X
2018 NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING
PRATT INSTITUTE
144 West 14th Street, Room 213 New York, New York 10011
June 19, 2018 1:22 P.M.
APPEARANCES:
COMMISSIONERS:
CESAR PERALES, Chair
RACHEL GODSIL, Vice Chair
CARLO A. SCISSURA, Secretary
MARCO CARRION
DALE HO
UNA CLARKE
ANNETTA SEECHARRAN
KYLE BRAGG
MATT GEWOLB, Executive Director

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MR. PERALES: My name is Cesar Perales and I

2	have the pleasure and the honor of serving as
3	chair for the New York City Charter Revision
4	Commission in 2018. I'm about to introduce the
5	other commissioners, but let me just make a
6	couple of opening comments. As you know, the
7	Charter Revision Commission was appointed by
8	Mayor DeBlasio. Mayor DeBlasio, like other
9	mayors before him, felt strongly that there was a
10	need to examine the entire City Charter. He had
11	a particular interest and that was to see if
12	there are ways of expanding democracy in our
13	City. And that's not just limited to the way
14	elections are conducted, but it also goes to the
15	issue of Community Boards and other vehicles that
16	exist for citizens to express their views to our
17	government.
18	We've held hearings in each of the five
19	boroughs. We've had neighborhood hearings.
20	We're going to continue to hold hearings. But we
21	wanted very much to have an opportunity to
22	discuss the issues that have been raised at these
23	community hearings with experts. And so today,

we will be having expert testimony, enough to

educate the members of the Commission and to give

1	the members of the Commission an opportunity to
2	ask questions. The theme is Community Boards and
3	Land Use in New York City. We will have one more
4	expert forum, if I can use that term, on
5	Thursday. And that forum is going to relate to
6	City Engagement and Redistricting. The meeting
7	is being live streamed; the record is being made.
8	We obviously have a sign language interpreter.
9	And there is a lot to cover today.
LO	So with that, let me ask the
L1	commissioners and I'll start on my right with
L2	Kyle and ask him to introduce himself.
13	MR. BRAGG: Good afternoon. I'm Kyle Bragg.
L4	I'm secretary treasurer of SEIU 32BJ. It's been
L5	an honor to serve on this Commission.
L6	MR. SCISSURA: Good afternoon. Carlos
L7	Scissura. I serve as secretary of the
L8	Commission. Currently serve as president of the
L9	New York Building Congress. And prior to that,
20	ran the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. And before
21	that, served as chief of staff to Borough
22	President Marty Markowitz, where I actually
23	oversaw Community Boards and Land Use. So I'm
24	excited to be here and I'm a former Community
25	Board 11 member in Brooklyn.

1	MR. PERALES: As I stated, my name is Cesar
2	Perales. I am a Former Deputy Mayor for New York
3	City. I more recently served as Secretary of
4	State of New York. I have a long history in
5	government, both in Federal, State and City
6	levels. And I'm an attorney who spent much of
7	his career doing civil rights work, including
8	voting rights and other efforts of democracy.
9	MS. GODSIL: Good afternoon. My name is
10	Rachel Godsil. I'm the vice chair of the
11	Commission. I'm happy to be here. I'm a law
12	professor at Rutgers Law School. My primary area
13	of interest in teaching is property, Land Use and
14	environmental justice. And prior to entering
15	academia, I tenured as a lawyer working on
16	environmental justice issues, land use and
17	environmental issues, including working with
18	Brooklyn community activists in East New York as
19	well as writing a great deal of my work on issues
20	of adorability, representation and ways to
21	protect the community and protect against
22	displacement in communities. Prior to this, my
23	only other work in City government was then as
24	the Chair of the Rent and Guidelines Board for
25	two years from 2014 to 2015.

1	I just want to say and apologize, I have a
2	meeting that I have to go to at 2. I feel awful,
3	this is an area of great interest and want to
4	hear from all of you. So I will be physically
5	absent for a period and I will listen carefully
6	to everything you say on live stream. And I'm so
7	grateful for all of you here contributing all of
8	your expertise. So thank you.
9	MR. HO. Good afternoon. My name is Dale
10	Ho. I work at the American Civil Liberties
11	Union, where I am the director of voting rights
12	public affair, which primarily focuses on trying

public affair, which primarily focuses on trying to ensure equal and open access for everyone to voter registration and the ballot box. I also have to leave a little bit early this afternoon. But I also assure you, I'll be watching the stream when I get an opportunity to do so. I'm

very grateful for everyone's participation and

MR. CARRION: Good afternoon. My name is

Marco Carrion. I currently serve as commissioner

of the Mayor's Office of Community Affairs. In

that role, I do a fair amount with both Community

Boards and land use issues. I'm very interested

in hearing what all of you have to say today.

attendance today.

1	MS. SEECHARRAN: Hello and good afternoon,
2	everybody. My name is Annetta Seecharran. I am
3	the executive director of Chia Community
4	Development Corporation, when I'm not doing this.
5	MR. PERALES: I will now introduce Matt
6	Gewolb, who's our Executive Director and he will
7	briefly state the ground rules for today.
8	MR. GEWOLB: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So before
9	we begin, just very, very brief background on
10	Community Boards for those who may be unfamiliar,
11	though many of you are. For each of the City's
12	59 community districts, the Borough President
13	appoints up to 50 Community Board members for
14	staggered two year terms. And at least half of
15	these appointees must be nominees of City Council
16	members. Established by the Charter, Community
17	Boards function throughout a range of
18	authorities, including State Law, the Charter
19	itself, the City's Administrative Code and the
20	rules of the City of New York. Although the
21	roles of the Community Board is advisory in
22	nature, they play an important role in many
23	governmental decision making processes by
24	allowing communities to share their views on
25	matters of public importance. Thus far, the

1	Commission has heard many comments from the
2	public regarding Community Boards, particularly
3	regarding the appointment process, the potential
4	use of term limits and the availability of
5	resources to the Boards.
6	So Mr. Chair, for the ground rules, we will
7	conduct we'll have each of the panel make
8	statements of about five minutes. With about one
9	minute remaining, I will give you a one minute
10	warning and let you know. Then we'll conduct a
11	very brief Q&A after each speaker with questions
12	that are particular to that speaker. And a
13	longer and broader Q&A session after all the
14	panelists have spoken.
15	So again, because we have a lot of speakers
16	and a lot of material to cover, we are asking
17	that after each speaker, the Q&A will be solely
18	on clarifying and understanding what that
19	particular speaker has said and saving broader
20	questions till the end.
21	MR. PERALES: Let me begin by introducing

MR. PERALES: Let me begin by introducing the members of our first panel. The first panel will be joined by Scott Stringer, the City Comptroller, who should be here in a little while. I have Elena Conte, Director of Policy at

1	the Pratt Center. Ebenezer Smith, District
2	Manager of Community Board 12. Shah Ally, Board
3	Member of Community Board 12 Manhattan. Myphuong
4	Chung, Land Use Chair of Community Board 3.
5	Rachel Bloom, Director of Public Policy at the
6	Citizens Union. Tom Angotti, Professor Emeritus
7	at Hunter College Urban Policy and Planning
8	Development. And with that, I will begin. I
9	suspect I should follow this order. So let's
10	again with Elena Conte.
11	MS. CONTE: Good afternoon. I am Elena
12	Conte. I'm Director of Policy at Pratt Center
13	for Community Development. Thank you very much
14	for the invitation to speak with you all today.
15	I'm as interested in the conversation with all of
16	you, than in giving any particular remarks,
17	especially with regard to Community Boards.
18	Because I have to say, what I'm offering today is
19	based out of my experience at the Pratt Center
20	for Community Development, where we work with
21	community based organizations on other planning
22	issues. And I have five years previous
23	experience working for a community based
24	organization in the South Bronx.
25	And so what I'm offering today are not

1	specific recommendations on behalf of our
2	organization, but general thoughts and
3	reflections about the role of Community Boards in
4	general and topics for sort of attention or
5	further discussion. So I think the first key
6	point that I wanted to make is that when we think
7	about the function of Community Boards, we often
8	narrowly go to the function in the Land Use
9	review process. And of course, Land Use is
10	certainly an essential role on Community Boards
11	and consideration of applications. But the theme
12	I want to talk about now as well in the second
13	panel is that planning is much more than land use
14	in community boards should be much more than
15	Land Use. They're and Community Boards should be
16	much more than Land Use. They're there to
17	represent the community and serve as a vital link
18	between marginalized communities and government
19	and vice versa. And they should be the place
20	that helps people understand the relationship
21	with local institutions, conditions and
22	structures. And as such, they should be the
23	place of access for education and of debate. And
24	Boards, as they're structured in the City, have
25	this great potential. I think we would be hard

