 and scoping, people coming in and making alterations,
8 people coming in and doing-- what is it? The HSQ?
9 And they were never told prior to that that they were
10 being considered. So, you seem to have not be
11 consistent in what you are saying. Have they been
12 submitted to HUD at any point in your process for
13 consideration? Because they are just now hearing
14 about it and now you are having meetings. Meeting
15 last week. You try to have a meeting two weeks
16 before that, but the tenants at though. So, where is
17 Pen Wortman to be specific? Have you applied for Pen
18 Wortman to be a part of this RAD project?

19 MARISSA SCHAFFER: We have not--

20 SIMON KAWITZKY: Go ahead.

21 MARISSA SCHAFFER: Oh, sorry, Simon. Okay.
22 We have not submitted the application to HUD yet
23 specifically for Pen Wortman. It is underway, but we
24 have not submitted it yet. With respect to the
25 inspections-- I can continue or not.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, in terms of
3 the inspections we did at the request of the resident
4 leaders, issue a request for a cease-and-desist
5 because they are very concerned about people coming
6 into their apartment during this helped pandemic and
7 we did get a notice that, yes. They will stop. We
8 had a commitment that they will not go into unless it
9 is something of an emergency nature. So, from the
10 residents, on behalf of their concerns. And they
11 were also told that they were asked to sign a letter
12 of affirmation which means-- to me it sounds like
13 saying a disclaimer. Listen, we know it is a
14 pandemic we need to get this information, so just
15 sign that you know that there is the risk involved.
16 That's what it sounds like to me. I haven't seen
17 the actual document.

18 MARISSA SCHAFFER: So, that was meant to
19 just document that the resident authorized someone to
20 enter their unit. So, these are predevelopment
21 inspections that the development team can understand
22 really what the conditions are in the units and so
23 that those papers are meant to document that the
24 resident has authorized someone to enter their
25 apartment. They do not have to authorize anyone to

2 enter their apartment, but, as you know, we've held
3 inspections.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Thank you so
5 much, Madam Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. So,
7 Marissa, you were just talking about the inspections.
8 And so the inspections is to take a look to see what
9 the internal repairs are needed so that you get an
10 overall picture of budget as to what the needs are
11 and to what the deal should or-- am I in the right
12 wave right now?

13 MARISSA SCHAFFER: Yes. That's exactly it.
14 So one of the requirements from HUD, actually, for
15 the RAD program, is that the full physical needs of
16 the development are addressed. And so the only way
17 the developer can do that is to understand what the
18 full physical needs are and so, going on site,
19 getting-- you know, inspecting the boilers, the
20 building system, the roofs, you know, all of the
21 issues, they engage third party environmental
22 consultants, really digging into every element. You
23 know, the landscaping that needs to be improved.
24 Really every element of the buildings and
25 developments on the grounds and the systems to

2 understand. So that's the reference to the
3 inspections.

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. And so
5 that's helpful to know. And, Jonathan, you
6 mentioned, needed specifically-- and then you
7 mentioned boilers before the converted units to
8 section 8, you said they will absolutely, like
9 absolutely will be addressed in the RAD deals and so,
10 I just wanted to highlight that and ask about that.
11 They will absolutely-- so all of the repairs that
12 are needed, not just in the internal-- in the units
13 themselves, but the overall building infrastructure
14 like the roof, the boilers, everything--

15 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Yes. The whole system.

16 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: will be
17 addressed in the RAD deal. So when you say will be,
18 is that happening like concurrently now or like will
19 be in the future? Like you know what I'm saying?
20 Like so right now let's say Armstrong is going
21 through a conversion process, right? They are in the
22 middle of their conversions. All of the
23 infrastructure needs, capital repair needs from the
24 roota to the tooda. From the basement to the rooftop

2 are being address with the current RAD conversion.
3 Every single thing.

4 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: That is correct. Yes.
5 The point of the PACT program is to bring about
6 comprehensive repairs to all of the buildings. So,
7 again, that is building systems, common areas, roofs,
8 exteriors, you know, recreational space, what have
9 you, and, of course, the apartments. It is
10 comprehensive. It gets into everything and ensures
11 that, wherever there are issues--

12 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So there is no
13 development that has either gone through the
14 conversation or going through a conversion now that
15 have no had all of their needs addressed? The reason
16 I'm asking that question is because I was
17 specifically told that there are , new kitchen, new
18 floors, but the-- some of the overall infrastructure
19 problems have not been addressed. So I just want
20 to-- I want to make sure that we're being clear in
21 getting the answer because I have heard the exact
22 opposite in some of these developments. And so I
23 just want to make sure that--

24 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Sure. I mean, I don't
25 know which projects you are talking about

2 specifically. I mean, look. There are going to be
3 some projects where the renovation is ongoing. So,
4 again, perhaps the one you have been made aware of,
5 the construction is still occurring. And so, of
6 course, all the systems have not been dealt with yet.
7 But by the end of the total renovation, it will be.
8 If there is something else that is of concern, I
9 would certainly be interested to know what that is.

10 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, it
11 wouldn't be a situation where a conversion has been
12 completed and next year they would need to go in and
13 break up walls because there is a need to go in and
14 do a-- a repair need that was known at the time of
15 the actual conversion? We won't see anything like
16 that?

17 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Correct. Yes. So let's
18 use the most recent project, the Manhattan Bundle
19 closed November 30th. They have about three years to
20 go through the entirety of this 1700 units that are a
21 part of that bundle to make comprehensive repairs.
22 So, yes. There's going to be different stages and
23 phases of construction between November of 2020 and
24 2023, but by the end of that, they will have
25 comprehensively repaired all of those buildings

2 within that project and then the point is to not have
3 to go back and break open walls and do all this
4 patching up because they would have fundamentally
5 addressed all of the issues as part of the
6 rehabilitation. And that is the same--

7 LEROY WILLIAMS: May I add that during
8 our process for engagement with residents, that they
9 help flush out that scope, right? We talked about
10 residents being, you know, masters of their own
11 developments, right? They know the development
12 better than all of us to because they actually live
13 there. So, yes. An inspector or NYCHA, or whoever
14 can come and give a list that, yes, you need a new
15 boiler. Yes, you need façade work. But they're the
16 ones who are going to be telling us, when it rains
17 and the A row in this particular building, there's a
18 leakage problem. Right? So those are the things
19 that, you know, we are working with residents to
20 complete that scope of work. So, it's just not, you
21 know, NYCHA or the inspector that's coming in saying
22 we know it all. So, we definitely work with
23 residents on this entire thing. We make sure that,
24 you know, the resident association is at the seat of
25 the table throughout the entire process to make sure

2 that it's a full, comprehensive scope of work. So
3 this is not to do band-aides, as residents have said
4 many, many times to us that that is what we do. This
5 is to actually do a full need of that particular
6 development. So, if there's specific questions or a
7 resident might have because, again, it could take
8 [inaudible 02:14:24] 18 months to do a full
9 renovation, depending on the size of the development,
10 but like Jonathan just said, depending on how many
11 units, it can take upwards of three years and they
12 might not understand the mechanics of, you know, we
13 have to do this first in order to do this. So, we
14 can definitely, you know, if you let us know what
15 development that is, then we can definitely double
16 check and make sure you fully understand and the
17 residents understand what's happening.

18 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And just a
19 quick question to follow up, you mentioned the HUD
20 RAD requirement. The inspection requirement. What's
21 the other requirement to make sure that all of the
22 units in NYCHA are safe and healthy? There's two
23 separate requirement, correct? Inspection
24 requirement?

2 MARISSA SCHAFFER: Chair, do you mean after
3 the PACT conversion under-- for PACT conversions?

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Prior to. But
5 a NYCHA development that's not even involved in the
6 PACT conversion. Just a HUD requirement to go in and
7 address the infrastructure needs or needs of a
8 particular apartment. There's an inspection that's
9 required, right?

10 LEROY WILLIAMS: Yes. There's two
11 inspections I know that we do. Right? Was the FAS
12 [sp?] inspection and I think that's the most common
13 for public housing that happens in each development
14 to see what's going on. You know, they only do a
15 percentage of the units in developments to come up
16 with our PNA and then for the PACT and RAD, we do the
17 housing quality standards, HQS, that all the needs of
18 the development. Is that-- that is a good to you
19 were talking about?

20 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Yeah.
21 So, the FAS inspection, if you go into a particular
22 unit, even the ones that are just a sample or, you
23 know, a certain number, do you see a difference
24 between what was required of the FAS inspection and
25

2 what is required of the RAD inspection based on HUD
3 requirements?

4 LEROY WILLIAMS: I would say, overall, I
5 would say it is more in depth, HQS, because, you
6 know, and RAD, we make sure, before any conversion
7 happens, that an inspection is done in every single
8 unit where, of course, in other inspections, we are
9 taking samples. So, I would say we definitely see
10 differences because now we can see all of the work
11 that is happening in developments. You know, we
12 might, we going into that 25 percent or whatever we
13 have to go into, and it might be that we only see
14 that this may not be any issue here, but, on the
15 other side of the building, it might be. So, we do
16 see a difference to get into more units than talk to
17 more people. Residents point out to us and we make
18 sure they understand that they have to be able to
19 tell us what is it that their experience is because,
20 without their knowledge and the knowledge that we can
21 physically see, we are not going to get the full
22 comprehensive--

23 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Right.

24 LEROY WILLIAMS: listing of items that
25 need to be tackled.

2 MARISSA SCHAFFER: Yeah. And I would also
3 like to add that there are two different standards.
4 But, then, apart from that, there is inspections that
5 aren't HUD inspections. HUD mandated inspections
6 that the development team is doing to understand that
7 scope and there they may be things that aren't
8 necessarily covered by the FAS or the HQS inspection.
9 So, for example, if they are seeing systemic issues
10 or a line of apartments that all have, you know,
11 similar issues, they can-- because they've been
12 brought in and can actually address root issues,
13 underlying issues that might be plaguing the
14 building, not on a unit by unit basis, but
15 systemically, that's what the development team is
16 coming in and looking at which may not be-- and I'm
17 not an expert on FAS or HQS inspections, but that
18 might not be addressed by a unit by unit inspection.

19 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Thank
20 you. I have one more follow up question from Council
21 member Barron before we go to Council member Gibson's
22 question. Council member Barron asked about the
23 waitlist and Lakesha was going to speak, but I just
24 want to make sure that when we are talking about the
25 waitlist, is that the same waitlist as the overall

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2 NYCHA waitlist that, you know, folks are on for, you
3 know a thousand years or, Lakesha, were you going to
4 speak to a different waitlist?

5 LAKESHA MILLER: Hi. There is the
6 Section 8 waitlist and there's part of RAD from the
7 public housing waitlist. Any applicants on the
8 public housing waitlist can also place their name on
9 the waitlist for any converting development. So the
10 list is kind of refresh because it is a new
11 invitation of interest and we will pull from those
12 waitlists and everyone has to make the Section 8
13 standards of being 50 percent of AMI.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Oh. Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, Council
16 member Barron, you were mentioning that it sounds as
17 though they were taking off the same waitlist, but
18 it's a different Section 8 waitlist.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Right. Section 8
20 waitlist. And that's restricted to up to 50 percent?

21 LAKESHA MILLER: Yes. Any new applicant
22 coming in have to meet the Section 8 standards.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Okay. Great.

24 Thank you.

25

2 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And can you
3 explain that in a little more detail, Lakesha,
4 because clearly, it's-- we receive phone calls
5 stating-- I received a letter and this one recently
6 was someone in Farragut Houses and said that I have
7 an opportunity to apply for Section 8 and then she
8 told her neighbor and her neighbor didn't receive
9 that letter. And so the question was, you know, why
10 can some-- why is it that some people are able to
11 apply for Section 8 and some are not? So can you
12 just kind of flush out what does that process look
13 like?

14 LAKESHA MILLER: Yes. So I'm not sure
15 what happened with Farragut, but as the properties
16 are converting over to RAD, anyone who has an active
17 application on the public housing waitlist can then
18 go and place their name on any of the converting
19 properties. The Section 8 waitlist that gets created
20 for those particular properties. So, if someone
21 doesn't have an active public housing application,
22 they cannot apply for section 8 because section 8 is
23 not open for the general public. It is only open to
24 someone who has an active application on of public
25 housing waitlist.