1	pressed to find folks that feel like their
2	current Boards are at that potential. And I
3	think part of the considerations or concerns
4	around that are related to the questions of
5	representation are often seen through the lens of
6	how the boards will interact with the Land Use
7	process. So obviously, the prompt of the Boards
8	is built around adequate representation and that
9	includes especially the marginalized communities
10	to be represented. They should be able to
11	reflect demographic changes sooner than the
12	political establishment and not the other way
13	around. There should standardized rules and
14	requirements for representation that allow for
15	flexibility, but that actually ensure that
16	there's an alignment of who's living in the
17	community and working in the community and who is
18	active on the board. And part of that would
19	include having pathways to joining Boards that
20	are not dependent on vetting by the Council
21	member, by the borough president. So if this is
22	supposed to be the first place of democracy, the
23	quasi-governmental structure where neighborhood
24	meets government, there should be mechanisms that
25	allow for folks to access that space, learn and

1	grow and develop leadership in that space, but
2	most importantly, represent folks that are new to
3	the community, who are not already familiar in
4	the structure of the community, alongside with
5	those who might. And I would say that the
6	strongest argument against imposing some type of
7	limit on the term that members can serve that
8	I've heard is about the citizen capacity that has
9	developed many years of serving. And I think
10	it's an important consideration about how well
11	Community Boards are supported in the work.
12	Obviously Boards are understaffed and don't
13	necessarily have the structure that can support
14	this vision of an educational place of debate and
15	real engagement in actions and issues before the
16	Boards. And so to address that, I think the
17	answer is in supporting professional planning
18	staff. And that means not just folks who
19	understand land use, but who have an influence in
20	issues beyond that, who have a clear
21	understanding of the interconnectiveness (sic) of
22	issues at the community level and how the
23	structures and systems and policies of the City
24	interact there and where that Board sits in the
25	ecosystem of the larger city.

MR. GEWOLB: You have about one minute

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2	remaining.
3	MS. CONTE: Thank you. So not wanting to
4	allow for any of my points to end up muddled,
5	perhaps I will summarize in the following: There
б	are absolutely needs to be a more systemized way
7	to address representation in Community Boards,
8	because even though there have been recent
9	reforms, it's still largely at the discretion of
10	the Borough Presidents and the Council members
11	and there isn't a consistency that encodes what
12	our aspiration is for representation at the
13	Boards. There needs to be increased staffing
14	support for the Boards in and beyond Land Use, so
15	that the Boards can manifest their relationship
16	with the community based organizations and really
17	be this portal or link to the neighborhood. And
18	that creating pathways for there to be turnover
19	in the development of new leadership on the
20	Boards is of paramount importance if we're going
21	to truly utilize this function. Thank you.
22	MR. PERALES: Thank you. Just a very quick
23	question from me: I'm somewhat confused. It
24	seems to me that there may be some conflict in
25	your saying you're not supportive necessarily of

Τ	term limits and yet, you do want to see turnover
2	and you do want to see rapidly changing
3	communities represented by the people. Could you
4	respond?
5	MS. CONTE: Thank you for your clarifying
6	question, Mr. Perales. That would be an instance
7	of the muddling of the point that I feared took
8	place. So I am in favor of term limits for
9	Community Board members. It got confused with
10	the point that the strong argument against the
11	point that I'm making, which is being in favor,
12	is that folks develop a capacity. And I think
13	that that capacity should be ongoing and
14	supported by staff. So thank you for that
15	clarifying question.
16	MR. PERALES: Anyone else have questions?
17	With that, we want to move along very quickly,
18	Shah Ally.
19	MR. ALLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good
20	afternoon. Good afternoon to the commissioners
21	and thank you to the Commission for the courtesy
22	of letting me go out of order. I have to return
23	to work. I'm an attorney by day and attorney by
24	night and I have court at 2:00. Which segues
25	perfectly into that Community Boards are

1	volunteers. Whenever I'm asked to help, my
2	answer is always yes, because I think that it's
3	our moral obligation to help one another and I
4	love Community Boards. I think Community Boards
5	are absolutely necessary. Any Charter Revision
6	should always be made to strengthen the uses of
7	Community Board. I'm the chairperson of
8	Manhattan Community Board 12, which covers the
9	dynamic neighborhoods of Washington Heights and
10	Inwood. I'm sure I'll get in trouble by saying
11	this to Mr. Carrion, but Washington Heights 12 is
12	the best Community Board in the City. I'm
13	slightly biased, but why not? Why not say it? I
14	love Community Boards so much, that I wear it on
15	my chest. I think the Chair said, on my heart I
16	wear the Community Board. We should do
17	everything to strengthen the resources of the
18	Community Boards. Community Boards are our local
19	level of democracy. I've been asked several
20	times as a chairperson, "what can we do to get
21	more involved?" I say, "go to Community Boards."
22	You go to a Community Board meeting and you will
23	understand the issues of your community and you
24	will come out of there with one good idea.
25	Community Boards are the incubators of ideas.

1	The Executive Director laid out the
2	functions of the Community Boards and the
3	vocation of the Community Boards. I encourage
4	everyone to read Section 2800 of the Charter to
5	understand Community Boards. The roles of a
6	chairperson, I have I play two functions.
7	One, you're CEO; one, you're chair leader. You
8	promote the good work you're doing in your
9	neighborhood. You also run the functioning of
10	your particular board.
11	There are some challenges that boards face
12	and this Revision offers that opportunity to
13	address those challenges. I'm particularly
14	excited by this topic; that is of Community
15	Boards and Land Use. When asked now what are the
16	quick topics that Community Board 12 is facing,
17	I'll say Land Use, Land Use and I forget the
18	third. Because we are dealing with Land Use.
19	Community Board 12 is dealing with the Inwood
20	rezoning, which is the fifth, I believe, in the
21	City and we just went through our ULURP process,
22	which is again, another area that Community Board
23	12 did a good job in. There was also some work
24	that we could have done in strengthening our
25	position. We are advisory; I think everyone gets

1	that. But we have something much more powerful
2	than just an advisory role. We have the power of
3	persuasion; we have the power of the people.
4	Even though someone tells me I'm advisory, I say
5	look, we have the power of the people. The power
6	of the people to network, advisory, we give our
7	roles.
8	The way I started on the Community Board is

The way I started on the Community Board is the quintessential issue. If you ask anyone on the Community Board the two issues that will span the entire City that everyone complains about is noise and dog poop. I was awoken one night and my wife said -- I said to my wife, "I wish someone would do something about the noise from the local bar." She can, "you could wish someone would do it or you could do it yourself." Five years later, fast forward, I'm chairing the board. So the joke's on her or the joke's on me.

In terms of democracy, every member of our community has a right to be at a Community Board meeting. They're open to the public. What I remind people is that you don't have to be a member to be involved. You show up. 80 percent of the success is showing up.

I do believe that we could empower the

1	Boards more by giving more resources. Resources
2	meaning money. We have our District Manager; our
3	District Manager of Community Board 12 is
4	Ebenezer Smith. We have a staff of three and
5	they handle everything. We have ten subject
6	matter committees on Community Board 12. And at
7	any given time, all ten are open to those who
8	want to advance that role. If we increase the
9	staff and we increase the funding, then we
10	increased the ability to handle the decision of
11	complaints. We'll have topics that we'll have to
12	deal with which are heavy, like, affordable
13	housing, which I'm not sure we can answer, or
14	we're missing a garbage can on the street. If
15	we're able to succeed with that, then we've done
16	something for our community.
17	I do believe that the appointment process
18	could have a little bit of work to do. I'm not
19	sure what the other option is, but I can tell you
20	that our members of Community Board 12 are
21	absolutely independent regardless of who appoints
22	them. The term limits are another issue. Each
23	term is two years. I think it takes a couple of
24	years to try to figure out how write a
25	resolution, how to understand City government. I

also don't think you can be a member of the Board
for 30 years either. There is some merit to
institutional knowledge. There's also merit to a
new voice and I do respect a good time limit as
chairperson.

So I'll wrap it up by saying that the end product of all the testimony you should have is not to minimize or to keep the powers of the Community Board, but to increase it. One of the success stories we have at Community Board 12 is that we saved a supermarket. We were able to save a supermarket from being closed. And that started with someone saying, "you have to staff our supermarket." So the power of persuasion and the power of network is real and it's prompt and it belongs at the Community Board level. Thank you.

MR. PERALES: Let me quickly ask a question. The question that came up in our community hearings had to do with the lack of capacity for land use. As you pointed out it's Land Use, Land Use, Land Use, Land Use, Land use and whatever you forgot. And that that is a major issue with lots of people. You as a chair of Community Board 12, what's your response to that?