2 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay, Audrey.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Council
4 member Gibson, you have five minutes.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Thanks so
6 much and thank you, again, Madam Chair, and everyone
7 for your participation today and I really want to
8 recognize all of the tenant leaders. I represent
9 many developments in the West Bronx, including
10 Claremont Consolidated, and so this is a very
11 important topic to me and I have done, you know, my
12 best over the last year working with the team on the
13 ground in terms of the outreach and, you know, the
14 honest truth is we have a lot of work to do. NYCHA,
15 you have not convinced our tenant leaders on the
16 ground that this is the best course of action for
17 them and their families. I recognize the decades of
18 underinvestment and disinvestment of NYCHA from the
19 feds, the state. I realize something has to be done.
20 I just want to be a part of the conversation in
21 making sure that this is the best approach. And
22 really making sure that there is a lot of advocacy on
23 the ground. But, so far, NYCHA, you have a lot of
24 work to do. You're not winning the game on the
25 ground and that is why we are asking so many of these

2 questions. So, I just read through the testimony a
3 little bit just to understand. I know about RAD and
4 PACT. This is not new to me, but I have a couple
5 questions just to make sure that the interior,
6 exterior work, that it has been cited and really is
7 included. So, yes. Roof, boiler, elevator,
8 exterior, all without a very important. Interior
9 apartment upgrades. As Maria Forbes said, for some
10 developments we have fire escapes. What are we doing
11 with that is my first question. The second question
12 I want to understand is the social service component.
13 The partnerships that you will have with the local
14 not-for-profit. What does that look like in terms of
15 timeframe, their responsibilities, their
16 expectations, and what we expect them to provide in
17 terms of services. So I do know Catholic Charities
18 at [inaudible 02:22:51] in the Bronx, I see the work
19 they are doing. It's great work. So is that one of
20 the models that we should expect in the other
21 developments? The third thing are the tenant's
22 association and recognizing the TA resident
23 associations moving forward. We give Council
24 discretionary funding that typically tends to be a
25 lot more flexible than the TPS funds, so I wonder how

2 that process will work moving forward. Can Council
3 member still provide support? Does it go through the
4 not-for-profit? How do we make sure that we can
5 still get money for our RA's so they can have
6 programs that operate, you know, family days and
7 other things of that nature. The size of this
8 particular proposal-- it wasn't in the testimony,
9 but I do know that this is a large one with a lot of
10 developments. I think discerned about capacity for
11 NYCHA on the ground. Since you keep saying that you
12 are going to maintain ownership and oversight,
13 accountability, this is a lot of developments and
14 when you talk about a place in the Bronx like Eden
15 Wald, the largest NYCHA, it is concerning to see and
16 understand that we have the capacity in this phase to
17 deal with all of these developments. So, my question
18 is-- it was asked before about the laying. What
19 about scaling back? If this is moving forward, do we
20 have to have all of these developments in this
21 particular phase or can we consider different
22 options? The final thing I want to mention is moving
23 forward and looking at some of the existing
24 management companies that we have in the city. I
25 swear, management companies are like those that build

2 comfort stations. They are so far and few. We don't
3 have a lot of opportunity and diversity in the pool
4 of management companies and you can never find a
5 management company where everyone wants them, right?
6 It's a give-and-take. There is always good. There
7 is always bad, so how do you determine what
8 management companies that you will be working with
9 moving forward? Is it left up to the NYCHA or the
10 private entity and how do we move forward? And then,
11 the final question, because I always have an extra,
12 as I mentioned earlier, with the first panel wall
13 around community engagement, what do you see
14 yourselves doing differently that you have not done
15 and how do you move this process forward when there
16 is so much uncertainty, there is so much anxiety and
17 a Covid world? We know something needs to be done.
18 Patience and understanding is something that NYCHA
19 residents have done their whole lives and I don't
20 know how much more time we can ask them to be patient
21 and understanding when they are living every day in
22 conditions that are not conducive, not up to
23 standard, and not quality as they rightfully deserve.
24 So, if you could just answer those questions and if

2 there's follow up needed, I'm happy to talk to you
3 offline. Thank you so much.

4 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Okay. So, a lot of
5 questions there. I will try to answer them all in
6 time allotted. So, you asked about fire escapes.
7 Residents are going to be involved in the scoping of
8 what the project would look like. So, you know, I
9 don't know what the answer is that this particular
10 moment, but, again, part of the theme of this whole
11 conversation is through the engagement and
12 participation, the residents will have a clear sense
13 of what folks want and what can be done through that
14 process that would happen during the investigation.
15 You asked about social services. Partnerships with
16 non-for profits. Again, I would turn to Leroy and
17 Tessa Lehman for a lot of work that were doing on
18 that front to really bolster that effort. If you
19 want to chime in there.

20 LEROY WILLIAMS: So, once the social
21 services provider is part of the project, they make
22 sure to go around to every unit in the entire
23 development to talk to residents and, of course, now,
24 with Covid, we probably would have to do something
25 very different. Again, we worked with resident

2 associations to come up with the type of questions
3 and figure out what types of programs they want to
4 bring in. You know, like you said at Betances,
5 right, they do great work over there by they didn't
6 come up with this by themselves. They reached out to
7 residents. They sat with resident Association
8 members, and came up with a full sweep of services
9 that were needed for their particular development.
10 There is no one-size-fits-all for any social services
11 provider. It really comes from the information we
12 receive from residents understanding what is said
13 that they brought into me. Maybe it is an on-site
14 social worker because we have a lot of elderly people
15 it is a community center because we don't have
16 community afterschool programs. Whatever it is that
17 their particular needs are, that is the job of the
18 social services partner to make sure that is brought
19 in.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay.

21 LEROY WILLIAMS: I can answer-- I'm
22 sorry-- a question about TPA's and RA's, so, again,
23 we did mention RA's do go over when we do a
24 conversion so they still would be recognized. TPA
25 funds-- Any current TPA funds that they have

2 currently will be moved over to the management
3 company to work with them so that the residents can
4 get the funding. So it doesn't go away and then,
5 going forward, they will get the full 25 dollars per
6 dwelling unit per year in order to do their
7 particular work that they would like to do in their
8 communities. And I still see Council members give
9 discretionary funds to resident associations. Some
10 can actually get it themselves because they have
11 501©(3)'s and I know Maria Forbes is on here and she
12 actually have one, so we you can actually get the
13 tenant Association directly. And then others have
14 worked with the social services providers since a lot
15 of the more 501©(3)'s and they will be the pass
16 through for the funding which will be a shorter
17 process for them. When we get money in NYCHA, you
18 know, things can take a little bit longer, so, you
19 know, with TPA funds, discretionary funds, any type
20 of funds can work through the social service provider
21 [inaudible 02:28:52].

22 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: And asset management
23 capacity or, sorry, and property management, rather.
24 So, first we go through is the competitive developer
25 and team procurement process and property managers

2 are part of that-- those teams. One of the things
3 that we are looking to do is really open up our
4 process. We actually do a two-step process. First,
5 we do a prequalification phase and then we do the
6 specific site by site proposal and call for
7 proposals. In one of the things that we want to do
8 is really open up the RFQ to really broaden and
9 deepen the bench of property managers just, one, to
10 get more numbers, more folks, more teams within the
11 system so that we can have additional capacity and we
12 also want to bring in property managers that are more
13 local that know the neighborhood and so that they can
14 better serve the specific residents within each
15 neighborhood within which they operate. So, I think
16 we--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: No. My last
18 question was on capacity. How many developments are
19 in this particular proposal that will be sent to HUD?

20 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: I'm sorry. Which
21 proposal, specifically?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: In terms of RAD.

23 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: -- are you talking
24 citywide? Right now we have 11,000 that are going

2 through the process. If you are asking citywide. I
3 don't know if you are asking--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: I am. Citywide.
5 Yes.

6 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Citywide. There's about
7 just over 11,000 that are still going through the
8 engagement process with presidents in the scoping
9 process and then will be going through the HUD
10 process once we get through those earlier stages.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: Okay. Well, thank
12 you so much and I know this is not the last time we
13 will speak. I encourage you to continue to engage
14 with us. We are talking to our already leaders on
15 the ground. There are weekly calls that many leaders
16 in the Bronx have engaged in and I think everyone is
17 very, very concerned about how we move forward, how
18 we support housing, how we preserve affordable
19 housing in New York City which seems to grow
20 unaffordable every day, and at the end of the day, we
21 have investments and I have supported public-private
22 partnership in the past. I know government cannot do
23 it by itself. I agree and am optimistic about this
24 new administration, but I know that he can't solve
25 everything, right? And so at the end of the day, I

2 realized something has to be done. So, I do think,
3 getting, a lot of work needs to be done on the
4 ground. Language access and talking to residents.
5 And as it was mentioned before, you have to talk to
6 residents before people start coming into apartments.
7 And you start seeing folks in their buildings and
8 developments. I think that is kind of, you know,
9 disrespectful that it appears that work is already
10 starting without any approval process and I realize
11 things have to be done, but I think if you engage and
12 talk to folks on the ground, they are less likely to
13 curse you out because you haven't given them the due
14 respect that they rightfully deserve. And so, I
15 think you guys. All will have more questions later
16 on in I can, you know, do my off-line conversations.
17 But thank you, Madam Chair, for your leadership and
18 for everything you have done. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Thanks.

20 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Thanks.

21 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: We have also
22 been joined by Council member Ayala, if I didn't
23 mention earlier. So, jumping into the project
24 management questions, on December 9th Pix 11 [sp?]
25 Reported that the bias case which gave protections

2 and resources to NYCHA tenants to help abate mold
3 would no longer apply to NYCHA apartments that were
4 converted to private management such as the PACT RAD
5 program since the private management company would be
6 responsible for mold removal and repairs. So, is
7 this accurate? Is it now the responsibility of the
8 private management company to address mold issues and
9 mold abatement?

10 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, if your question
11 is about Baez specifically. There's--

12 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: My question is
13 not about Baez specifically. My question is about--

14 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Okay.

15 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: the property
16 management question. Property management--

17 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Yeah.

18 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: roles and
19 responsibility.

20 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Yes. So, again, as we
21 have been saying, the purpose of PACT is to complete
22 comprehensive renovations of all of our buildings.
23 So, as part of that, they are, as it relates to mold,
24 they are specifically charged and legally responsible
25 for addressing the Boulder choose. So, part of why

2 did-- part of what happens is when we first select
3 folks, you know, and they start to do the scoping,
4 they are going in. They're doing inspections. They
5 are understanding what the conditions are they are
6 mapping out the capital plan, as well as an ongoing
7 operation and maintenance plan to deal with mold.
8 And then, you know, we will be giving folks
9 development teams the work orders. The existing work
10 orders that we have. That typically happens in about
11 six months before the closing and then we refresh
12 about 10 days before the closing and then that is to
13 give development teams a real sense of, you know,
14 what has been within the NYCHA records, but also it
15 supplements their old inspections. So, between the
16 two, they are developing a really comprehensive plan
17 to get to the systemic causes of mold and make sure
18 that, when they go into the building and they do the
19 renovations, they are really getting to the source.
20 That the mold isn't just treated. It is actually
21 eliminated on a minute basis.

22 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: so, my
23 question is, when the conversion happens and you have
24 these meaningful mold abatement, how do you know or
25 how can we be certain or how do we ensure that that

2 is actually happening once the new property manager
3 takes over? I mean--

4 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: So--

5 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: I understand
6 that you are saying that, you know, there is a-- you
7 take a look at the work orders. You submit that six
8 months and that whatever about of the days is prior
9 to the actual conversion is completed, you do that
10 and then I know that there is an assessment that is
11 done when you are even having a discussion with the
12 residents to figure out if they should go through the
13 program, but you know that needs. Everyone knows the
14 needs. The property manager knows the needs. The
15 folks that are coming in to take over management know
16 the needs. So, can you explain how there can be a
17 situation where that property manager is not
18 addressing all of those needs?

19 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: So, part of what I went
20 over at the-- in the testimony was the design of the
21 team. And so, we have built out a design and
22 construction team, as well as an asset management
23 team. And so, those two teams are going to be
24 sharing responsibility for monitoring, really, what
25 is going on. So, the design and construction team

2 will be going out, inspecting, and ensuring that the
3 work is actually happening pursuant to our agreement
4 and pursuant to law, etc. And then, once the
5 construction piece is done, the asset management team
6 will continue to monitor the progress of the projects
7 on an ongoing basis. Now, you know, residents can
8 certainly continue-- they have a lot of different
9 avenues to address concerns if they feel like they
10 are not being addressed. First, of course, is the
11 first line of defense would be to work with the PACT
12 property manager. If that's not working, they can
13 contact NYCHA through our customer contact center.
14 And then, if that doesn't work, they could then go
15 through HPD and request an inspection. So, there is
16 several years to ensure that the work is happening,
17 but it is our plan and expectation that it would not
18 get to that far level. We are going to be monitoring
19 these projects from closing on through renovation and
20 then on an ongoing basis to make sure that all of the
21 work is done pursuant to our agreements.

22 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. So, are
23 there any issues right now currently of an RAD PACT
24 conversion that is taken place and residents have
25 complained that the issues and the apartments are not

2 being addressed? Are there any issues happening now
3 related to that?

4 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: You know, people, you
5 know, file work orders. The police work orders with
6 the property managers. Those are addressed on a
7 regular basis. We are getting reporting. We have
8 not seen any systemic problems. When there are
9 issues that come up, to our knowledge, but everything
10 that is been provided to us thus far, these issues
11 have been addressed. So there are not lingering
12 problems that exist.

13 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Okay.
14 In 2016, Ocean Bay Houses in Far Rockaway was the
15 first development to be transferred under the RAD
16 program. When NYCHA managed Ocean Bay Houses from
17 2012 to 2015, how many eviction proceedings were
18 brought by NYCHA and what was the most common reasons
19 for NYCHA to begin an eviction proceeding? And after
20 the RAD conversion from 2017 to 2019, do you know how
21 many households were evicted and what was the common
22 reason for the private management company to begin
23 their eviction proceedings?

24 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Sure. I'm just say
25 generally and then I'll turn it over to Lamar who is

2 the head of our asset management team who can give
3 you some specifics. Over the-- all of our projects,
4 the full 9500 conversions that we've done, we've had
5 64 evictions. And I can also say that we have
6 developed a program in October of 2020. We developed
7 a program where we are working with PACT partners to
8 ensure that they are absolutely minimizing evictions.
9 We want to make sure that it is a true, true last
10 resort. For example, sometimes folks have gotten
11 into some issues financially and they stop paying
12 rent and then they set themselves up for an issue.
13 We want to make sure that both the developers and our
14 property managers, as well as the residents, are--
15 they understand that they can go through the
16 recertification process. Can the rent based on any
17 changes in household. So, that is just one example
18 of what we're trying to do to minimize evictions
19 going forward. But Lamar, can you provide some the
20 statistics from the pre-conversion and current?