Τ	MR. ALLY: We certainly could use an
2	independent Land Use expert. Land Use is one of
3	these things that's highly technical. You can't
4	sort of fake it until you figure it out. Someone
5	who understands the steps, especially the ULURP
6	steps, would be highly valuable. I think
7	appointments should be made of members with
8	specialization with certain expertise. We have
9	those on our board who are experts in this area
10	and they're valuable. But the scary part to a
11	chair is without that mandate for them to be
12	there so if they're absent one day, we're
13	without the expertise. So if we have someone who
14	is a salaried employee, then there's a reliance
15	that that person is there. I can turn to that
16	person. I'm not an expert. I can turn to that
17	person and say I ask the questions. Are we
18	doing the right thing? And we have that person
19	to answer. So I think you need to put someone or
20	staff.
21	MS. CLARKE: I'm sorry to be late. I'm Una
22	Clarke. I'm a former member of the New York City
23	Council and I'm a trustee for the City University
24	of New York. And I'm pleased to serve on the
25	Commission.

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MR. PERALES: Kyle.

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MR. BRAGG: Good afternoon, Mr. Ally. Thank 2 you for coming here and testifying for the 3 Commission. I failed to mention, but I am a Community Board member of Community Board 13 in 5 Queens. And I'm interested in hearing from you 6 7 again, your thoughts on term limits. I think 8 that my particular Community Board might be the 9 exception versus the rule in regards to diversity and representation. And I would like to hear 10 11 from you about your feelings on term limits, so 12 that you can ensure continued diversity and 13 representing that ever changing populations in those Community Boards and also the turnover of 14 15 leadership and your opinion on that. And not 16 only diversity of culture, but diversity of age. 17 A lot of young folks who have been excluded from 18 serving on the Community Boards because of the current rules on how you're appointed. 19 20 would like to hear your opinion that. 21 Thank you for that question. MR. ALLY: Each board as 50 volunteers. At Community Board 22 23 12 we just received 10 new appointments. So at 24 one point, 20 percent of our board are new.

my opinion is that we need a term limit that -- I

1	actually favor term limits. But the middle
2	ground is between term limit/no term limit; what
3	is that term limit? Long enough to allow someone
4	to understand the scope of work that they're
5	doing, but not so long that they're riding on the
6	laurels of, "I've been here for 20 years, so
7	that's what I'm going to rest on."
8	What we've recently started doing is and
9	I've answered the most honest way I could when
LO	reappointments happen every two years. I've told
L1	my members that it's never personal; it's
L2	business. You have to earn your reappointment.
L3	So even if you've been on the board for 20 years,
L4	if you've done nothing to earn that
L5	reappointment, I cannot support you. We've
L6	actually had two folks removed for that. So I
L7	can say we have to find that magic number between
L8	the years you don't know what's happening versus
L9	you've been there too long. And I don't know
20	what that looks like, but it might be five, six,
21	seven terms. While I do believe that multiple
22	terms is great and it is great, a different voice
23	also could be so maybe staggering how
24	appointments are made. I'm actually in favor of
25	term limits, but I'm actually more encouraged to

1	see that that's being discussed the turnover
2	of leadership. I'm of the belief that you don't
3	need to be on the board X number of years before
4	you can be put to leadership. I'm of the
5	philosophy that if you put someone in leadership,
6	people will respond to it. So I've recently
7	appointed people who have been on the board for
8	six months or a year into leadership positions,
9	because we all come in with subject matter
10	expertise. We don't leave out expertise at the
11	door. In fact, we want to have experts on the
12	board. So it would be a shame it would be a
13	missed opportunity by any chair, not to identify
14	the experts that coming in and putting them to
15	leadership positions. So you can be on the board
16	for 30 days. I will identify how we can extract
17	your leadership abilities. So again, that answer
18	has to be do we have a chair who understands that
19	that so our chair is a representative who
20	understands.
21	In terms of diversity, we absolutely have to
22	diversify and make sure that all the boards
23	reflect the composition. In Washington Heights

reflect the composition. In Washington Heights and Inwood we're balancing among -- someone asked me when I went to run for chair, "how could you

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1	possibly run for chair in a district that's 60
2	percent Hispanic?" And I'm Indian. I said,
3	well, why not? Diversity helps everybody. It
4	has to be promoted. It has to start from the top
5	from the ground level. Our borough president,
6	our Council members have to say, we need to
7	diversify. Diversifying reflecting our
8	composition, diversifying to reflect the cultures
9	of our neighborhoods and I hope that answers your
10	question.
11	MR. PERALES: Seeing no more questions, then
12	I would move immediately to Ebenezer Smith, who
13	will continue.
14	MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And
15	thank you for inviting me to participate in this
16	conversation. As a District Manager, I am
17	responsible of the implementation of the
18	day-to-day work of the Community Board. As
19	directed by the executive committee and by the
20	board. So I am responsible to make happen
21	everything that the board wishes to happen. And
22	it's not an easy job, because sometimes you have
23	requests coming from board members or chairs of
24	the community that are not according with the
25	reality of the City's functionality. As a

District Manager, I am a City employee and I need
to deal with the City Charters and City Agencies
and work as the City agencies work. I define my
job that I need to be like an ambassador and deal
with a lot of diplomacy between the community,
the Community Board and the City agencies and the
elected officials. And try to accomplish what I
am being asked to do in a meaningful way with the
resources that the City agency or the
organizations that I have been asked to work with
can provide to me.

One of the day-to-day challenges that I have is a finding locations for particular meetings. My chair just spoke about the Inwood rezoning that we had in the beginning of this year. And when we went planning the executive committees to work with that ULURP process, I was asked, "we need a location in Inwood large enough to hold 1,000 people at once." In Inwood, we don't have that location and it has to be for free and it has to be from 7 through the time we finish. The only location I was able to find was a school -- a very old school that is not accessible. But it can hold close to 1,000 people at once and we can have it as long as we want, because of the

1	relationship that we have with the leadership
2	from the school. A former chair of the board
3	works there and another board member works there,
4	so they were able to help me. And the day that
5	we decided was on the spring break and people
6	were upset. How will we manage that? And it was
7	not accessible. Many people was outside. We
8	were at full capacity. We had to close the door
9	at a certain point because the Fire Department
10	came, "you reached capacity. You cannot continue
11	letting people in." And you have all that
12	pressure and you're needing to make things
13	happen. And in the meantime, the board office,
14	the phone is ringing because somebody has a
15	problem with a barcode or a streetlight that is
16	not working or a lady is asking for Section 8,
17	how can we help and all the walk-ins, I need
18	immigration paper and how you can help me? That
19	happens all at once on a given day. And I only
20	have two people working with me and I need to
21	train them how to answer, because you can't say I
22	don't know, is what I told them. I tell them
23	anyone that comes here for help, we need to refer
24	them to the person. If you don't know, if I am
25	not here, please take the contact information of

1	that person, so when I come back, I can try to
2	figure it out how to refer them. Many times the
3	directions and the demands from the board members
4	and the executive community are in conflict with
5	the day-to-day operations, because when you see
6	the City Charter, the district managers are
7	responsible to process community complaints. And
8	when you got a complaint that, I have no water in
9	my apartment; what's going on? Or I have a
10	compliant for the landlord that doesn't provide
11	the heat and I have a demand to put a meeting
12	together with two people, if one calls in sick or
13	is not there, how are we going to manage these
14	things? Everything is an emergency for someone.
15	If I have someone at my desk, this is the one
16	that's going to go first for whatever reason.
17	And my main emergency is when we have a meeting
18	is going to happen today at 7 P.M., it's ready
19	with the location with the all the information
20	that needs to be distributed, all the invitations
21	and everything is ready for that meeting, and
22	that takes priority. At the end of the day, 100
23	people going to come to that meeting and they
24	need to be served.

MR. GEWOLB: One minute remaining.

1	MR. SMITH: The question also that we have
2	for the City Charter is sometimes it's very
3	vague. The District Manager works at the
4	pleasure of the board and that is interpreted
5	the pleasure of the board, what that means. And
6	you need to serve according to the standard of
7	the board. Sometimes the standard of the board
8	is not a reality that it is the managers job and
9	you need to manage that.
10	And the last question that I'm going to talk
11	about is the time limit. It's very complex one.
12	It needs to be fixed in one way. You need to
13	preserve the institution of the memory, but at
14	the same time, you need to give opportunity to
15	new residents and members of the community to
16	serve. I will say that probably a cap of years
17	of service will be good. How many years? I
18	don't know, 10, 12, 14. Because members of the
19	board, they serve two year limits. It has to
20	find a way not to pry away progress that may be
21	going forward if a cap is placed to limit the
22	term in service. Thank you.
23	MR. PERALES: Thank you. I'm going to ask
24	you a question, if I might, and I would hope
25	Ms. Chung when she speaks, will also respond to

1	it. The question has to do with something I
2	asked the chair, which relates to the capacity of
3	Community Boards to address the issue of Land
4	Use, zoning and planning in general. Are any of
5	your staff members expert in that area? Are you?
6	Or do you get any opportunity to provide expert
7	support to the members of the Community Board on
8	those issues?