21 LAMAR FENTON: Between 2012 and 2015,
22 there were 57 total evictions that took place at
23 Ocean Bay. These were over a sort of cases from
24 nonpayment cases, non-desirability, bawdy house,
25 chronic rent delinquency, and holdover cases where

2 part of that makeup of the 57 total eviction cases
3 that took place at Ocean Bay. Since Ocean Bay has
4 converted over to the PACT portfolio, there have been
5 51 evictions at Ocean Bay since then. Most of these
6 evictions had to-- or took place around cases of
7 abandonment of apartment, there were court actions
8 that were required in order for those units to become
9 inhabitable again by family members who were in the
10 section 8 program.

11 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. I just
12 want to bring that-- you know, just with some
13 attention because, you know, that number does-- it
14 feels significant. It feels like, you know, a
15 situation where, you know, the fear of when the
16 developments are converted, you know, as just a way
17 to kick people out. You know, that is one of the
18 serious concerns from residents, right? And that's
19 some that, you know, has to be addressed and has to
20 be, again, communicated in a way that, you know,
21 people can understand what's going on because, again,
22 that is significant number for a recent conversion.
23 You know, 51 families. That's--

24 LAMAR FENTON: So, I think we really
25 understand that sentiment and have been really taking

2 measures to be able to monitor how residents that are
3 actually in the PACT portfolio-- how property
4 managers are addressing any type of concerns that may
5 position them to become evicted or displaced. And,
6 you know, part of that has been regular reporting
7 that we are receiving from the property managers that
8 outline exactly what type of resources the property
9 managers are providing those residents with to ensure
10 that they are receiving consistent information that
11 is going to allow them to come out of or help them to
12 come out of whatever situation may be exposing them
13 to the displacement. So, the that is something that
14 we have been doing. We have found a lot of support
15 from our partners in this program. We are continuing
16 to scale it up so that we are receiving the data and
17 can be on top of the follow-up and procedures to be
18 able to support this process to make it as successful
19 as possible.

20 BRIAN HONAN: And, Lamar--

21 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And how many
22 folks-- just a second, Brian. Do you know now-- so
23 you're receiving this data, this information, from
24 your partners. Do you have a sense in each
25 conversion and how many folks are struggling? You

2 know, who is on the list for a possible eviction and,
3 you know, like what is happened with them? Like are
4 you doing something about that now? Like for each
5 conversion?

6 LAMAR FENTON: Sure. Yeah. So, we do
7 receive the data and we receive the data on a regular
8 basis and then we have numerous follow-up with that
9 property managers that, essentially, go through the
10 reporting that they are providing us. Looking at
11 details around what type of support they are
12 providing those particular residents ensuring that
13 the actual data that is then incorporated into the
14 reporting that they are providing us. It makes sense
15 that we're clear in the interpretation of the data
16 itself. We follow the data from the point where the
17 resident may not be in a particular legal matter, but
18 may be having some problems initially upfront to have
19 been able to stay up with their rent. And so, we are
20 seeing what kind of resources are provided to those
21 residents at that point. And then, also, we are
22 working with the property managers to provide them
23 with resources that we hear of that we hear of
24 through our position to ensure that they are passing
25 on those same resources to their residents.

2 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Who on
3 your team is responsible for that follow up or
4 liaisoned with the partners? Is there a specific
5 person or is there a certain like job description?
6 Who is that?

7 LAMAR FENTON: The responsibility falls
8 under the asset management team which I am vice
9 president of. And so, it is our team that are
10 collecting the reports, but it is also our team-- we
11 are also working collaboratively with other
12 departments at NYCHA that have experience in
13 understanding how to work with tenants and what
14 resources are available out there to be able to
15 connect to those residents with to Justin sure that
16 we are providing additional resources to the property
17 managers. They are also helping-- other departments
18 help us to go through the data and identify any
19 potential red flags that may be there and help us in
20 supporting in our feedback conversations with
21 property managers.

22 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

23 LEROY WILLIAMS: Hi. Can I just add one
24 thing?

25 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay.

2 LEROY WILLIAMS: I just wanted to add
3 that, again, the social services provider that is on
4 the ground, you know, the that is really part of
5 their purview, right? If the person has issues and
6 concerns of nonpayment, I can't fill out particular
7 paperwork, all those things can be assisted by those
8 particular social services providers. So, I don't
9 want it to be like, you know, under NYCHA aware, you
10 know, people always say social services never-- you
11 know, anywhere. We can't find them and nobody is
12 ever coming. They actually have a partner on the
13 particular ground to help with all of those things.
14 So, you know, I just wanted to bring that to the
15 forefront.

16 BRIAN HONAN: And also, too, Chair, if I
17 can just add, too, of the 51 number, some of these
18 apartments had nobody living in it and the manager
19 went through the eviction process in order to turn
20 the apartment over and, these apartments also had no
21 family that they could connect to-- so there were
22 people living there, but they were not connected to
23 that apartment and, again, they went through the
24 tenancy action in order to get a proper family, you

2 know, into that apartment who could add to the
3 subsidy.

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. And you
5 all know that I am a data-driven kind of person and I
6 love to, you know, figure out how folks are looking
7 at data. How do you share data between NYCHA and
8 your partners and what kind of data do you actually
9 share? Examples?

10 LAMAR FENTON: So we are receiving
11 regular reporting from our partners. We are asking
12 them to perform-- to provide details on any red
13 delinquency, potential red delinquency cases. We are
14 asking them to provide details on hold over cases and
15 we are also asking them to provide details on cases
16 on any rent delinquencies that may not have been
17 going through any type of formal proceeding at the
18 time. So, this is pretty proceeding information
19 that--

20 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Outside of
21 legal-- outside of legal evictions proceedings, what
22 other data do you share for-- like what other
23 conversation are-- and you know-- and I'm asking
24 this question because we are in the middle of the
25 pandemic, right? And so, we have been talking a lot

2 about, you know, making sure that all of our
3 developments and our residents are-- you know,
4 there's a way to reach out to them and make sure that
5 they are okay and to share data to make sure there is
6 no one falling through the cracks. And so, I just
7 wanted to, you know, know that, now that it is a
8 private entity that is managing the development and
9 not necessarily NYCHA that is connecting with city
10 agencies, you know, what other data are you sharing
11 and are you able to, you know, trek to make sure that
12 those seniors or folks that have, you know, ability
13 challenges are being-- there is some kind of
14 connection like just during this pandemic and crisis
15 that we are in.

16 LAMAR FENTON: You know, that's a
17 really interesting point. At this point in time we
18 are not necessarily having specific characterization
19 around the households that are being reported at this
20 time. I think that that is something that we can
21 note. But, at this time, we are, you know, looking
22 at the households as a whole and tracking any
23 households that are getting into any type or could
24 potentially be in arrears or in arrears or have a
25 nonpayment or pre-eviction and problem that may be

2 arising. And so-- and hold over cases. Excuse me,
3 that may be also potentially arising. So, we are not
4 necessarily looking at the size of the household or
5 whether or not they are a senior.

6 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And so, Brian,
7 you see how that-- You see the concern that I'm
8 talking about, right? Because we are talking about
9 testing and tracing. We are talking about
10 vaccinations. We're talking about all of these
11 things and when we look at seniors in our NYCHA
12 developments, those that are not in the senior
13 exclusive building, those that are not necessarily in
14 the HUD 202 building, the other lists our seniors
15 that live in NYCHA developments, right? And so,
16 making-- and so, they get a call. They are still
17 connected to, you know, other organizations and so,
18 that is it intentional cool for, you know, a certain
19 demographic we did NYCHA and so, when you have these
20 conversions, you know, just what happens to those--

21 BRIAN HONAN: So I think this is the exact
22 role of the onsite social services. So, the Catholic
23 Charities which was mentioned before of [inaudible
24 02:50:13] work which has done work in other places.
25 They are on site. They have staff on site and they

2 are working with residents in those cases, as well.
3 I also know that opportunities were presented to us
4 and we were able to work with many of the converted
5 developments around food distribution and, you know,
6 opportunities by private or public, you know,
7 opportunities. Cloth, which was a group that worked
8 with the Manhattan Bundle, did an amazing job
9 throughout the portfolio making sure that they gave
10 out food during the pandemic. And then the last
11 thing, too, that we had, lots of conversations with
12 our partners was on sanitizing protocols to make sure
13 that there was a plan in place and so it wasn't just
14 that NYCHA had a plan, that there was a plan for all
15 of the developments.

16 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. Thank
17 you. I next set of questions are related to, you
18 know, something that you all have heard me say over
19 and over and over and over and over and over.
20 Resident management corporations. Resident
21 management groups. Part of the HUD 964 regulations.
22 Leroy, you know I talk about this over and over and
23 over and over again. Would NYCHA consider working
24 with residents to create resident management
25 corporations to help manage their portfolio in RAD

2 PACT developments and would NYCHA be open to have
3 resident management corporations manage a building?
4 So can we just talk about, you know, what are you
5 doing around resident management corporations and
6 looking to see-- we already know that, you know,
7 what your Chair, Greg Russ, you know, how he feels
8 and, you know, his experience with resident
9 management corporations in the past. But, you know,
10 can you just talk about just what are you doing
11 around resident management corporations and
12 supporting residents who would like to manage their
13 properties?

14 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: So, it is an interesting
15 question and it's something that obviously is come up
16 a lot of times and a lot of different forums that. I
17 don't know that there is a lot of experience across
18 the country of the working for a particularly long
19 period of time, but I would say that one of the
20 things, as I tried to emphasize through the testimony
21 and you have heard, I can, in response to all the
22 questions is we acknowledge that engagement and the
23 input in all of the rest of that may not have been as
24 robust as it could have been, you know, at the very
25 beginning and we have been taking very concrete steps

2 to enhance that. We know we are not there yet, but
3 that is what we are doing. And, as part of that,
4 look, I think we would love to hear how it could work
5 and see if there is a way-- if there is a version of
6 it that would work that would be a benefit to these
7 projects.

8 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, Jonathan,
9 let's not even start there, right? Because we know
10 that there has been several across the country that
11 have not worked and that is a conversation that I
12 have had with the Chair. So, now that we have
13 lessons learned about what is not worked, how about
14 we start to think of how to make it work based on the
15 lessons learned for why it did not work, right?
16 Because, if we are out here looking for one that
17 actually worked, we would never get it done. And,
18 again, that is always the problem, right? Is that
19 they are set up to fail.

20 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: I hear you.

21 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, how do we
22 make it work?

23 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Let's have the
24 conversation. Absolutely.

2 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And what I
3 will also throw out there is when we are talking
4 about management companies and were talking about,
5 you know, local management companies to come in
6 because we see this massive portfolio and looking at
7 community-based-- I mean, community companies that
8 know the area. Those are the same companies or
9 corporations that can go in and train residents or,
10 you know, partner with residents and really, you
11 know, come up with a program or a plan or an entity
12 that works because if we have it already built into
13 the law itself that this particular instance can
14 exist, right, and you're also talking about putting
15 funding into associations to assist them with hiring
16 experts, and what would it look like to put funding
17 into associations to train and build the skill set of
18 the residence to have their own management companies
19 so they are not then using their money to hire these
20 other experts or do different things when they can,
21 you know, uplift themselves and then be able to, you
22 know-- we're looking at, you know, different
23 economic opportunities. One of the slides said that
24 the PACT RAD deals can lead to job. You know, this
25 is also a job. And so, I think this is low hanging

2 fruit and I'm not sure why we are not prioritizing
3 this, especially in this climate. You know, I would
4 hate to believe that it's a situation where, you
5 know, you just don't want to because it is empowering
6 residents to now manage and own, but, you know, I
7 would-- that's not the case, y'all.

8 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: No. not at all and--

9 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, let's move
10 toward--

11 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: and other ideas. Yeah.
12 These and a lot of these ideas are great and we
13 certainly welcome them. And, you know, again, one of
14 the things that I tried to stress is this idea of
15 partnership with all of our stakeholders. Look, and
16 one of the things that I said also was that it is not
17 just about fixing the buildings. We're looking at
18 really improving the buildings and improving the
19 communities and that means providing the right
20 services and the right opportunities. So, certainly,
21 happy to expand the conversation beyond merely fixing
22 the buildings.

23 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Yes. Yes.

24 So, I will be something else that we talk about as we
25 talk about section 3 and the funding for RAD

2 projects. That's a significant piece of it. We just
3 have a couple more sections and then I'm done with my
4 questions and I don't think my colleagues have any
5 other questions. Can we go-- so, we talked about
6 HUD approvals. I want to just get on the record.
7 The actual process. The section 18 process. And
8 just for background, section 18 of the United States
9 housing act of 1937 provides that public housing
10 agencies may demolish or dispose of public housing
11 with approval from HUD. In some of these PACT RAD
12 conversions, NYCHA plans to use section 18 process to
13 have HUD issue tenant protection vouchers to
14 residents and make the RAD conversion more economical
15 as the tenants remained in their apartments. In
16 the section 18 legal documents, the tenant rights
17 codify-- are these units permanently affordable and
18 is there an expiration date to those documents?

19 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: So, it does, admittedly,
20 get confusing with the way HUD uses its terminology.
21 We are not seeking to demolish buildings are any of
22 that sort of thing through the PACT program. It is
23 the term is the term. But the point is, when
24 buildings have reached a certain level of
25 degradation, in terms of the physical conditions,

2 week and get a richer source of subsidy through this
3 process and that is why you are seeing these types of
4 applications. And we expect that, throughout the
5 rest of this program, that it would be a blend of
6 section 18 units and RAD units, but the point here
7 is, between RAD and our PACT program, all of the
8 rights and the protections that come with RAD are
9 extended throughout all of the different mechanisms
10 that are used to get subsidy from HUD. So,
11 absolutely. All of the rights and protections that I
12 outlined in the presentation that I know we have all
13 heard in other forms over the years, are going to be
14 enshrined in this document and those residents, you
15 know, they will not see or experience anything
16 different in their lives compared to and RAD
17 residents. They will get a brand-new apartment with
18 great systems then great, you know, common areas and
19 the rest of it, as well as social services and all
20 the other good stuff. That is a good change, but in
21 terms of the rights to the protection, it is the
22 same.

23 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And, okay. So
24 how many buildings does NYCHA expect to go through
25 this section 18 process?

2 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Well, as I mentioned, we
3 imagined that it would be a blend throughout the
4 whole portfolio, so there will be some RAD and there
5 will be some section 18. So, theoretically, you
6 know, we're almost all going forward.

7 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. So,
8 what does HUD require within section 18 for resident
9 consultation? Is there an actual-- is there
10 language that speaks directly to tenant consultation
11 in the section 18 process?

12 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Sorry. Tenant
13 complications?

14 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Consultations.

15 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: Oh. Consultation. I
16 believe it is the same. I don't think there's any
17 difference, but regardless, we are going to be doing
18 to same approach for any of these conversions. We
19 are not going to treat anyone differently as we go
20 through.

21 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: And with
22 section 18, is there a requirement or consultation
23 with elected officials?

24 JONATHAN GOUVEIA: I don't know off hand.
25 I believe there is, but I can confirm that for you.

2 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. All
3 right. And last of the questions related to NYCHA's
4 blueprint for change. On December 12th, 2018, Mayor
5 Bill de Blasio announced NYCHA's 2.0 plan to fix and
6 preserve public housing. NYCHA is now considering a
7 new plan called the blueprint for change. What is
8 this new plan? Just can you give us a summary of
9 what the new plan is as blueprint for change and how
10 is it different from NYCHA 2.0 and can you provide us
11 with an update about this plan? Like where are you
12 with this plan and in speaking to residents?

13 BRIAN HONAN: Thank you, Chair. So, the
14 blueprint for change gives us the ability for the
15 first time, to have an entire portfolio approach to
16 take care of the needs of all of the units, common
17 areas, and also the ground. We will do this by
18 creating a new entity called The Public Housing Trust
19 which is a totally public entity with the board that
20 is appointed by public officials with a public
21 workforce, meaning the NYCHA workforce will be-- will
22 work in these developments and using public subsidy.
23 And, specifically, tenant protection vouchers. We
24 will create this new entity. The units will be--
25 they will be a lead disposition, a lease, and NYCHA

2 will continue to own to properties similar to the
3 PACT deals. But the tenant protection vouchers are
4 really important here because they are much more
5 valuable than your regular voucher or public housing
6 subsidy. With that additional funding, we will be
7 able to invest in the property and, at the same time,
8 we will-- the legislation will protect tenant's
9 rates, will keep rents where they are now, will make
10 sure that the property is affordable forever because
11 the new tenants coming in will be from the tenant
12 waiting lists and it also gives us procurement relief
13 because, as we all know, people often say that even
14 when NYCHA gets money, takes too long for the
15 authorities to spend it and the contractors who are
16 often hired do work that is not at the satisfaction
17 of the residents. So, under the legislation that we
18 have been very involved with putting together, we
19 look to achieve those goals. It is a new session.
20 It just started a few weeks ago. We are having
21 conversations with, first, residents. We have been
22 holding a townhome meeting every week. We had nine
23 in total with an average attendance of about 100 per
24 meeting. The Chair is meeting regularly with tenant
25 Association presidents and tenant leadership and we

2 are all so meeting with the community organizations,
3 thought leaders, and housing leaders throughout the
4 city.

5 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. So, I
6 am understanding that the public trust is the
7 blueprint for change can only exist if there is a
8 public trust for NYCHA. It is that the-- like the
9 just out of the blueprint itself? Like we know that
10 the blueprint for change is a new plan and vision,
11 but it can only exist if the state legislators vote
12 and approve the public trust.

13 BRIAN HONAN: In order for the public
14 housing trust we will need the state legislature to
15 create this new public benefit corporation, that is
16 correct. And at the same time, we will be working
17 with our partners to make sure that the tenant
18 protections vouchers are in place in order to provide
19 the additional funds.

20 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: So, who did--
21 Who developed the blueprint for change?

22 BRIAN HONAN: NYCHA has been working on
23 this plan and, you know, over the last year and we
24 have had many conversations with resident leaders,
25 some elected officials, and also some industry

2 leaders looking at best practices and things that
3 were tried in other cities. I know that you have
4 been to Cambridge where you see that model and,
5 obviously, our Chair has some experience with
6 Cambridge. We looked at, you know, models that have
7 worked at other places and said, if it worked there,
8 we could do this on a larger scale in New York City.

9 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Okay. And the
10 last thing, there was a hearing in December that was
11 held by our state colleagues. And I just want to be
12 clear that this public trust-- the bill is from
13 Assembly member Cymbrowitz and State Senator
14 Cavanaugh. They held a hearing for the state
15 legislators and a public hearing. It was not the
16 city Council, right, but we clearly were listening to
17 the hearing and had our own opinions. Can you just
18 give us a sense of just how did the hearing go and
19 like where are you now with the blueprint for change
20 and reaching out to residents? Where are you now?
21 Are you taking a pause? Are you looking to, you
22 know, change direction, you know, like so-- has
23 anything-- are you doing anything different based on
24 the outcome of last months hearing?

2 BRIAN HONAN: Sure. And let me so last
3 session, the assembly introduced the bill, but the
4 Senate did not, so we did have Assembly member
5 Cymbrowitz introduce the bill. I think that hearing
6 was really interesting and in an absolutely-- we
7 heard from a lot of people and some things that we
8 need to do different. And we are having many
9 conversations with residents. Yesterday, we held
10 three separate meetings with tenant associations that
11 the Chair participated in the [inaudible 03:07:23]
12 all of them. We are holding town hall meetings. We
13 are having meetings by neighborhoods, too. So, we
14 are getting entire neighborhoods together where there
15 are clusters because, you know, folks talk to each
16 other and they usually want to make sure that they
17 know what is good for-- because what is good in East
18 Harlem may not be good in Rockaway. And we want to
19 year people's different experiences. We did have a
20 very strong support from some advocates, from
21 leaders, from some thought leaders, but, you know,
22 that voice that we need to hear more from in the
23 voice that we, you know, moving forward needs to
24 always be the resident voices first and, moving
25 forward, we've got to make sure that, you know, that

2 is where we are leading and that is what we have our
3 foot forward..

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: I think we get
5 in there, Brian. What do you think?

6 BRIAN HONAN: All right. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: You think we
8 could in end that?

9 BRIAN HONAN: Yes. I think so.

10 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: What's
11 necessary. What's needed.

12 BRIAN HONAN: I'll get a button that says
13 that. Okay.

14 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: I think that
15 sums it up. Audrey, my phone died. I'm sorry. I
16 don't even know if you texted me to let me know if
17 there were other questions. I'll give it back to you
18 real quick.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sure. It's been a
20 bit of time. There doesn't seem to be any further
21 questions from Council members, so, at this point we
22 will wrap up this time and then move into the
23 testimony from of the remaining members of the
24 public. And I would also just like to thank everyone
25 for staying on. I know many of you have been waiting

2 for some time to be able to present before the
3 committee, so thank you for your patience.

4 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Well, thank
5 you so much, everyone. And I just, again, the
6 purpose of these hearings and having the resident
7 speak for students because they are the residents.
8 This is their home, right? And we know what our
9 family is and neighbors have been going through for
10 decades and now is the time to just simply do the
11 right thing. And I know that Jonathan-- you know,
12 was kind of in my feelings with you put your slide
13 presentation up and did not mention the residents
14 first, so that is a lesson learned. And so, overall,
15 the theme today was the residents have not been
16 included. It's not enough to say that you are
17 receiving input and feedback. Resident should be
18 partners in every deal. They should be partners.
19 And so, I think that, you know, I like the concept of
20 providing the associations and groups with funding to
21 be able to really be a part of what is happening in
22 be at the table, to be a part of decision-making, to
23 be now at the table all tests select the developers
24 and the management companies during the process
25 itself. That is something that we have been pushing

2 for and you all know I have-- I did visit Cambridge.
3 I visited Toronto public housing in Canada. I have
4 been to London twice last year. This is all, you
5 know, looking to see some of the best practices
6 around the country and around the world. And so,
7 there is so much room for improvement and we know
8 that. And so, I just hope that we are able to really
9 move forward in the direction that we should be
10 going. So, thank you so much and that is it for me.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very
12 much, Chair. We will, at this point, turn to
13 testimony from members of the public. Thank you very
14 much for your patience. Please listen for your name
15 as I will be calling individuals one by one and I
16 will also announce who the next person will be. Once
17 your name is called, a member of our staff will
18 unmute you and the sergeant-at-arms will set the
19 timer to announce when you may begin. Your testimony
20 will be set to two minutes. So, at this point, we
21 will begin with Manhattan borough president, Gale
22 Brewer followed by Mary McGee.

23 GALE BREWER: I'm ready. Thank you. Are
24 we ready to go? Okay. Thank you very much, Madam
25 Chair. And I just want to contribute a little bit

2 because I listened to most of the hearing and I want
3 to say two things. In my borough, we have Wise
4 Towers and some of the scatter sites that are now
5 going through this RAD project and I don't think it's
6 great, I have to be honest with you. At the same
7 time, as you heard from Hector Vazquez, the project
8 that is discussed for a year and a half at Chelsea,
9 Elliott, and Fulton works. That is what works. But
10 in terms of what is happening now, despite the great
11 efforts of NYCHA, just at Wise Towers, this is not
12 enough ground staff. They haven't completed the
13 project, but even the folks who are supposedly the,
14 you know, social services group. They come from
15 uptown. Why not use the group that is actually
16 there? So, I don't like the fact that the community
17 did not have any say about the RFP at all. There's
18 not enough staff. They can't really file complaints.
19 They cannot call the CDC hotline and, when they do,
20 their complaints get bundled with other properties.
21 The PRC, which is the PACT group, is installing bath
22 fitters for apartments, but they were told they were
23 going to get new bathrooms. Communication is not
24 great. And I don't have a lot of time. This is
25 going to be submitted, but it is not a good process

2 and I know that the people who, you know, are doing
3 this management are constantly saying we're working
4 with them, Gale. We're going to do a good job and so
5 on. Second, I want-- accolades to the project at
6 Chelsea, Elliot, and Fulton. 50 people participated.
7 Legal aide was at every meeting. Every elected
8 official was at every meeting. The CSS was at every
9 meeting. Tenants were front and center. Hundreds of
10 community engagement real with the tenants leading
11 the charge. That's very different than what I am
12 seeing. These other conversions should not have
13 taken place without that kind of discussion and we
14 shouldn't have anymore conversions without a similar
15 process. And I say that with all due respect to
16 NYCHA, but I am not happy. So, the process in which,
17 even virtually, worked because the tenants did the
18 outreach. The tenants took the lead in the workshops
19 and the tenants were part of every decision and, as
20 you heard from Hector, input to the RFP, it's from
21 the tenants. I may not like that there's going to be
22 market rate housing, but the tenants are okay with it
23 because they worked through the finances. The
24 tenants can get the finances better than you and I
25 could ever do because they sat through all those

2 meetings. At the same time, I got this other RAD and
3 this other project at Wise Towers. I don't know
4 what's in the RFP. The tenants don't know what in
5 the RFP. I had to fight to make sure that one
6 community room wasn't taken over by the management
7 when they needed the community room and I had to
8 fight to get that back and get that bathroom back.
9 And when there was a fire there the other day, we
10 never saw the super. The tenants were out there
11 telling residents what to do in the fire department
12 was great. So, going to submit this, but I don't
13 think there's anybody else who has got that kind of
14 experience with what it is that is in the process and
15 versus the real planning. Preplanning is what is
16 needed. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I
17 appreciate what you are doing. I don't know what
18 this resident planning fund is because I just heard
19 about it from your hearing. NYCHA just does not know
20 how to do outreach. I don't know if it is going to
21 change and I understand that you heard from some of
22 the residents today that when there is a new
23 management team, that's true. I still want to make
24 sure that, however, the same mailing list-- I worry
25 a little bit about those who are over income. I

2 don't want to lose them. How do you work with them?
3 So there's still a lot of questions. But when
4 there's not the real tenant input, it's not going to
5 be a good outcome. Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

6 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you so
7 much, borough president. I know every single meeting
8 that I go to, your staff is-- you are there were
9 your staff is there and so I know you know. You are
10 out there on the ground. And so, I have the same
11 like issues and concerns, but I just wanted to know,
12 do you have an opinion at all on this blueprint at
13 all?

14 GALE BREWER: Yeah. I think the-- I think
15 as people have said-- Yes. I've been briefed on it
16 a couple of times. We've brought them to the borough
17 board. I would say that, if there is, again-- we
18 have not seen kind of the tenant input. If we get
19 money from Washington, and that is an if, and, you
20 know, it would kind of work like the School
21 Construction Authority, whether it's a separate
22 entity. I have had such a good experience on the
23 LinkedIn community Chelsea community. That's the
24 kind of process that we need in order to make that
25 work. You know, it's like if you don't have that

2 process, for some reason, whatever's in the water at
3 NYCHA, cannot work with the residents. So, I don't
4 know. I've been doing this work 40 years. That's
5 how long-- Victor's longer. Yes, Victor. But not
6 many longer. And I don't see the communication ever
7 taking place. All right? So, the concept of the
8 blueprint-- you know, Brian Cavanaugh thinks it's
9 okay. I trust Brian. Victor I trust. You I trust,
10 but it cannot take place with communication that is
11 top down. And that's the problem. You know, it's
12 just like-- I mean, you know, it just doesn't work.
13 I don't know what it is, but it doesn't work. So,
14 that's where you have to have a different process.
15 So the concept of the blueprint and the section 8 and
16 so on and so forth, the other entity, but who is the
17 interface? Who is doing that that it would work?