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MR. SMITH: I am a lawyer by training. I've learned about ULURP and read ULURP from the City Charter and when someone asks me a question, my normal response is I was working for DOT before in the legal department and I learned some part of the process for the ULURP. However, I am not a technician in Land Use. We are blessed at Community Board 12, that our chairperson is an architect and is an expert on Land Use and ULURP process. And we have the wealth of institutions that we can figure that out. But I am not an expert. And yes we will benefit from a professional in planning that be in the office working with us and the public residents come more with the board. Sometimes we get particular question that I need to tell this person, give me your contact information. I will call you back

Ι	and then I will have to do the research to
2	provide answers to that person.
3	MS. SEECHARRAN: Just to clarify: Are you
4	the only paid staff?
5	MR. SMITH: I have two more paid staff with
6	me.
7	MS. SEECHARRAN: And then some of the
8	responsibilities or duties that you described for
9	you and your team seems to me are similar to what
LO	a local Council member's office would address.
L1	How do you see the difference in residents
12	choosing to go to you to address concerns versus
L3	the local Council member? And what is the sort
L4	of relationship in addressing issues? I'm not
L5	sure I'm being clear in my question. It sounded
16	like there was some overlap in roam
17	MR. SMITH: What I hear from your question
L8	is how people prefer me as the District Manager
L9	than a Council member to go to solve the problem?
20	Is that the question?
21	MS. SEECHARRAN: I mean, I hear that the
22	role you're playing is
23	MR. SMITH: It's very similar.
24	MS. SEECHARRAN: And I think that there
25	seems to be some arguments thus far about

1	strengthening the Community Boards. So I'm just
2	wondering if Community Boards were to be
3	strengthened, how then would that either overlap
4	in the role that the local Council members play
5	and their offices play or not? And what is the
6	sort of relationship there?
7	MR. SMITH: Many times the Council member
8	will refer people to me to solve the problem.
9	And why people choose the Council member over me
10	is because the Council member have the title and
11	have the more dues, political connection to solve
12	the matter. That's the only way I can word it.
13	But then the office of elected official they
14	refer the people to me to solve the problem when
15	the new Council member came to my district, his
16	staff, they used to call me three or four times a
17	day, how can I deal with that matter? How can I
18	explain it more to you? Well, if I can control
19	issues that take a lot of time for me to figure.
20	Find a room to have my executive meeting every
21	month. My board wants that the meeting be around
22	the district. I need to have a room with a
23	capacity at least 100 people, has to be free and
24	we need it from 6:00 to 10. But one of the
25	problems is the meeting never finish at 10. And

1	then, "I thought you said 10." It's now 11:45,
2	those persons say, "you told me at 10 and what
3	happened?" And how am I going to go back to
4	those people right away. They need to cool down.
5	That's a hell of a job to find location every
6	month. When we have a special meeting, we need
7	to find a location. It has to be free. It has
8	to be accessible. And the other day I got in
9	trouble from everyone because I find a location
10	that was not accessible and people tell me they
11	don't want it and we have to change. We changed
12	location three times and people were very upset.
13	I had to get a location that was suitable for the
14	meeting. That is a lot of time consuming that
15	when people call me with an issue, I need to put
16	it on the side. Because at that time I need to
17	resolve the location of that meeting.
18	MR. PERALES: Are there any other questions
19	from the board?
20	MS. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, it's not so much
21	a question. I just want to place something.
22	While I was on the City Council, there was
23	members of the City Council, especially those in
24	Queens, who felt that the Community Boards just
25	confused their constituents as to where to go for

1	service. So I would like to clarify for you what
2	issues that would come to you that you would call
3	the Council member and say, "I'm sending a
4	constituent to you, because this is not an issue
5	for Community Board."
6	MR. SMITH: When somebody wants some type of
7	legislation or some type of change that we're not
8	able to pass that. But the day-to-day delivery
9	of service that come to my office we resolve.
10	Remember, as a District Manager, I chair district
11	service meeting that deals every month with the
12	agencies' representative which I have a very good
13	connection. And I resolve issues with Parks
14	Department, Department of Transportation, Con
15	Edison, et cetera, et cetera. So those issues
16	related to delivery of service, I am very able to
17	resolve with those people. But when somebody
18	call me that they sidewalk repair or they want a
19	liquor license, that's according to the rules
20	cannot be passed and you need to change the
21	legislation to get what they want, I need to
22	refer them to the City Council to introduce
23	legislation.
24	MS. CLARKE: Would you surmise, if not
25	knowing, does each Community Board operate the

Ţ	way yours works or you are unique in terms of
2	your orientation towards your community and the
3	service?
4	MR. SMITH: Definitely not. Each Community
5	Board is an independent community agency and that
6	all depend on the notices of the District Manager
7	and the chair. It happens that I worked for
8	Parks Department ten years and I worked for DOT
9	ten years and I work for the Community Board 12
10	ten years. So I have 30 years of experience in
11	work that I can guide people in the right
12	direction.
13	MS. CLARKE: That's why I asked are you
14	unique? And for us who are making the decision
15	here, who wants to make to the recommendation to
16	make sure that every community is equal in terms
17	of the kind of interface and impact that
18	Community Boards have; what would you recommend?
19	MR. SMITH: The quality of District Manager
20	and the experience of the District Manager. If
21	the District Manager doesn't have City of New
22	York government experience, would not be working
23	well at any given time because they're going to
24	be confused.
25	MS. CLARKE: Whom would you say you're

1	accountable to? Are you accountable to whom
2	within the City for the kind of work that you do?
3	To whom are you accountable? Your chairman and
4	your chairman to whom? How does it work?
5	MR. SMITH: I am accountable to my
6	chairperson. That's my immediate supervisor.
7	Then the executive committee and the Community
8	Board members. We are under the umbrella of the
9	borough president. When the borough president's
10	office indicates something, we need to follow
11	that direction. And ultimately, we are directed
12	by the mayor's office as well. But also we're
13	accountable to the community in many different
14	sects of my district. If they demand service, I
15	need to deliver it to them.
16	MR. PERALES: Okay. Thank you very much.
17	Well me move on to Ms. Chung.
18	Will you wait for just a moment. Would you
19	like to hear Ms. Chung, Mr. Stringer?
20	MR. STRINGER: Yes.
21	MR. PERALES: All right. There's a chair at
22	your disposal. Ms. Chung, you've got the floor
23	for five minutes and then we'll ask you
24	questions.
25	MS. CHUNG: Thank you Mr. Chair and everyone

1	on the Commission for the opportunity to speak
2	today. My name is Myphuong Chung. I am
3	currently chair of Land Use for Community Board 3
4	Manhattan, which encompasses the Lower East Side,
5	East Village and Chinatown. First, I'll get
6	straight to the point: I'm generally not in
7	favor of term limits.
8	MR. PERALES: Generally or in this
9	particular situation?
10	MS. CHUNG: In this particular situation. I
11	am for the most part not in favor of term limits.
12	I'll give you a little bit of background of my
13	personal experience on the board and talk about
14	CB3 specifically and then why I feel the way I do
15	about term limits. So I started serving on my
16	board in 2010. I'm an architect. So in 2010, I
17	was towards the beginning/middle of a very
18	demanding career in New York City. So I was
19	working all the time basically and I basically
20	had no time to serve on the Community Board or I
21	thought I had no time. I had different
22	priorities as a young person in New York City.
23	So in 2010 I started serving on CB3 first, as a
24	public member. I did that for a year before I
25	was appointed onto not my first choice

1	committee, but a committee that I served on and
2	learned a lot of about how important that
3	committee was. As an architect, I had my heart
4	set on the Land Use committee and of course the
5	Land Use committee is one of the most coveted
6	committees in any board. So I served on the
7	transportation committee and learned so much more
8	about communities in general. My community and
9	how all the different committees are interrelated
10	and how you really need to establish a good
11	working professional relationship with all 50
12	Community Board members in order to do your job
13	even on your specific committee. That, given the
14	fact that the Community Board membership is a
15	volunteer position and most of the members on the
16	board are really trying to just patch together
17	the hours necessary to become an effective member
18	of their community. There are already so many
19	structural barriers to fulfilling our service. I
20	feel like adding a term limit is another somewhat
21	unnecessary barrier. And I think partially
22	because of the structure of the Community Boards,
23	the fact that they're on a volunteer basis and
24	it's not even a job that you have the luxury of
25	putting in the equivalent of a part-time job.