18 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Thank you.

19 GALE BREWER: Thank you.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Great. Thank you
21 very much. We will now hear from Barry McGee
22 followed by Jackie Law and then Miguel Acevedo. Mary
23 McGee?

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

2 MARY MCGEE: Hi. Good afternoon. Thank
3 you for having this meeting today. I am a resident
4 of Fulton Houses. I am also a member of the working
5 group. There is a lot of issues that need to be
6 addressed. NYCHA that is like it has a cancer that
7 everybody ignores throughout NYCHA and the ones who
8 always pay the consequences are the residents. We
9 are the ones living in horrid conditions. We are the
10 ones being told that we have to take this RAD PACT
11 program in order to live in decent dwellings. Like
12 why does it take RAD PACT? Why has government failed
13 us to the point where we don't have a choice?
14 Residents weren't given the opportunity. We pay our
15 rent. Where has all this money gone? If the HUD
16 hasn't given the money that should have been given,
17 then our other governments or other branches of
18 government should have stood up and stepped in and
19 put in that money, but, you know what? That is the
20 past. We are moving forward no. We are moving
21 forward and the residents still are not being heard.
22 Excellent. You are reaching out to the TA's. You
23 are talking to the tenant Association presidents, but
24 what about reaching out in talking to the actual
25 residents? Find out there wants, their needs, their

2 concerns, their fears. We, as residents, are being
3 ignored. Our voices are not being heard. When you
4 all for us new roofs, new boilers, new elevators, new
5 bathrooms, new kitchens, of course we want that, of
6 course it sounds good, but what price are we paying
7 for it? What rights, as residents, are we getting
8 up? You know, part of the working group, when they
9 said there was a law does planning in the beginning,
10 as you can tell right now, you see my passion, I'm
11 the one--

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

13 MARY MCGEE: who caused all the fighting.
14 I am the one who tackled everyone and questioned
15 everything. And the finances-- I'm sorry, borough
16 president Brewer. The finances, I still don't know
17 the numbers. I sat on that committee. I asked for
18 those numbers. What I was given was what everybody
19 else was given. Was I able to sit down and calculate
20 those numbers? No. The other thing is that, if RAD
21 is such a good program, the more I do you need to
22 take the infill? Because we are in a high valued
23 real estate part of the city. New York City and it
24 is unfair that you have to do both to us and not just
25 do one. But, as for the working group, progress was

2 made and if I had to go RAD PACT, it would have to be
3 the working group way because we work hard for the
4 rights of the residents, as for everything it has to
5 be understood that there wasn't enough resident
6 outreach. I'm sorry. During the pandemic, it should
7 have been pause, but if my arm is twisted, you would
8 have to be the working group way, not NYCHA's weight
9 because, you know what? We don't trust NYCHA. And
10 people need to understand that. Residents do not
11 trust NYCHA. NYCHA says seeing and it is actually
12 Yang. So, I ask of this committee to please put a
13 pause to this. Please put a pause so residents can
14 be heard. Please put a pause so our rights, our
15 voices and our concerns are being addressed before
16 somebody from the outside, looking from the outside.
17 You're just looking at numbers and structures, but
18 you're not looking at the heart of NYCHA, which is
19 us, the residents. And you are not hearing from us.
20 You are talking to us. I thank you for your time and
21 I hope you understand that we matter. We can't say
22 this is affordable housing. No. This is low income
23 housing and we need to understand that we need to
24 maintain low income housing for the future

2 generations and not make it disappear. Thank you so
3 very much.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very
5 much. We will now hear from Jackie Lara followed by
6 Miguel Acevedo and then Manuel Martinez. Jackie
7 Lara?

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

9 JACKIE LARA: Yes. Can you hear me?

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Yes.

11 JACKIE LARA: Okay. My name is Jackie--
12 Jacqueline Lara and resident for 18 years and I am
13 also on the board as the secretary and I was also on
14 that working group and I went into the working group
15 hoping to preserve public housing, but their mind was
16 already made up of which way this was going to go.
17 So, I didn't want to hear it anymore, unfortunately.
18 I didn't want to stay. I didn't care for anything
19 they had to say. I just wanted to keep public
20 housing public. In our development is not
21 deplorable. Our development, all it needs is
22 probably hundred 50 million dollars just to restore
23 it. But, unfortunately, we have deplorable hearts
24 out there that want to take our development and
25 privatize it. Now, according to what I hear during

2 this Council here, NYCHA is trying to wash their
3 hands and there is no hand sanitizer. So, I don't
4 know. They have to be accountable for this. I don't
5 think they should get away and just start taking
6 public housing away from us. I mean, like Mary McGee
7 said, you know, we need it for the next generation.
8 I mean, my poor kids are paying 2800 dollar rent out
9 there which is not fair because affordable, they've
10 been on that housing connect and they can't get
11 nowhere. Now, I love where I live. I have a
12 beautiful apartment. My apartment doesn't look like
13 a NYCHA apartment and there are a lot of apartments
14 year that don't look like a NYCHA apartment and there
15 are deplorable apartments out there and it's because
16 they have a mental issue or they have a drug
17 addiction or something is wrong. But, otherwise,
18 this development is beautiful and they have neglected
19 it on purpose because now we can't even get any work
20 done here. So they are letting our apartments get
21 deplorable because they want it and we live in a
22 prime place where this is money to them. So, they
23 are all lying. They are a bunch of liars. They took
24 an oath to lie and they have a deplorable heart and
25 that's all I have to say.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Miguel
3 Acevedo followed by Manuel Martinez and then Sophonie
4 Joseph.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

6 MIGUEL ACEVEDO: Good afternoon. My name
7 is Miguel Acevedo. I'm the tenant association
8 president at Robert Fulton Houses. I feel their
9 pain, but I don't agree with them. I feel that NYCHA
10 has worked wholeheartedly. The city has worked
11 wholeheartedly. Every single elected official that
12 represents our district has taken part from day one
13 to make sure that this working group was resident
14 driven and as much as they say we're not living in
15 deplorable conditions, it is not true. We have a
16 heating system there that is outdated. We have roofs
17 that are leaking every day. We have elevators that
18 are broken down. If something is not addressed
19 sooner rather than later, I can guarantee that this
20 development, within the next five to 10 years, will
21 be condemned. And this is why I support this and for
22 people to say that it wasn't resident driven, it's
23 not true at all. That committee met every single
24 Tuesday for almost six months until the pandemic
25 started. Then we met virtually to discuss how we can

2 work together to make sure we get the finances that
3 make sense on moving forward so this development and
4 Elliot, Chelsea, Chelsea Addition, and Chelsea has
5 what's needed financially. The infill building that's
6 going on, the only reason why we support that infill
7 building is because it is going to bring the finances
8 that is needed to preserve public housing in Chelsea.
9 Yes, it's true. We live in a neighborhood that is
10 very expensive, but without this, there will be
11 public housing in Chelsea in the near future. They
12 would find ways to tear Fulton and Elliott and
13 Chelsea down, so we need this project to move forward
14 and NYCHA and City Hall and every elected official
15 has worked hand-in-hand, even advocates throughout
16 the city, from not for profits, legal aid--

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

18 MIGUEL ACEVEDO: have worked with us to
19 make sure that our voice was heard, first and
20 foremost, so that it was all about the residents, not
21 about the elected officials or City Hall or NYCHA.
22 It was about us to make sure we got what we wanted.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
24 we will hear from Manuel Martinez followed by
25 Sophonie Joseph and then Victor Bach.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

3 MANUEL MARTINEZ: Oh, good afternoon,
4 Madam Chair. It' always a pleasure to see you and
5 good afternoon to everybody that's on the Council. .
6 I am the resident Council President of South Jamaica
7 Houses. My testimony today is in regard to the NYCHA
8 2.0 and also in how they are approaching this
9 privatization on the whole stock of NYCHA. So, when
10 they say preserving public housing, we have to
11 understand that the transition from section 9, which
12 is public housing, to section 8, is the elimination
13 of public housing. It is no longer public housing
14 anymore. When you are looking at NYCHA blueprint for
15 change, the request, the proposal that they are
16 making is to completely eliminate public housing.
17 The verbiage of preserving public housing is really a
18 misguided advertisement, right? You are not
19 preserving public housing. You are transitioning it
20 to section 8 housing. We also have to make the
21 considerations that we have fluctuations with chairs.
22 This is just part of the history and the dynamic of
23 all of these agencies, especially the Housing
24 Authority. So, promises that are being made by one
25 chair will not be consistent with the next chair that

2 comes in and we don't know what that timeframe would
3 be. There is another dynamic that we have endured.
4 See, public housing in New York City, especially, has
5 been a time capsule for racial segregation, right?
6 Red lining. In red lining is being-- is very
7 evident no matter what community you are in. Be it a
8 predominately black community like mine or a mixed
9 and affluent community like Chelsea, right? The
10 public housing development in that community still
11 maintains the same condition. It is not surprising,
12 right, that we are experiencing the days conditions
13 in a similar fashion throughout the city and on a
14 population that would be the 54th largest city in the
15 country. Right? The consistency of this is what
16 brings-- that needs to bring us pause.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

18 MANUEL MARTINEZ: We have to take into
19 consideration that any kind of strategy put on top of
20 this deficient work culture-- no, I want to preface
21 this next, met with the fact that I know many great
22 people who work for public housing. I have had the
23 honor and pleasure of working with them. This is not
24 indicative of all and everybody, but we do have a
25 workplace culture that makes it impossible for the

2 families who are to be served, to be respected, we
3 are starting to see that repairs are being-- the
4 cost of repairs are being expanded by multiple
5 visits. Unnecessary visits and positioning
6 residents, harassing residents with forced drill out,
7 home invasions with insufficient notices being given
8 back when they were doing the lead inspection. I
9 have endured it and I have had multiple occasions put
10 a stop to the drill out in my development two or
11 three times because they got notice the day of. I
12 mean, the day prior. On a Friday to Monday. And
13 people work. And now, the other consideration that
14 we have to give is that, although the average rent
15 across the public housing population is 550 dollars,
16 if you were to look at the working population here,
17 which is predominately 44 percent, I believe, and, of
18 the working population would make up 80 percent of
19 the people who are working, right? The average rents
20 are 1150 to 2800 dollars. Now, at that price range,
21 we are not exploring the strategies under section 9
22 that is available such as homeownership and making
23 homeownership an option. Also, the stopping of
24 exploitation of exploiting section 3 which has been
25 grossly exploited. It has recently come out that the

2 Comptroller in his NYCHA transparency initiative,
3 have put out 19.1 billion dollars and issued
4 contracts from 2010 to 2020 just in the prior section
5 3 before it was changed. There was a 10 percent
6 mandate of subcontractors for section 3 business
7 concerns that has never been engaged by NYCHA and is
8 not being reported under the Comptroller's
9 transparency initiative. That 10 percent represents
10 1.9 billion dollars alone. So, that's 190 million
11 dollars that our communities have been exploited for
12 over the last 10 years for each and every year. We
13 have many methods that we can engage in such as
14 raising the rents for residents through their income,
15 through providing them the opportunities that are
16 available to them under section 9. This RED and also
17 this blueprint for changes the separation of the
18 residents and the fair housing rights that they have,
19 as well as title VII rights, right, when it comes to
20 economics. We cannot justify the separation of these
21 rights and this massive size of population, right, in
22 order to find a quick fix. Another thing that we
23 need to engage in when you said about the resident
24 councils and the additional funding, we need
25 legislation. We need legislation that is going to

2 enforce the 964 special subsection 135 and all
3 paragraphs within it that is going to ensure that the
4 resident councils and the residents have the ability
5 to engage NYCHA in a manner that is intended, right?
6 Not only through letter, but the spirit of the law so
7 that we can make sure that we can accommodate the
8 oversight of these processes. We have been-- the
9 communication with us has been improved, but there's
10 still a lot that, you know-- there's still a lot
11 that is desired. That is desired. And I also feel--
12 and I put this on the Council-- the public housing
13 resident, the section 9 resident needs to be a
14 protected class. If anything, right now, we have
15 been a symbol of racism here in public housing with
16 the conditions that have been imposed on us. Section
17 8 right now has been designated a protected class
18 under the source of income and public housing
19 residents also need to be a protected class and we
20 need to have our rights preserved. The issue now is
21 people versus property and it's the specific type of
22 people that have been devalued in the past and
23 continues in this manner. We need to change this now
24 and I look forward to the progress that you guys have
25 been making. I am appreciative to the Council. I am

2 appreciative to the Chair to the public housing
3 committee for the progress that they have been
4 making, but we do need to set the pace for NYCHA in
5 order for us to get proper engagement in the services
6 we desire. Thank you so much for giving me this time
7 to speak and I wish everyone a happy new year and a
8 blessed day. Take care.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks very much.
10 We will now hear from Sophonie Joseph followed by
11 Victor Bach and then Lucy Newman.