1	You know, 10 or 12 years of service on a job such
2	as the Community Board, is not the same as 12
3	years of service in the publically appointed and
4	compensated position. People are already
5	overcoming so many barriers to serve and
6	MR. PERALES: Is there an argument for not
7	enough chair members? I'm not sure I understand.
8	MS. CHUNG: I think in order to amass the
9	not just technical part, but practical expertise
LO	of being on the board it takes longer. So
L1	because you can only put in a few hours here and
L2	there to learn a very, very complicated City
13	process, to learn how government and agencies and
L4	electives work together and there's still
L5	confusion about how those different segments
L6	coordinate and work together it takes time. I
L7	think it's vital that Community Board members
L8	have time enough to grow into their roles and get
L9	to know all their fellow board members to
20	establish working relationships and agencies and
21	electives that we have to work together with. I
22	also would like to say so after I joined in
23	2010, after a few more years, I was appointed to
24	Land Use and then became chair of Land Use. So
25	all of this took quite a bit of time to grow into

1	the role and become comfortable in that
2	leadership position. I think Community Boards
3	provide a unique opportunity for people with
4	different backgrounds and expertise to serve
5	their communities who wouldn't otherwise go into
6	public service. The fact that you don't have to
7	campaign for this job, I think, opens it up to a
8	much wider variety of people, who don't have to
9	go out and socialize and glad hand and go out
10	there
11	MR. GEWOLB: You have about one minute
12	remaining.
13	MS. CHUNG: Thank you. So and also I
14	personally rely a great deal on the members of
15	board who have been very, very long serving
16	members. Not just because of their life
17	experience, but specifically their Community
18	Board experience. Some of the projects that we
19	work on take many, many years, especially the
20	Land Use projects. Over 10 years sometimes to
21	build consensus from the greater community to
22	push these actions through all the agencies that
23	we need to work together with different agencies
24	and electives to get to enact. And it's very
25	hard to find good candidates that are, you

1	know that become good members of the board.
2	And I feel like term limits are a very blunt rule
3	that cuts out as many good people as it does bad.
4	And in terms of having a process for increasing
5	turnover and diversity, I agree, diversity is a
6	problem and we need to make more efforts to make
7	sure our boards represent the community. But I
8	feel like that should happen on the front end;
9	not the back end. I think that's what term
10	limits do. I think we need to increase our
11	outreach process, improve the have a more
12	vigilant appointment and reappointment process.
13	I think we already have a structure in place to
14	make sure that boards have adequate turnover and
15	provide more opportunity. And I think that's
16	really just strengthening the process we have
17	today.
18	MR. PERALES: Let me interrupt you with two
19	questions that I have: One, has to do with
20	whether you would accept or advocate for term
21	limits if you could come back on? That is go off
22	for a
23	MS. CHUNG: Right. Well, I think that could
24	be a good way to balance the competition. Being
25	able to step away for two years, could be a good

1	way not only to open up the opportunity, but also
2	for a long serving member
3	MR. PERALES: My second question is about
4	capacity in terms of Land Use. Given your own
5	expertise and experience, do you think that there
6	should be greater capacity provided to Community
7	Boards to address questions of Land Use.
8	MS. CHUNG: I think we absolutely need more
9	technical expertise. And I think it's really
10	hard to rely on the members themselves to provide
11	that. I'm an architect and I have worked on
12	several different ULURP applications in my
13	professional capacity. But it's different. You
14	play a different role as an architect than you do
15	as a Community Board member. As an architect, I
16	am versed in certain aspects of ULURP, but not in
17	the aspect where Community Boards participate.
18	So I yes, we definitely need more
19	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
20	MS. SEECHARRAN: Can you say some more about
21	the process that you have in place to ensure
22	turnover and that there's diversity?
23	MS. CHUNG: We currently have two year term
24	limits. We currently serve for two year terms
25	and then there's a reappointment process. So I

1	think that process could be
2	MS. SEECHARRAN: But does it work to
3	increase diversity.
4	MS. CHUNG: The reappointment process? I
5	think that's one way it could help. Another way
6	is to it do more targeted outreach to people in
7	the community and get the word out. And frankly,
8	that's something the Community Boards need to do
9	better in general, just to let the community know
10	who we are and what we do. I think there are
11	tools in place and if we use them properly, that
12	should take care of the issue.
13	MS. SEECHARRAN: What are some of those
14	tools?
15	MS. CHUNG: Like having well first,
16	having targeted outreach, which is a tool that we
17	haven't really we aren't using enough. I
18	think there's there's a reappointment process
19	and that seems to change and evolve with new
20	borough presidents. Sometimes it's an interview.
21	Sometimes it's an interactive workshop. I'm not
22	privy to the actual decisions being made about
23	who gets appointed and why. I understand that
24	the board chairperson can help influence that
25	process, but the rest of the Community Board

1	members and community chairs as lar as I know,
2	don't have a formal role in advising the borough
3	president and the Council members of the types of
4	members that are needed.
5	MR. PERALES: Thank you, Ms. Chung. I would
6	like to move on now to the New York City
7	Comptroller, Mr. Stringer.
8	MR. STRINGER: Good afternoon, Chair
9	Perales, and members of this distinguished
LO	Charter Revision Commission. Many of you I know
L1	very well, so it really is great to present to
L2	you especially on some very favorite topics of
L3	mine, both when I was Manhattan Borough President
L4	from 2006 to 2013 and in the beginning of my
L5	political career at the age of 16, when Percy
L6	Sutton appointed me as the youngest teenager ever
L7	to serve on a Community Board, way back in 1977.
L8	For the record, that appointment made front page
L9	news in the New York Times below the fold and it
20	changed my life. Little did I know, when I
21	became Borough President, I would play a role
22	with our Community Boards. But I do think it's
23	important that you convene this forum on
24	Community Boards and Land Use. And I'm going to
25	submit formal testimony, but if you bear with me,

1	I just want to give you a sense of my experience
2	when I served as Borough President.
3	The first thing I want you to know is that
4	the Community Boards play a central role in
5	shaping neighborhood development and in advising
6	government on the needs and interests of our
7	communities. I do commend you again for
8	examining ways to strengthen and support
9	Community Boards in fulfilling their mission and
10	I think it's important to know the history of
11	Community Boards. They were originally
12	established as community planning boards by
13	Manhattan Borough President, Robert Wagner, back
14	in 1951. And that was to conduct comprehensive
15	community-based planning for the growth of
16	Manhattan. In 1975, the Charter Revision

the new Community Boards into what Mayor John
Lindsay had called little City Halls.

Mr. Perales, I think you remember that very well.

And Dr. Clarke, I know you know this. It ensured
at the time that service delivery, such as Parks

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Commission extended Community Boards Citywide

with 59 Community Boards representing the same

number of districts. The Charter Revision aimed

to centralize service delivery back then and make

1	and Sanitation, were consistent among Community
2	Boards. Established for the first time, district
3	service cabinet, and officially created the
4	district service manager position. In addition,
5	it gave Community Boards other advisory
6	functions, such as, budget analysis, capital
7	needs recommendations, oversight of City service
8	delivery and the creation of district needs
9	assessment.
10	When the Charter laid the groundwork for
11	local planning through the creation of ULURP and
12	197A planning, it really wasn't until 1989, when
13	the Charter Revision back then, really expanded

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local planning through the creation of ULURP and 197A planning, it really wasn't until 1989, when the Charter Revision back then, really expanded those powers. Specifically, that Charter required the City Planning Commission to actually adopt and define rules regarding the review of 197A. It did at that time give Community Board representatives the right to attend meetings regarding the environmental impact of proposed Land Use proposals and gave Boards the power to make recommendations relating to the opening and closing of City facilities. And most importantly, the new structure highlighted the role of Community Boards in ULURP as the local nucleus for responding to zoning changes.

Τ	While the Community Boards had a dual
2	mandate and many tried to focus on both service
3	delivery and community based planning, due to
4	limited resources, proactive planning often took
5	a backseat to service delivery. However, at the
6	same time, many elected officials began to
7	professionalize their operations going back to
8	1974 in the Post-Watergate era. So suddenly
9	where the Community Board at that time was the
10	service delivery agent, now you had the local
11	Assembly member with a district office, the local
12	Council member, the Congress member. You'd get
13	elected to office and suddenly you had different
14	offices in the cabinet area delivering those
15	services.
16	That was expanded back in 2007 with the
17	beginning of 311. So we had to move and we
18	should move Community Boards from service
19	delivery to planning. And I believe we should,
20	rather than focus on those constituent services,
21	we should be empowering Community Boards to
22	fulfill their intended role as neighborhood
23	planning bodies. So I do think you should call
24	these boards, not Community Boards, but Community
25	Planning Boards. I think that's critical because

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the current development boon reaches deeper into
the boroughs. Affordable housing has become
increasingly scarce and our Transit system is
bursting at the seams. Neighborhood based
planning that takes the diverse needs of local
communities into account is now more essential
than ever. With Community Boards working as
partners, the City might have an easier time
passing zoning, citing shelters and moving
forward on a host of other initiatives, to help
our City stay fair and affordable for the people
who helped build the very neighborhoods that they
are now targeting for development.

Community Boards however, have historically lacked the resources, capacity and expertise to fulfill their community planning role in a consistent meaningful way. That's why Community Board reform was the signature effort of my eight years as Manhattan Borough President. Our vision was to restructure the appointment and training process, to ensure Community Boards were comprised of well-qualified members and equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complex issues facing their communities.

1	Our reform initiatives had positive results
2	and they form my recommendations for this
3	Commission to strengthen and empower Community
4	Boards. One of the simple responsibilities of
5	Community Boards is to enable community based
6	planning and make recommendations on Land Use.
7	However, Community Boards face challenges in
8	their ability to adequately review and analyze
9	Land Use matters, due to a lack of resources and
10	expertise. Most boards do not have trained urban
11	planners on staff and must therefore rely on
12	their volunteer members to analyze Land Use
13	proposals and develop recommendations. And yet,
14	we expect them to argue their positions against
15	the 800 I think it's now \$1,000 an hour
16	lawyers, hired by major developers in front of
17	the City Planning Commission. It's just not a
18	level playing field.
19	In an attempt to level the playing field,
20	when I was borough president, our office created
21	the Community Planning Fellowship Program, which
22	at the time placed graduate urban planning
23	students in Community Boards offices. It was the
24	Urban Peace Corps. The program enhanced the
25	ability of Community Boards to undertake

1	research, analysis and mapping, allowing them to
2	better evaluate development proposals and provide
3	more sound recommendations. During my time as
4	Borough President, these urban fellows created a
5	community based zoning proposal for the East
6	Village in Community Board 3, analyzed the
7	residential conversion of Class D office space in
8	Community Board 5 and helped Community Board 10
9	in Central Harlem update their 197A proposal.

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The fund for the City of New York has continued the program in select areas. But it should be expanded to benefit every Community Board in the City. As valuable as this program is, it was developed as the substitute for what is truly needed; a full-time urban planner on the staff of every Community Board. The sole responsibility of this planner would be to support the Board's analysis in developing recommendations on Land Use matters and to coordinate community-based planning activities. Expertise of the urban planner would better enable Community Boards to conduct comprehensive community planning. So I ask you today that you require that Community Boards appoint a full-time urban planner, with a degree in urban planning,

1	architecture, real estate development, public
2	policy or similar disciplines and include the
3	necessary budget for creation to fund this
4	position. A community planner would be a game
5	changer in communities that experience
6	extraordinary Land Use applications and quite
7	frankly, they don't have the expertise and
8	they're at a tremendous disadvantage.
9	Now in addition to creating this fellows
10	program, my office invested in training and
11	continuing education for Community Board members.
12	Once appointed, new members were required to
13	attend trainings on the New York City Zoning
14	Code, ULURP, Land Use actions and planning
15	concepts. Returning members were also encouraged
16	to regularly attend these trainings to refresh
17	their skills. This continuing education, helped
18	their knowledge, better prepared them for work of
19	the office. And I have to tell you, people
20	couldn't get enough of Urban Planning 101 and
21	102. People went to these courses. It was quite
22	extraordinary. I couldn't believe people who had
23	jobs and responsibilities couldn't wait to go.
24	Now communities were able to successfully
25	advocate for meaningful changes in spite of

1	development. Some of the issues they had
2	attacked during my tenure was Columbia
3	University's expansion in West Harlem, the City
4	sponsored development by Suaz Park urban renewal
5	area and a whole host of different development
6	project, NYU expansion, Fordham University
7	expansion. The advocacy around these projects
8	just resulted in a better relationship between
9	what the community needed and what these
10	universities needed. All recognizing that
11	skylines change, but they cannot change without
12	our community. So based on this fruitful
13	experience, I would ask you to think about the
14	City requiring that we do provide training,
15	support and educational opportunities in all of
16	these disciplines for Community Board members.
17	And really codify this in a more holistic way;
18	not just based on who the Borough President is,
19	but really create a five borough agenda in this
20	area. That is something that I'd ask you to do.
21	And finally it is about recruitment. We
22	have got to do more to recruit people to serve or
23	Community Boards. Now under our administration,
24	our outreach and improvement strategy was
25	comprised of four components: Individualized

1	recruitment plans for each community, Community
2	Board, broad outreach to community organizations,
3	public information sessions and we used all forms
4	of traditional social media to reach the public.
5	We also examined Census data for each district.
6	This allowed our office to create targeted plans
7	to recruit advocates and we wanted very much to
8	recruit diversity in our Community Boards. So
9	this was something I thought was interesting: In
10	the 2000 Census, well, that showed there were 3.2
11	percent of Community Board 3 identified as Asian
12	American or Pacific Islander. That's 35 percent.
13	Yet in 2006, only 8 percent of the board or 4 out
14	of the 50 members were Asian American. This
15	meant that the recruitment strategy for Community
16	Board 3, needed to focus on outreach within the
17	Asian American community. As a result of our
18	focused approach, we were able to steadily
19	increase Asian American representation on the
20	board, tripling it to 24 percent or 12 members by
21	2011. We took the same approach to tackle the
22	lack of LGBTQ representation on boards outside of
23	Greenwich Village and Chelsea. The lack of Black
24	and Latino representation on boards South of 96th
25	Street on the Upper West Side and the Upper East

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Side and by the way, almost no Caucasian
representation in Central Harlem. So to ensure
quality, transparency and diversity, we want the
Charter to set additional standards for Community
Board recruitment and make it possible to
actually tackle diversity, which is so critical
to rounding out the different opinions of
communities.

Now finally, I want you to focus on the notion that we should create annual reports issued by each Borough President on the composition of Community Board membership and strategies used to conduct outreach and recruitment. Our office not only focused on attempts to reform the Community Board recruitment process, but also on reforming the appointment process. Now Community Boards have historically been governed by the same appointees year after year, allowing limited room for new voices and views. Dozens of vacancies and conflict of interest among board members really presented very interesting challenges. Now the centerpiece of what we did was the creation of an independent screening panel comprised of leaders from government groups, civic associations and

1	community based organizations. Our panel, our
2	independent screening panel, helped to ensure the
3	public and all who were concerned, that
4	appointments were merit-based and helped to
5	recruit applicants from their organizations and
6	communities essentially serving as ambassadors to
7	what we called Community Board reform. All
8	applicants, including those who had previously
9	served on the board, were required to complete an
10	application and come into the office to be
11	interviewed, effectively ending automatic
12	reappointments. We endeavored to appoint
13	committed candidates. We made sure that there
14	were no vacancies on the Boards. We left very
15	few vacancies. Our policy was to fill every
16	vacancy in 30 days. We had a list of
17	panel-approved candidates that met our very high
18	criteria. We basically took the politics out of
19	Community Board appointing. One of the things
20	that we did, much to my chagrin, was this whole
21	notion that it didn't matter who you supported
22	for Borough President, it didn't matter whose
23	friend you were, because like the judicial
24	selection process, if you weren't approved by the
25	independent panel, we couldn't help you. And I

1	will never tell you the stories of people who
2	were not reappointed that are still mad at me
3	today.
4	So what was the proof in the pudding? Over
5	eight years, 715 new appointments were made to
6	the Boroughs 12 Community Boards. We gave
7	hundreds of New Yorkers the chance to participate
8	in shaping the future of their neighborhoods. So
9	in ensure this momentum, the Charter should set
10	additional standards for a Citywide process and
11	timelines for Community Board appointments.
12	And lastly, I just want to say
13	MR. PERALES: But this one is lastly?
14	MR. STRINGER: Yes. Well, I was only going
15	to come today to this chair if I could give you
16	my stem winder, because if you're going to tinker
17	on the edges, don't tinker at all. You need to
18	have, in my view, with all due respect, a
19	comprehensive look at Community Boards or we're
20	going to get into the narrow discussion of term
21	limits/not term limits and not address five
22	borough Community Board reform. So I will stop
23	there, because I see you're a little chagrined.
24	But thank you.
25	MR. PERALES: I am not chagrined and I do

1	appreciate your very thoughtful presentation and
2	we're looking forward to getting your written
3	proposal.
4	MR. STRINGER: Thank you.
5	MR. PERALES: Again I'm going to cheat my
6	fellow members and ask this sort of two point
7	question. There's two things you said that
8	intrigued me. One had to do with those 800 or
9	\$1,000 an hour lawyers. And then your solution,
10	it seems to me, is to hire a recent graduate from
11	an architectural school or something. And do you
12	think that will even out the process?
13	MR. STRINGER: So the point I was making is
14	when when I became Borough President, we
15	realized that most Community Board members, even
16	with the board members who had specific Land Use
17	experience, could not begin to compete with the
18	resources that a developer would have at their
19	disposal. They obviously had the best lawyers in
20	town. They were proposing to build \$100 million
21	developments. Think about just in Manhattan
22	alone at that point. You had Columbia
23	University, Fordham University, NYU. Their
24	budget for engaging the community was unlimited.
25	MR. PERALES: I understand that.