12 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

13 SOPHONIE JOSEPH: My name is Sophonie
14 Joseph. I am a community planner and an advocacy
15 coordinator in the equitable neighborhoods practice
16 are at Take Root Justice. Take Root works with
17 grassroots neighborhood organizations and community
18 coalitions to help make sure that our people of
19 color, immigrants, other low income residents who
20 built this city are not pushed out in the name of
21 progress. We thank you for listening to our
22 testimony. This hearing is particularly crucial
23 because NYCHA has been moving forward with the
24 disposition of its property without ULURP nor
25 approval of this Council. Our clients and partners

2 who already work closely with NYCHA residents have
3 serious concerns about continued attempts to
4 implement these programs during Covid 19, which
5 directly inhibits inclusive public participation.
6 Simply put, implementing such programs are not
7 acceptable to our coalitions. This includes TAB,
8 organizing Asian communities, Good 'Ol Lower East
9 Side, Goals to Homes, Isaacs Coalition, Housing
10 Justice for All, and the Justice for All Coalition.
11 So PACT RAD. How could resident lose out? In
12 transitioning to public housing to PACT RAD, formerly
13 NYCHA buildings will be taken out of the 2018 Baez
14 versus NYCHA settlement and the 2019 federal
15 monitorship agreement. The Baez settlement currently
16 requires NYCHA to adhere to strict practices in
17 remediating chronic mold and water leaks and makes
18 NYCHA answerable to the mold and leak ombudsman.
19 They have had success in forcing NYCHA to follow
20 through with proper repairs, so removing them from
21 oversight is not beneficial to residents.
22 Furthermore, HUD has already granted NYCHA approval
23 to convert 33 campuses. This is 76 buildings to
24 section 8 using the RAD PACT programs. These five
25 campuses have already been converted and repairs

2 supposedly in progress. But these conversions have
3 not been done with oversight from this Council. So,
4 people who used to be NYCHA's tenants are now under
5 private landlords. And when we looked at the draft
6 fiscal year 21 and you will plan, it includes an
7 additional 20 campuses that are slated for--

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

9 SOPHONIE JOSEPH: transfer to private
10 management. NYCHA admits that it has only applied to
11 hide for approval for these conversions and yet they
12 are already taking liberties with eight of these
13 campuses, announcing specific developers to take over
14 them without actually having HUD approval, presuming
15 that HUD will rubberstamp its applications. We thank
16 you for the time that you have given us. We have
17 submitted our testimony. Please feel free to read
18 through for more detailed information. Thank you for
19 your time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
21 now hear from Victor Bach followed by Lucy Newman and
22 then Debbie Dominguez Higgins.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

24 VICTOR BACH: Good afternoon. I am Vic
25 Bach with Community Service Society. It is late. I

2 will try to be brief. In August 2019, we did do a
3 survey of a sample of 275 grassroots NYCHA residents
4 and asked them what they thought of RAD PACT. We
5 found that they were evenly divided. About half
6 supported the idea and half opposed it. The major
7 regions for opposition or an objection to
8 privatization and as well as fears of gentrification
9 in potential displacement. Obviously, there are
10 policy issues that need to be resolved, ideally, they
11 should be resolved through a process in which
12 preservation strategies go forward only after full
13 resident engagement and, ideally, their consent. I
14 think that has been a consistent theme throughout
15 this hearing and, as the Chair Ampry-Samuel put it,
16 NYCHA does engage residents and educate residents,
17 but only after the basic decision is made as to
18 whether to go forward with RAD, with blueprint and
19 the like. The Chelsea working group, already
20 described by Gale Brewer, by Hector, by Miguel, is an
21 unprecedented process through which resident leaders,
22 elected officials, and the community board and the
23 resource organizations like mine and others came
24 together over a period of time to develop a community
25 generated plan that will be coming out shortly that

2 hopefully will reach and represent a community
3 consensus on how to preserve the three Chelsea
4 developments. It's a model, I believe, that I just
5 should try to use in all of its planning citywide
6 world were that will work. So, in addition to the
7 need for more collaborative planning and decision-
8 making with residents, as required, by the way, under
9 HUD 964 regulations, I think there is a need or more
10 of the need for independent technical assistance to
11 residents going through the process-- rather, the
12 complicated process-- and I think the resident
13 planning fund proposed by NYCHA is a step in the
14 right direction. The other question-- the other
15 process question that arises is a question of timing
16 and, given the pandemic and the stresses it puts on
17 resident leaders, TA presidents who are trying to
18 protect their communities, provide services to
19 vulnerable households, whether this is the time isn't
20 the time to slow down on RAD conversions. I
21 understand I just wish. Generate the capital quickly
22 that is needed to repair and restore our public
23 housing, but this seems to be a time when we need to
24 slow down and take time to fully engage residents in
25 the decision process. And with that, I think that we

2 need to move forward, as has already been said, at
3 the pace of resident engagement and given the amount
4 of distrust and anger at NYCHA among many residents,
5 it will take time to overcome that. And I hope the
6 process will do that in time as it seems to be doing
7 in Chelsea. Thanks.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next,
9 we will hear from Lucy Newman followed by Debbie
10 Dominguez Higgins followed by John Forrester.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

12 LUCY NEWMAN: Good afternoon, everyone.
13 Thank you to Chair Ampry-Samuel for your commitment
14 to public housing in the 600,000 NYCHA residents who
15 call NYCHA home. I wanted to echo the comments from
16 Vic Bach from Community Service Society and Hector
17 Vazquez and borough president Gale Brewer, all of
18 whom were part of, along with Mary McGee and others,
19 part of the Fulton, Elliot, Chelsea working group. I
20 am going to be submitting written testimony later.
21 To the extent of the residence to decide that they
22 want to go forward with RAD or PCT at their
23 developments and they are, you know, fully engaged
24 in, I think, a model just like the working group at
25 Fulton, Elliot, Chelsea, I just wanted to highlight

2 one area that we think needs attention during and
3 after a PACT conversion. What we tend to see a lot
4 on the ground is that management staff at the
5 development know that they are going to be
6 transferred to a different development after
7 conversion and what that tends to lead to is,
8 basically, a lack of attention to residents on their
9 behalf leading up to the conversion because they
10 don't really have any stake in that development going
11 forward. And so we really think that there should be
12 a PACT transition team that gets placed into any
13 development that is undergoing conversion to ensure
14 that residents received the service that they are
15 entitled to and to make sure that loose ends that
16 impact tenants' rights and protection get taken care
17 of and tied up prior to conversion. I wanted to let
18 Ms. Dominguez Wiggins, who is a client of ours,
19 discuss and tell the panel some of the experiences
20 that she underwent in trying to take care of her
21 brother's tenancy request prior to the conversion at
22 Wise Towers. So, I'm handing over to Ms. Wiggins who
23 is on the line now.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 DEBBIE DOMINGUEZ HIGGINS: On mute.

3 Okay. I wrote everything down so that I could keep
4 to what was very imperative to discuss with this
5 panel. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with
6 you all today. Residents, chairs, panel, NYCHA,
7 PACT, legal aid, and supporting staff. Good morning.
8 It's now afternoon. Good afternoon. My name is
9 Debbie Dominguez and I am a social worker in the Bay
10 Area of San Francisco. As a cycle social family
11 social worker and family partnership and wrap
12 services, working with families resolving issues of
13 mental health, housing, probation, immigration, and a
14 myriad of court proceedings, I am advocating on
15 behalf of my brother. My brother, Michael Dominguez,
16 is a former boxer with Parkinson's and because of his
17 literacy issues, it has been imperative that my
18 mother and I assist him. Myself, as a former
19 resident of the beloved upper West side Wise Towers.
20 Thank you, Gale Brewer. As a former resident of the
21 beloved Upper West Side, I decided to fly cross
22 country to assist my brother. Michael is a golden
23 glove two time champ, World Cup bronze medalist,
24 Puerto Rico's national team and selected US boxing
25 team. Michael is an upper West side fixture as a

2 former boxer and trainer. He continues to give to
3 the upper West side as a boxing instructor. He
4 shares his skills to children of the upper West side
5 instructing them in pro social activities. Famous
6 neighbors trained with him and restaurant tours
7 donated equipment for the children to keep them
8 focused on school and out of gangs that are trying to
9 convert these kids. But Michael converts them to
10 health and wellness. Kids for free and donations
11 from adults. Michael has been living in the upper
12 West side with his companion and partner for 10 years
13 in a NYCHA apartment. They proceeded over two years
14 ago and they were given documentation at NYCHA in
15 2019 and the last in May 2020 to add him to the
16 lease. They thought it was all going through. She
17 fell ill and passed away in October 2020. Today, we
18 are coming to the panel to express our frustration
19 and how my elderly mother of 84 years started this
20 process with multiple calls, conversations with
21 NYCHA, and PACT and no one could assist her. Going
22 back-and-forth in person as I crossed the country,
23 putting my family at risk, putting myself at risk,
24 putting my elderly parents at risk. I tried.
25 Multiple calls. Over 40 calls. I have a myriad of

2 calls that I made to NYCHA. I am a professional
3 advocate. This is what I do for a living. NYCHA has
4 lost forms multiple times and I expressed to them if
5 I could get a copy. I gave all pertinent information
6 to show the rights of a resident and the
7 documentation needed to no avail. I was ping-pong
8 back-and-forth from NYCHA to PACT PRC. I'm not sure
9 why the multiple efforts to solidify his housing has
10 been thwarted. I am here today to share the lack of
11 checks and balances as it relates to the transition.
12 Also, I have been recently informed by neighbors that
13 the same NYCHA maintenance crew members have damaged
14 boilers, heating, keys to maintenance equipment, and
15 maintenance equipment, elevators as they were on
16 their way out. This I experienced firsthand while I
17 was there. With no heat for four days, no hot water
18 for three days and then it was posted and when
19 posted, beyond posted dates. No water. No heat.
20 This all within my two-week stay multiple days in a
21 row. Weeks. I know elevators for a week at a time.
22 What happens to the elderly during this time was my
23 thought. I flew across country at risk to myself, my
24 family. Issues that arose due to the transition of
25 NYCHA PACT PRC. I had upwards of all these calls. I

2 called legal aid. I called PRC. I called housing,
3 urban renewal, etc. etc. I was zigzagging in talking
4 to them multiple times and still no answer after two
5 weeks of my visit. Heavily guarded for Covid 19, I
6 still broached the subject and went out into the
7 community to help my brother who has Parkinson's and
8 still making in-person appointments with no
9 resolution. It is extremely disheartening. Over
10 multiple times I expressed that I was calling all the
11 numbers that were given. I even spoke to PRC with
12 coach who said-- coach, this new company that is
13 supposed to help the residents and nonprofit
14 organization who said they would advocate him after I
15 called. They expressed to me they would not do it
16 until he was on the lease. Wow. My experience has
17 been, unfortunately, as a ping-pong. PACT program
18 said I would have to go to NYCHA to fix the issue.
19 NYCHA has been unwilling to work with us. I have
20 never, in my experience, seen the level of inactivity
21 and disingenuous efforts on the part of other human
22 beings. More importantly, there is a person on the
23 other end of this inactivity that has left with
24 housing vulnerability and the instability of having
25 to move out with animals in tow. Michael is afraid

2 he will be kicked out with their dogs. I must ask,
3 on behalf of my family, including my mother who is
4 been a longtime advocate of the upper West side.
5 Mrs. Dominguez, an advocate who started years ago
6 with urban renewal inception as an advocate for
7 voting housing rights for strikers Bay. Since the
8 1960s. I would like the committee today to support
9 our family and solidify my brother, Michael Dominguez
10 Lisette NYCHA or PACT PRC to assure wrap his housing
11 his dogs. After losing his companion partner of over
12 15 years, he needs to continue to live without the
13 impending feeling of being removed from his home and
14 having to start the process all over again from
15 homelessness to housing. I would hope and pray that
16 the needs of the residents in all of those most
17 vulnerable in our community are seen and heard and
18 that, more importantly, their needs are being met.
19 With more transparency and accountability to protect
20 residents in the community from the lackluster
21 performance of NYCHA and now, moving forward, PACT.
22 There must be an understanding of the complexity of
23 transition, yet in understanding of basic needs of
24 knowing that housing is not basic. It's never been a
25 basic need. It is a paramount need of all of its

2 residents. I thank you all for your attention and
3 I'm inspired by the residents who expressed on behalf
4 of themselves and their neighbors and their great
5 community. Thank you to all for listening to our
6 very personal story as an example of how families are
7 trying to find ways in which to assess and shore up
8 stability and how there is no checks and balances in
9 NYCHA and, furthermore, at PACT PRC RAD. Sincerely,
10 on behalf of my brother, Michael Dominguez and my
11 mother, my name is Debbie Dominguez Wiggins, not
12 Higgins. As a tenant of human experience, one must
13 allow for the lack of our own expertise and someone
14 suffering to allow ourselves transparency out of our
15 own humanity to take the lead in a collaborative way.
16 Thank you, Madam Chair, for giving me this time.

17 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: I just want to
18 jump in here real quick. Thank you so much for your
19 testimony on behalf of your brother and your mother.
20 This is why I think it is so important to hear the
21 real stories. So we can address them directly. And
22 so, I will be looking for follow-up. So, thank you
23 to Lucy or Miss Newman. You know, clearly, I need to
24 get some background and follow up with NYCHA. So,
25 but thank you so much.

2 DEBBIE DOMINGUEZ HIGGINS: Thank you,
3 Ma'am. Thank you, Madam Chair.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very
5 much. We will now hear from John Forrester followed
6 by Danny Cabrera and then Mickey Lucas.

7 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your Time starts now.