Ţ	MR. STRINGER: What we were able to do was
2	create an Urban Planning Fellowship that began
3	this process of getting expertise, people who
4	actually would graduate students in urban
5	planning, into these Community Boards, so that we
6	could at least give them some ray of expertise on
7	an ongoing basis. What that experience proved to
8	me was that, yes we cannot rely on graduate
9	students to stem that tide. So why not hire or
10	mandate that every Community Board should have a
11	professional urban planner working full-time on
12	Land Use issues.
13	MR. PERALES: I was being a devils advocate.
14	Obviously I agree the idea of greater resources.
15	It's just that I'm trying to come up with a
16	vehicle where there's even stronger than one
17	person attached to the office. And that was the
18	reason I was poking fun at the \$800 an hour
19	attorney.
20	The other question you didn't answer is term
21	limits. I think you're term limited. Lots of
22	people are term limited and develop expertise in
23	that particular job. Would you be for term
24	limits for Community Boards?
25	MR. STRINGER: So I respect certainly the

1	will of the voters who have now spoken at the
2	ballot box, that there should be term limits
3	Citywide elected officials. And I would never
4	seek to change that, nor would you.
5	MS. CLARKE: What?
6	MR. STRINGER: Dr. Clarke says that could

MR. STRINGER: Dr. Clarke says that could actually happen. But Hearing that I do think we should recognize, that whether it's -- when you have term limits, you also have a lame duck status that sets in. We're going to see that with people who are now in their fifth year, wondering what office they're going to run for next. And I dare say, you're going to see a lot of musical chairs and people thinking about the future; not necessarily the focus of the job in front of them. And that's just the reality of elected term limits.

I think one of the things our process showed was when you have an independent screening panel that looks at the evidence, evaluates people based on merit, it creates a system where the appointed process is not automatic. The data I'm submitting to you shows that over eight years, we created -- we put on the boards, 715 new people. We upped the diversity of the Manhattan Community

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Boards by 40 percent. So by going to a
nonpolitical merit based process, it wasn't about
term limits. We had the benefit of keeping the
long term Community Board member who does a great
job and at the same time and that individual
should stay, but we also put new blood on the
Community Boards. People with fresh perspective
and different points of view.

I will say to you that during our Community Board process, there was one Community Board member that had been very cruel to my mother when she ran for City Council back in the 1970s. And the same individual was equally unpleasant when I ran for Borough President. And I'm the first to admit that during my campaign for Borough President, when it was 95 degree weather outside, I did think about the first thing I would do is throw him off the Community Board. I have to admit this; I know this is something you shouldn't say at a hearing. And then when we engaged Community Board reform, I did say, "hey, remember that guy? He probably doesn't have Good attendance. Check it out." Came back and said wow, this guy has never missed a meeting in 20 years. "Well, what's his evaluation say?"

1	Came back to me and said he's perfect. He's the
2	perfect board member. I said, "he's never missed
3	a meeting in 20 years? He does all of this? Who
4	does that on a Community Board?" And I
5	reappointed him. And once we reappointed him, we
6	basically said the politics of Community Boards,
7	we're done with that. We're going to create a
8	merit-based system. You have the opportunity of
9	creating a system that will elevate the borough
10	presidents and the new ones by 2021 and you will
11	make Community Boards something that's even more
12	attractive to people who want to access potential
13	public service.
14	MR. PERALES: Kyle.
15	MR. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank
16	you, Mr. Comptroller for being here. You've been
17	an innovator throughout your political career on
18	how the constituents access and participate in
19	government. I want to thank you for that.
20	There's a couple of things that I want to
21	ask and I want to make sure it comes out clear as
22	I speak it in my head. Ms. Chung actually made a

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statement that the Land Use Chair is one of the

most coveted positions in the Community Boards.

But as you had mentioned, there's 59 Community

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1	Boards throughout the City and new development is
2	not particularly equal throughout those Community
3	Boards. And I think over the last 20 years,
4	there's been a huge increase of development in
5	the City and overwhelmingly in a new communities
6	throughout the City. So there are other issues
7	that are very important to Community Boards that
8	are not going through Land Use or the ULURP
9	process on a regular overwhelming basis. And so
10	you had suggested that each Community Board
11	receive or be given an expert on those issues and
12	I'm not sure if through your experience in the
13	past, if you think that each board actually needs
14	one. And I know geographies changes and the
15	interest in our communities change, but I think
16	currently, the vast majority of these Community
17	Boards have not experienced that
18	overwhelming having to face ULURP as happens in
19	Manhattan and parts of Queens and Brooklyn that's
20	currently taking place. And so I'm interested in
21	knowing whether or not you think that each
22	Community Board actually needs that expert or
23	needs access to someone who is an expert. And
24	then I'd say that well let me ask that.
25	MR. STRINGER: That's a very fair question

Τ	and I don't mean to suggest that every
2	neighborhood is facing the same particular
3	issues, although I do think that gentrification
4	now knows no bounds. And I think what's
5	happening in many communities is that there are
6	changing skylines and there are unique problems
7	that we have to face both globally as a City and
8	also locally. So let's think about what an a
9	urban planner with some great expertise could do
10	to assist the Community Boards. It's not with
11	dealing with a ULURP application. There's a
12	whole issue now on that we see throughout the
13	City on closing storefronts and vacant property.
14	And doing analysis to figure out why that's
15	happening in our unique neighborhoods, I think,
16	is something that we should do. There are bike
17	lanes and transportation issues in every
18	community. We need an urban planner who could
19	lead on some studies unique to that community.
20	We also need people who have that kind of
21	background to sort of think about what would a
22	Community 197A plan we? What would the community
23	like to see in terms of development? There's a
24	whole issue that we struggle with every day. The
25	huge undertaking by this administration on

1	affordable housing plans and how you grapple with
2	what would we do to up-zone on one block but
3	down-zone on another block? Give us what that
4	would look like; not just from the City Planning
5	Commission's perspective, but what's the
6	community perspective? And then work to try to
7	align whether the community and City government
8	can find common ground. So I think there's a
9	huge potential here.
10	But the real potential is or the real
11	discussion should be, what do you think the

discussion should be, what do you think the

Community Boards are about in 2018? I would

argue that the Community Board is less about

being a service delivery operation. Only because

we have so many elected officials, 311, filling

potholes, thinking about policing. We've built a

whole mechanism around that. What is missing is

Wagner's -- Wagner created Community Boards in

1951. We've called them Community Planning

Boards for a reason, because we wanted to give

people in communities a say in what their

neighborhoods would look like. I think that's

more relevant today, than it was 60 years ago.

How we get to that change, I think is unique. I

testified at a Charter Revision Commission back

1	in	2010.	My	testimo	ny	was	longer	back	then.
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MR. STRINGER: Carlo was weary to testify 3 after me. But one of the things that they talked about is well, is this a proposal that's unique 5 to what your office did and maybe what you were 6 7 doing in Manhattan is just not what the entire 8 City would want. And I thought that was a fair 9 question. And I think for you, the question is: What should a Community Board be about in the 10 11 next ten years, let's say? And I do think it's 12 about Land Use and zoning and it's about doing 13 the critical analysis for Community Board members who really want to have more bandwidth to look at 14

the unique issues in their neighborhood.

MR. BRAGG: I have just one follow-up: So this, I think, is related to term limits and turnover of leadership, especially considering that there's going to be a lot of new development and a lot more ULURP going on. And I'm concerned too that our City government is based on checks and balances. We have on some Community Boards, folks who've served as chair in Land Use, and I'm not casting the portion against as anyone, but it appears to me that it lacks a checks and balances

1	that allows people to be maybe a little too cozy
2	with developers who come before them over and
3	over again and are successful. And so I I
4	lean toward the question of: How do we create
5	checks and balances to ensure that the process is
6	both a fair representative of the people that
7	they're serving? And then in regards also to the
8	turnover, my particular Community Board,
9	Community Board 13 in Queens, has had the highest
10	number of marijuana stops and arrests in the
11	City. And we're a very diverse Community Board,
12	but it appears that only half of that Community
13	Board is the one that's responsible for those
14	numbers. And so it's only recently that we had
15	new blood on the Community Board that this has
16	been brought up as an issue in challenging the
17	local commander about these practices. And so
18	it's because of the turnover and new blood on the
19	Community Board that challenged our local
20	commander and politicians on this issue. And so
21	to me it kind of says something about whether or
22	not people have been on a little too long. And
23	I'm not advocating for any particular term limit,
24	but I think at some point in time, there needs to
25	be opportunity for a rotation of both thoughts

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2	MR. STRINGER: So we set up an independent
3	screening panel. We had in-office interviews
4	with longtime members of the Community Boards.
5	We looked at attendance records at board
6	meetings, but also looked at committee
7	representation. We had a screening panel of
8	experts, independent of my office, who did that
9	kind of recruitment and then we created a list of
10	the most qualified people based on their
11	different experiences. And then we sat down with
12	the Community Board chair and other stakeholders
13	and said so, for example, what do you need in
14	your Community Board? What are we missing? Well
15	you know, we don't have architects on the
16	Community Board. We don't have that expertise.
17	But there's a new member who's now working in an
18	architecture firm. So why don't we go recruit
19	her? We're missing you know, don't have
20	enough attorneys to look at some litigation
21	issues of the Community Board or best practices.
22	So here's a guy who seems ready to serve. Let's
23	go get that person. And then we had longtime
24	members who didn't come out of the screening
25	panel. People who were well connected. I'm not