8 JOHN FORRESTER: Good afternoon. I am
9 John Forrester, former vice president with District
10 Council 37 and currently representative from local
11 375 who we represent over 200 of the architects,
12 engineers, and project managers that work at NYCHA.
13 I have presided-- I have presented a series of
14 questions in regards to the blueprint for change,
15 which I also raised at the assembly hearing a few
16 weeks ago and I just want to say for the record,
17 labor is by no means unanimous in its support for
18 blueprint for change. There's a lot of questions out
19 there which we are still looking the answers for.
20 But, in terms of the RAD program, I mean, we are
21 using public funds here to develop and restore--
22 private funds to develop and restore public housing.
23 That's not a good thing, from the start. And we
24 believe that this can and will, in fact, lead to the
25 privatization of public housing. We are very

2 concerned about what is the-- are affordable rents,
3 in fact, going to be maintained in these efforts? As
4 the result-- is it going to result in more
5 evictions? Is there going to be increasing pressure
6 on tenants and families to actually relocate under
7 this circumstance? We are also concerned about what
8 this privatization mean to our members in providing
9 the services and providing are they going to maintain
10 and higher union members? Are they going to continue
11 to keep civil service staff on board? I mean, what
12 does that mean? I mean, for all of the suppose it
13 safeguards of RAD and PACT, it means bringing in
14 private entities whose bottom line is the bottom
15 line. That is not a great position for public
16 housing. We have no public records about how the
17 success of RAD has operated so far in New York and we
18 certainly know that it is been challenged across the
19 country in Minneapolis, in San Francisco, and other
20 areas across the country and I think we seriously
21 need to look at those. So, we're calling for a
22 moratorium on RAD until we can get credible reports
23 on what the conversion-- what the success or the
24 failure of the conversions have been before until we
25 can get a real opportunity to get feedback from the

2 residents on this issue and from the staff that have
3 been impacted by these conversions and until we get a
4 better idea of what are the possibilities of these
5 under the new Biden administration. I mean, we are
6 at a moment in time where we have an opportunity to
7 not only repair, but expand public housing in the
8 city and in this country and we need to look at ways
9 to do that. Two things come to mind immediately.
10 The green new deal for New York City Housing
11 Authority is a very comprehensive approach that I
12 really urge people to look at and, more recently, and
13 equitable recovery report that has been put out by
14 the Coalition for climate works for all coalition is
15 also worth looking at. So, I hope we take these
16 other experiences into account and that we put-- we
17 ask for a moratorium on RAD at this time until we can
18 have better information in terms of how it is
19 operated today. Thank you. Thank you for your time.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
21 now hear from Danny Cabrera followed by Nikki Lucas
22 and Paula Martinez.

23 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.
24 We're not hearing you. We have a lot of feedback.

2 DANNY CABRERA: Can you hear me better
3 now? Great. Okay. Thank you so much for that. So,
4 as we all know,-- I'll start again. My name is
5 Danny Cabrera. I am policy analyst at Citizens
6 Housing and Planning Council. Thank you all for this
7 opportunity today. As we all know, NYCHA is in
8 desperate need of more resources and greater
9 transparency and accountability to ensure they better
10 serve NYCHA residents. While RAD in its current form
11 is far from perfect, we do believe RAD is a good and
12 necessary tool as it provides capital funding for
13 developments, for development needs, along with
14 additional oversight through public-private
15 partnerships. Through our research, we have seen
16 early examples that PACT/RAD can be successful. In
17 2018, we conducted an evaluation of triborough pilot
18 projects which utilize structures similar to RAD's
19 public-private partnership for six NYCHA properties.
20 We compared work orders for the triborough properties
21 with a group of properties that remained in NYCHA
22 control. We found that, after investments were made
23 and new management was in place, the number of work
24 orders dropped in the repair times improved
25 substantially. We also conducted a tenant survey and

2 we found-- and we heard from hundreds of residents
3 about their impressions of the rehabilitation. The
4 results were pretty unsurprising when 80 million
5 dollars is spent to modernize development. When
6 tenants get new kitchens, new bathrooms, new
7 operating systems, residents are happier. However,
8 we also found residents in triborough reported
9 feeling safer, rated day to day management is more
10 responsive and experienced quicker repair times than
11 residents and similar NYCHA properties. However, it
12 should be noted that, while Triborough and RAD and
13 early RAD projects have shown the results that
14 indicate that RAD/PACT can be successful, the program
15 still does remain controversial. NYCHA has earned
16 the mistrust of tenants. RAD/PACT and other NYCHA
17 2.0 strategies can, however, change that and use it
18 as an opportunity to center resident voices and enact
19 resident decision-making in the process of
20 redeveloping their homes. CHBC's research from
21 London provides a blueprint for how we can do this in
22 New York City. And we all know residents have the
23 most knowledge about their housing needs and the
24 needs of their communities. This knowledge should be
25 looked at as a resource to the city.

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

3 DANNY CABRERA: Residents considered for
4 RAD [inaudible 03:59:27] or transfer to preserve
5 should be given information about the physical and
6 financial needs of the development, why their
7 development was selected, and play an active role in
8 the decision-making process. We believe this is not
9 only the right thing to do, but we have examples from
10 the UK where this was done and where residents worked
11 directly with the Housing Authority and the
12 affordable housing sector to redevelop their homes.
13 The same can be true here. And while the original
14 conception for NYCHA 2.0 did not include a role for
15 resident decision-making, we hope that NYCHA in the
16 city have become open to the idea. At CHBC, we
17 believe the future of RAD/PACT, NYCHA residents, in
18 the city's housing-- public housing rests on NYCHA's
19 and the city's ability to establish a true and equal
20 partnership with residents and establish NYCHA
21 residents as decisionmakers for all preservation
22 projects. And it should be noted that that does not
23 mean a ULURP process. A ULURP process will not
24 center residents as equal partners. That centers
25 community folks as partners. Thank you so much.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
3 now hear from Nikki Lucas followed by Paula Martinez
4 and then Elizabeth Gyori.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

6 NIKKI LUCAS: Chairman Ampry-Samuel,
7 members of the Committee on Public Housing, good
8 afternoon. Or good evening at this point. My name
9 is Nikki Lucas, once again, and I am a founding
10 member of the Coalition to Save NYCHA. And I thank
11 you for this opportunity to discuss and speak with
12 you regarding programs and policies relating to
13 NYCHA. NYCHA's needs have never been more dire.
14 However that need has largely been manufactured
15 through deliberate and action. Year after year, for
16 decades on end, I can recall NYCHA residents pleading
17 for help with repairs, infestation, mold, lead paint,
18 unsanitary conditions, broken doors, windows, and
19 elevators. The list is truly endless. These
20 conditions, compounding over time and multiplied into
21 tens of thousands, have left residents it out in the
22 cold and every winter this can be taken as a matter
23 of fact. Time and time again, we witness this agency
24 jumping into action when confronted by an alarming
25 news report or court order. For the last several

2 years, there has been much talk and praise about
3 NYCHA blueprint for change, peppered with clever
4 acronyms and promises of a better life for the
5 residents. However, at the same time, thousands of
6 residents are still being ignored in attempts to gain
7 consistent decent living conditions. In recent
8 testimony, NYCHA chairman Gregory Russ admitted that
9 NYCHA's proposals and goals to advocate-- to
10 advance, excuse me, the agency--

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

12 NIKKI LUCAS: with no mention of the Baez
13 agreement which would require apartments with mold to
14 be addressed. However, since that ruling eight years
15 ago, NYCHA deliberately removed apartments from being
16 covered under in that apartment once they have been
17 transferred into the RED rental assistance
18 demonstration program, putting these tenants at the
19 mercy of private developers. NYCHA is actively
20 fighting in lawsuit seeking to overturn this
21 determination. The fundamental concern with these
22 programs is that they lead to the privatization of
23 public housing. There is no real estate portfolio
24 more important in New York City than NYCHA, with an
25 estimated 600,000 people living across its buildings,

2 larger than any city in New York outside of New York
3 City. We cannot afford to give away this vital part
4 of our city. We are putting this very important real
5 estate portfolio in the hands of private developers
6 who are notorious bad actors when it comes to low
7 income earners. There is nothing these developers
8 can say or any agreements that can be created that
9 would remove the fact that they are notorious bad
10 actors when it comes to low income earners. This
11 will never change. RAD gives the developers the
12 properties almost out right wall the blueprint plan
13 does it a little more subtle through public trust.
14 The private real estate industry has long sought to
15 weaken tenant protections, deregulate rents, ignore
16 fines, and refuse to pay their fair share in taxes.
17 Why would the city subject some of its most
18 vulnerable residents to private landlords? This has
19 to stop in the Coalition to Save NYCHA will do
20 everything we can to stop this entire process and, if
21 we don't do something now about this, the alarming
22 rates, especially in East New York of the out-of-
23 control numbers of people that are in shelters and
24 that are homeless, are going to certainly increase in
25 numbers after this privatization. Thank you.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
3 now hear from Paola Martinez followed by Elizabeth
4 Gyori and then Kristen Hackett.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

6 PAOLA MARTINEZ: Hi. Can everybody hear
7 me okay?

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

9 PAOLA MARTINEZ: Okay. Perfect. So, I
10 have a recent testimony just to make sure that I keep
11 up with the time. Good afternoon, Chair Alika Ampry-
12 Samuel and members of the Public Housing Committee.
13 My name is Paola Martinez and I work for Catholic
14 charities community services as the director of the
15 social services program at the Betances Houses
16 located in the [inaudible 04:06:18] neighborhood in
17 the South Bronx. As a NYCHA site participating in
18 the PACT program in partnership with [inaudible
19 04:06:25] MDG and Catholic charities-- Can you be?
20 Hello?

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes. You can
22 continue.

23 PAOLA MARTINEZ: Perfect. So, I was just
24 saying that we have rehabilitated 1088 units of
25 housing that are home to over 3000 low income New

2 Yorkers. As the social services provider on site, we
3 liaise with community partners and city agencies to
4 provide much-needed services to our residents. In
5 2019, we conducted a needs assessment and learned
6 that residents of Betances Houses desperately needed
7 access to eviction prevention programs, jobs,
8 education, and vocational trainings, as well as
9 primary and mental health services. With these
10 priorities in mind, we developed our community
11 engagement strategy, strengthen partnerships with
12 important service providers in the area, and launched
13 our own programs to address the needs of our
14 residents. In 2020, recently in December, we
15 conducted a needs assessment to determine the needs
16 of individuals with disabilities residing at the
17 Betances Houses and we are currently working with
18 what in our college to conduct an assessment to
19 determine how Covid 19 has affected our residents.
20 And let me just make sure that you can see me because
21 I didn't turn on my camera. I apologize. Here I am.
22 Our tenant advocate and our case manager on site
23 advocate for individuals and families by helping them
24 navigate city resources and apply for assistance.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

2 PAOLA MARTINEZ: Especially when they are
3 enduring hardships such as the loss of employment or
4 death of a family member. The long and tedious
5 application process for benefits can be discouraging
6 and such was the experience of one of our residents.
7 I would like to provide an example. Luis and his
8 wife, prior to moving to the Betances, lived in the
9 streets and then in a shelter for over two years.
10 With our support, we were able to secure furniture,
11 health services, immigration legal assistance, and
12 help them to apply for HRA benefits and provided
13 additional support during the pandemic. Since the
14 launch of our program, in May 2018, our team has
15 secured over 100,000 dollars in grants to help
16 residents cover their arrears. We have referred
17 residents to the numerous services such as
18 immigration, HRA, and provided over 60,000 dollars in
19 direct assistance to the residents who were impacted
20 by Covid. The Covid 19 pandemic has certainly
21 presented itself as an opportunity to be more
22 intentional and strategic about our work and how to
23 support our residents, many of whom are essential
24 workers. Food insecurity, for example, are two
25 challenges that affect our community. Therefore, to

2 support our residents, we created a new mentoring
3 program understanding that many of them would find it
4 challenging to implement remote learning. We
5 provided laptops and school supplies, as well as
6 connected students with a mentor that motivated and
7 guided the students. Thanks to our partnership with
8 [inaudible 04:09:58] MDG and private donations, we
9 were able to allow 20 students to participate in this
10 pilot program that will continue through the end of
11 the academic year due to its positive impact, both
12 for the mentors and the mentees. Being a mentee
13 allowed students to improve their communication
14 skills, express their feelings, and find new
15 interests, as well as engage with role models. In
16 addition all the, in partnership with the NYC food
17 emergency program, fresh, direct, and feeding our
18 neighbor's programs, we have distributed over 500,000
19 meals since the beginning of the pandemic in March
20 2020. Through partnerships with corporations,
21 nonprofits, and city agencies, we have engaged our
22 residents and provide assistance in a variety of
23 topics such as financial empowerment,, including OSHA
24 trainings. We have also employed numerous residents
25 in our site. Our resource fairs are very well

2 attended, I have to say, by over 300 and 400
3 residents each time we do one of these events. I
4 want to share briefly some of the lessons we have
5 learned over this year and 1/2. We have learned that
6 the most important thing is to listen to our
7 residents and understand their needs to plan and
8 engage the right partners and to deliver much needed
9 services. Having a social services team on site has
10 allowed us to respond faster to our residents needs
11 when they are faced with challenges or a crisis such
12 as the Covid 19 pandemic. We recommend that the city
13 expands these programs and increases the staff to
14 provide social services in NYCHA properties
15 participating in the PACT program. I would be happy
16 to answer any questions that you may have and to
17 share my information if you want to learn more about
18 what we are doing the Betances Houses. Thank you so
19 much, Madam Chair, and thank you to all Council
20 members and those that have an interest to learn more
21 about what we do at Betances.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
23 no hear from Elizabeth Gyori followed by Kristen
24 Hackett and Margaret Massac.

25 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your Time starts now..

2 ELIZABETH GYORI: Hi. My name is
3 Elizabeth Gyori. I'm a Skadden fellow and staff
4 attorney in the Citywide Tenants' Rights Coalition at
5 Legal Services NYC. LSNYC provider in the nation and
6 has a long history of representing tenants living in
7 NYCHA. As a Skadden fellow, my project seeks to
8 vindicate the rights of NYCHA tenants, including
9 those facing privatization of their units under RAD
10 or NYCHA's blueprint for change. As you have heard
11 today, there is an overwhelming need for city Council
12 to take steps to ensure that public housing tenants
13 can live with dignity in their own homes and have
14 their rights fully protected. I would like to thank
15 the committee for prioritizing this critical issue.
16 We have three main areas of concern about RAD and the
17 blueprint for change. First, we fear that the
18 leveraging of private resources for repairs may lead
19 to violations of tenant's rights and unscrupulous
20 landlord and management practices in the long term.
21 Second, there is a lack of accountability and
22 oversight mechanisms for both programs, both in
23 program structure and implementation. And, third,
24 there is widespread tenant confusion, fear, and
25 anxiety about these programs in their implementation.

2 With my remaining time, I will just briefly talk
3 about how these three areas of concern manifest in
4 the RAD program. In terms of rights violations, we
5 have seen continuing conditions issued after
6 conversion. As landlords have failed to both make
7 critical repairs in a timely manner and to keep
8 tenants updated about repair progress. We have heard
9 some reports of harassment during construction and it
10 remains an open question of whether RAD conversions
11 have led to an increase in displacement or an
12 increase in eviction filings, which we all know is
13 traumatic for tenants. We have heard today that
14 NYCHA does in fact track eviction or tenants who
15 might face eviction and legal process. More research
16 and disclosure of this information is urgently needed
17 and NYCHA should disclose that information quickly
18 and as soon as possible. With respect to the lack of
19 accountability and oversight, NYCHA allows conditions
20 and buildings slated for RAD conversion to
21 significantly deteriorate prior to conversion,
22 seemingly seeking to offload critical repair costs to
23 the new landlord at the expense of tenant's health
24 and safety. As we have also heard today, the NYCHA
25 management practices have led to severe confusion,

2 loss of paperwork, and applications prior to
3 conversion leading to hold over proceedings that
4 rekindled after conversion.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

6 ELIZABETH GYORI: On top of this, once
7 buildings are converted, there are no concrete
8 mechanisms to hold NYCHA accountable for their
9 oversight of the new landlord and management company.
10 Finally, as to tenant confusions, fear, and anxiety,
11 much of this is attributed to poor NYCHA outreach to
12 tenants as we have all heard about today and a deep
13 mistrust between tenants and NYCHA due to years of
14 mismanagement, abuse, and neglect. I urge you to
15 read my written testimony for recommendations and for
16 comments, as well, on the blueprint. Thank you,
17 Madam Chair, and thank you to the committee.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks very much.

19 We will now hear from Kristen Hackett followed by
20 Margaret Massac and Rema Jason.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time starts now.

22 YVETTE KEMP: Good evening, everyone. I
23 just want to make a correction. My name is Yvette
24 Kemp. I am co-chairperson of Justice for All
25 Coalition located in Astoria Queens. Kristen Hackett

2 is a colleague of Justice for All Coalition. Justice
3 for All represents tenant residents in Astoria,
4 Westside, Ravenswood, and Queens Ridge houses. Our
5 tenants are very, very upset and they are getting
6 mad. They are tired of paying rent and they're not
7 getting the services that they are needing. It is
8 bad enough that they are dealing with Covid where
9 hundreds of tenants have died. Even attended on my
10 floor. Families have died in one apartment. When
11 Covid hit, no one was told in NYCHA about the
12 protocol of being safe, how to stay clean, how the
13 buildings are being cleaned. The workers don't want
14 to clean. They don't want to get sick, which we
15 understand, but, at the same time, our tenants are
16 living in, practically, squalor and, because the
17 buildings are secure, we have homeless staying in the
18 buildings because, when they got kicked out of
19 transit, they had no other place to go, so now they
20 are going to any little place that they can't find
21 and it is not fair. And, on top of that, people are
22 dealing with mental health and wellness issues, food
23 inequality, and, for those who speak up about repairs
24 in their apartment to management, they become targets
25 of retaliation. This is ridiculous and this

2 blueprint should be stopped. It shouldn't even be
3 talked about in Covid and I think it is really
4 disrespectful that this would be implemented during
5 Covid. Nobody is taking people's lives in account
6 here. People are not taking into account how the
7 elderly are going to get their food in their medicine
8 than they are scared to death to go outside because
9 they are afraid they may just drop dead by one
10 breath. Somebody has to have some accountability and
11 some responsibility and some kind of compassion.
12 It's like you are making money off the misery and
13 that is not fair. And so, NYCHA needs to get their
14 act together and, also, the tenant presidents need to
15 speak with the people, not for the people because
16 people are getting misinformation. They don't trust
17 their tenant presidents. So, everybody has to get
18 their act together because people are losing their
19 lives over this. And then, you're going to do will
20 blueprint talking about change. Change for who?
21 Because it seems like it is going to be a change for
22 those who are going to make money off of this. So, I
23 really need NYCHA to take a step back and not do this
24 at all because this is not right. The people are not
25 even ready. They are trying to make it through the

2 day, much less think about where the hell they are
3 going to live if they get put out. So, come on,
4 people. Let's have some compassion here. Let's do
5 the right thing and leave the blueprint alone. Thank
6 you for listening, Madam Chair, and for everyone here
7 in the panel. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
9 now hear from Kristen Hackett followed by Margaret
10 Massac and Rema Jason.

11 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time starts now.

12 KRISTEN HACKETT: Hi. And thank you for
13 the opportunity to speak with you all today. My name
14 is Kristen Hackett and I am an executive committee
15 member of the Justice for All Coalition and a
16 doctoral candidate at CUNY's graduate center where I
17 study housing policy and urban development. From
18 what I've seen in both of these roles, RAD is a raw
19 deal for tenants and one with larger societal
20 consequences that negatively affect us all. We are
21 being told by Greg Russ and by NYCHA that RAD is
22 about preserving public housing when, in fact, RAD
23 conversions transfer buildings out of section 9,
24 meaning that those buildings categorically are no
25 longer public housing. So, this is, in fact, moving

2 us in a direction towards ending public housing
3 altogether. It is really important that that is
4 clear and that is not contestable, really. In
5 addition to being transferred to section 8, private
6 companies are brought in to manage the properties. I
7 did a preliminary analysis of the private actors the
8 city and NYCHA have brought in and these are some of
9 the worst landlords in the city. Wave crest is
10 notorious for tenant harassment and high rates of
11 eviction, but number two and number three on 2019 the
12 worst evictors list are also in multiple deals. In
13 fact, these three together now control the majority
14 of units that have been converted so far, amounting
15 to 10,000 households. The other with long histories
16 of abusive tenants and abuse of public money. When I
17 started this analysis, I didn't think it would be
18 good, but this is way more egregious than I thought
19 it would be. It is hard to imagine a worse light up.
20 It is almost like the city went looking for the worst
21 landlords in the city and there is actually some
22 evidence of that, as well. But I think, more so,
23 this is really about profit. Tenant harassment and
24 abuse and eviction doesn't happen because private
25 actors don't like tenants. For them, this isn't

2 personal. This is about money and profit. Landlords
3 engage in tenant harassment and eviction because that
4 tenant is deemed to be standing between them and more
5 money. That is the reality driving these
6 conversions. These RAD deals are being structured in
7 a way that maximizes profit for private actors
8 without real concern for what that means for tenants
9 or society. Ron--

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

11 KRISTEN HACKETT: Golis, head of L and M
12 Development, number two of the 2019 worst evictors
13 list and now in control of nearly 3000 former public
14 housing units, bragged about this on a recent panel
15 in 2019. He said there is money to be made in
16 affordable housing. It's great business. The
17 government directly and indirectly subsidizes 70
18 percent of the capital stock. And he was talking
19 about RAD, specifically. This is achieved through
20 massive financing deals to the tune of 200 million
21 dollars that are tied to low income housing tax
22 credits. First, if we don't think that these
23 companies are over leveraging themselves by taking on
24 this much debt, then we are kidding ourselves. Over
25 the last 20 years, we have learned that over

2 leveraging is a key business practice of these kinds
3 of firms. And it's concerning because, when economic
4 downturns occur, it translates into neglect and
5 abandonment and deteriorating living conditions for
6 tenants. Meanwhile, private companies walk away
7 Scott free. So, while the immediate effects of RAD
8 conversions are bad enough, the future looks worse
9 with more tenants in peril and the state even less
10 equipped to deal with the needs of tenants. It's
11 also worth talking about these tax credits a bit
12 more. They were developed in 1986, supposedly with
13 the intent of subsidizing affordable housing, but
14 there is evidence of backdoor dealings with corporate
15 actors and, within a year, they had figured out how
16 to exploit them for financial gain. And they have
17 become a main source of corporate welfare, providing
18 massive tax abatements for corporations. In part,
19 this is because these tax credits exist alongside a
20 loophole that was never closed that allows
21 corporations to double dip in the tax pool. This
22 reality, which RAD furthers, is key to the declining
23 corporate contributions to our tax base, even before
24 Trump rewrote the tax code further in their favor.
25 Over time, this has cost us dearly, both in terms of

2 less public money to provide for public goods like
3 public housing, and the affordability of affordable
4 housing has become shallower and shallower. It also
5 has consequences for economic and political
6 inequality writ large, as wealth becomes increasingly
7 concentrated through these practices specifically.
8 Research shows that the most cost-effective way to
9 provide deeply affordable housing is through direct
10 investment, not through subsidizing private profit.
11 To say this in other ways, fully funding public
12 housing through section 9 is not only the more humane
13 approach, it is the more fiscally responsible. Also,
14 and lastly, on the whole what this tells us about RAD
15 conversions is that this is not about public housing
16 or affordable housing or tenants at all. It is about
17 converting what was a nonspeculative form of housing
18 into a functional tax shield for private actors. A
19 vehicle through which private actors not only profit,
20 but are also able to shield their profits from tax
21 responsibility that we are all subjected to as
22 members of the society. With this in mind, I implore
23 this committee to publicly and loudly demand a halt
24 or a moratorium to all RAD conversions in New York
25 City and further to demand public investment. There

2 should always have been a political will to do this
3 and none of the committee members before us today are
4 new in their roles, so this is something that they
5 always could have done, but with the political
6 factions realigning right now, there is more
7 political will to fund public housing now than in
8 years past. Not doing so is irresponsible and
9 willfully inhumane. I also want to stress that
10 advocating for public funding is the bare minimum.
11 Really, I implore you to throw your support behind
12 robust legislation like the green new deal for public
13 housing which is simultaneously a housing, jobs, and
14 a climate change bill that not only preserves public
15 housing for existing tenants, but for generations to
16 come, while also repositioning as a central mechanism
17 to addressing the national housing crisis and
18 altering the trajectory of our society. Housing is a
19 human right and it is time our elected officials
20 started acting that moral imperative. Thank you for
21 your time today.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you.

23 Finally, we will hear from Margaret Massac.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your Time starts now.

2 MARGARET MASSAC: Thank you for allowing
3 me to speak today and thank you for this hearing. I
4 just would like to say I am one of the tenants that
5 has been participating in a lot of the blueprint
6 meetings and I would like to say that a lot of times
7 when I ask questions, sometimes I would be told that
8 they are going to get back to me, so they brushed me
9 off and then I don't get back to. There is no email
10 follow-up of the questions that I ask and I don't
11 understand why they are always talking about debt so
12 early in the game because I feel that the debt that
13 it would put us in, if we are not able to pay it,
14 somehow in NYCHA, this is just selling-- just really
15 giving away NYCHA to the private developers. I
16 believe that we, as advocates and staff of NYCHA,
17 need to fight federal government to fully fund public
18 housing like it used to be before. However they have
19 to do it instead of all the disinvestment, give us
20 the money that we are supposed to have to run this
21 public housing and to maintain it for the next
22 hundred of years or whatever because housing is a
23 human right and we need to always work together to
24 maintain housing instead of making all these schemes
25 to give away housing to the private developers and

2 for NYCHA staff to wash their hands and the
3 politicians to wash their hands of NYCHA because
4 affordable housing is much needed in public housing
5 is affordable housing and we really needed and we
6 need to continue to fight and we need to fight for
7 the transparency that is not really there even though
8 they seem like they try sometimes, but it's not
9 really there and I a retiree and I feel that I've
10 been fighting so much just to keep afloat and I'm
11 really tired of fighting and I want to rest and I
12 want them to do what they have to do. Their jobs.
13 And I don't want to have to tell people how to do
14 their jobs.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Time expired.

16 MARGARET MASSAC: I feel offended by it.
17 Thank you very much.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. This
19 concludes our time a public testimony. If we have
20 inadvertently forgotten to call on anyone to testify,
21 please raise your hand now using the raise hand
22 function on zoom and we will try to hear from you
23 now. Seeing none, I will now turn it over to Chair
24 Ampry-Samuel to close the hearing.

2 CHAIRPERSON AMPRY-SAMUEL: Well, thank
3 you so much, everyone, for today's hearing and, you
4 know, coming out and taking up so much of your time
5 to stay here during the entire duration of this--
6 what is it? 5:39 now? So, four and a half hours of
7 the hearing. And I really do appreciate each and
8 every word that was spoken today. I just want to
9 say, again, that theme today was partnerships and,
10 when we talk of-- I know every time we say
11 privatization and private, it makes NYCHA cringe and
12 so understanding that this is a public-private
13 partnership, but it cannot be a public-private
14 partnership without really considering the residents
15 as true partners and another thing that we have heard
16 throughout the entire four and a half hours was the
17 fact that so many people chimed in to say that the
18 process should be slowed down. There should be a
19 pause. And we even heard that from Victor Bach, you
20 know, that that slowdown conversation. Let's look at
21 what is happening and really just slowdown during
22 this timeframe. And so, just wanted to put that out
23 there. And I also want to apologize to Ms. Margaret
24 because I know you are a NYCHA resident and I did not
25 realize that you were on the list and so you would

2 not have testified last. It was not my intention, so
3 I do apologize to you for that. With that being
4 said, again, I thank you and I look forward to the
5 ongoing discussion, especially when we start talking
6 about what is coming out of the federal government
7 with the new administration and the infrastructure
8 bill. So, be safe, everyone and enjoy the rest of
9 your evening and we can we will get through this as a
10 community. Thank you.

11 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 28, 2021