1	saying that they're not qualified or good people,
2	but they just in comparison to what the board
3	needed or what they could provide, the screening
4	panel gave us the opportunity to only focus on
5	the people we believed were the best based on
6	merit. It doesn't mean it's hard when people
7	who are connected or politically active, don't
8	make the Community Board. And sure, that
9	certainly can hurt politically. But, hey, at the
10	end of the day, you have a screening panel and
11	that model was basically I based it on a
12	judicial screening panel. So people select
13	judges. If you want to be a judge in this town,
14	in most of the City, you've got to come out of a
15	screening panel. There's nothing we can for you
16	unless you are found most qualified. And that
17	was the model we used.
18	So what's the proof? 715 new appointments
19	in eight years. That's a complete turnover of
20	Community Boards without term limits. And then
21	you look at well, what happened there? 40
22	percent in Manhattan 40 percent of the people
23	we appointed, were people of color. 40 percent.
24	And equally important, we integrated the
25	Community Boards. Right? So why should LGBT be

1	focused in the Village? Think about how silly
2	that is. We tried to create that integration
3	throughout. We now have Caucasian people on
4	Community Board 10, but we also have African
5	Americans and Latino people in some of the
6	Whitest areas of Manhattan, the Upper East Side
7	and the Upper West Side. And you know what? The
8	entire community is served better, because we got
9	people to believe that there was buy-in and
10	reform and a different approach.
11	Also I think in your study of this and I
12	know we will continue to talk about offices I
13	do think that we have really some great Borough
14	Presidents. I've served with some amazing
15	Borough Presidents and I think the more we can
16	create a Citywide holistic view of Community
17	Board empowerment, I think that also enhances the
18	role of the Borough President and the Council
19	members and the community, as well.
20	MR. PERALES: I'm going to have two
21	commission members with brief questions,
22	Dr. Clarke and Carl on my right. I think that
23	will be it.
24	MS. CLARKE: I just my question concerns
25	the uniformity of the City in terms of the

1	boroughs and the values of each Borough President
2	and the politics of each Borough President
3	towards their constituents and who may serve or
4	may not serve. And then the role of the Council
5	member who may tokenly be asked to name somebody
6	that somebody else wants on the Community
7	Planning Board. How do we get around all of
8	those issues to make it what you're talking
9	about? And I'm also because I'm an immigrant,
10	I just want to put it out there that for the
11	immigrant communities, there's always somebody
12	who says, "well, you don't have to do that much
13	over there, because they're not aware of what's
14	happening in the community." How do we put a
15	level playing field, so all communities feel
16	empowered and feel that they can participate?
17	MR. STRINGER: So one of the crucial
18	complaints of what we did over eight years,
19	Dr. Clarke, was recognize that our goal was to
20	diversify our Community Boards. And it wasn't
21	always easy to go into communities and find
22	people, because usually the people who were most
23	active, were people who knew the system. And I
24	can further break it down as you make your
25	decisions, on where we were successful in

1	creating diversity. 40 percent over eight years
2	is a pretty good record, but we worked at it.
3	Because diversity is something you have to work
4	at every day. That was a key component of the
5	Community Board process.
6	The other thing and again, I would ask
7	you to wrestle with this is as Borough
8	President, Council members recommend half of the
9	Community Board appointments. Under the Charter,
10	I believe, Mr. Chair, it's a recommendation that
11	the Borough President can either take or not.
12	And for the most part, my work with the Council
13	member was, "you appoint your half; I'll appoint
14	my half. But we all have to agree that the
15	people who we appoint will come out of
16	independent screening panel." So I said to them,
17	"we should only appoint on our list."
18	And I have to tell you, in the beginning
19	there were Council members who had their view of
20	Community Board reform and what they wanted to
21	do. And so I recollect that in year one and two
22	it was a very bumpy journey. But I will tell you
23	at the end of the day, we would sit and decide
24	the Community Board appointments and every

Council member in Manhattan, from Washington

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1	Heights to the Lower East Side, would sit with
2	our screening panel recommendations and would
3	look with me and say, yes, I need another
4	architect. Yes, we need a public school teacher.
5	Wait a minute, you mean, that person hasn't shown
6	up to Community meetings all year? No. We were
7	able to focus on the merit of the need of the
8	neighborhoods and not the parochial view of who
9	should be on the Community Board. It wasn't
10	always perfect. And by the way, there were
11	people who I personally wanted to see on the
12	Community Boards I'm human too, right? And if
13	they didn't make the list, they weren't going to
14	be on a Community Board and we held to that in
15	every single case.
16	MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Good afternoon,
17	Comptroller. Always good to see you. Two quick
18	questions. First of all, I think this is
19	obviously very well thought out. It's something
20	that when I worked with the Brooklyn Borough
21	President, boy, did I try. But we weren't ready
22	back then and maybe the time has come. But I
23	have two questions about the independent "closed
24	screening panel" and the process as to who
25	appoints that in your way of doing it? And then

1	the second question is: What if the independent
2	screening panel appointed the Community Board
3	members and there was no Councilman or
4	Councilperson and there's no Borough President
5	and it was a true independent process? I'm
6	curious to get your thoughts on that.
7	MR. STRINGER: In essence that's very
8	well that's almost like a logical extension to
9	be considered. I do think at the end of the day,
10	the elected official should play a role, because
11	that elected official does have a pulse of the
12	community. And sometimes there's no one who
13	thinks reform and Community Board reform no
14	one believes Community Board reform is important
15	more than I do. I really believe in it. But I
16	felt that the Borough President and the Council
17	member should continue to have that role. That
18	if you left it only to an independent screening
19	panel, it could runaway with the practicality of,
20	you know what, you're the elected official.
21	You're responsible. We hold you accountable.
22	And if you create a system that theres no
23	electoral accountability, you could have
24	something that creates a whole new bureaucracy
25	and you're at the end of the day, the only one

1	accountable. You don't run for Community Board,
2	right? So you don't have to land handle, you
3	don't have to run for election. But elected
4	officials have to be out in the communities. And
5	if that panel is really not meeting the needs of
6	the community, then electorally, you're going to
7	explain that at a Community Board meeting and be
8	held accountable from your constituents.
9	MR. SCISSURA: Who appoints
10	MR. STRINGER: The Borough President.
11	MR. PERALES: I want to thank you,
12	Mr. Comptroller, for taking the time and
13	providing your testimony. It's been very, very
14	helpful.
15	MR. STRINGER: Thank you, everybody. It's
16	great to be here. Thank you.
17	MR. PERALES: With that, I'm going to move
18	onto Rachel Bloom from the Citizens Union.
19	MS. BLOOM: Hi. I will try and be brief;
20	definitely within, my five minutes. Good
21	afternoon, Chairman Perales, and distinguished
22	members of the New York City Charter Revision
23	Comission. It's nice to see you again today.
24	I'm the Director of Public Policy and
25	Programs for Citizens Union and I thank you for

1	inviting us here today and giving us the
2	opportunity to publicly share our recommendations
3	with you. Together our positions on Community
4	Board reform seeks to strengthen Community
5	Boards, providing them with additional resources,
6	while also ensuring that there's a more rigorous
7	selection process and open process for
8	appointment of members. Most of what we will say
9	is things that are things that you've heard
10	earlier, but sometimes we'll give a bit of a
11	different perspective.
12	We believe that a mechanism should be
13	created that provides available pool of urban
14	planners, independent of the Borough Presidents
15	offices, that can be accessed by Community
16	Boards. We now heard why this is critical to
17	provide meaningful and important input on Land
18	Use decisions and to develop 197A plans. We
19	envision these urban planners to be connected to
20	one or more boards, as needed. Thereby,
21	establishing relationships with those boards and

the larger communities they serve. While housing urban planners with the Borough President to align with their current responsibilities to establish and maintain the planning office for

1	new development or improvement of land located in
2	the fir, while under Section 82 Chapter 4 of the
3	City Charter. It could become problematic when
4	the Borough President may disagree with the
5	Community Board on a land development issue,
6	which we have all seen happen. Given the role of
7	ULURP and past instances in which Borough
8	Presidents have sought to remove Community Board
9	members who have not aligned their votes with
10	that of the Borough President on Land Use
11	proposals. It is essentially that the
12	independence of the Community Boards and the
13	urban planners that serve them, be maintained.
14	We recommend reforming the process for
15	selecting members to Community Boards. Community
16	Boards are often plagued by vacancies or not any
17	turnover. To professionalize and open the Boards
18	to the communities they serve, we believe, much
19	like we just heard in great detail, a formal
20	standardized and transparent process should be
21	created for filling Community Board positions, as
22	was first done by Comptroller Stringer when he
23	was Manhattan Borough President.
24	While there have been some more formalized
25	procedures for filling vacancies among the

1	Borough Presidents, they vary enormously from
2	borough to borough. And you just all of them
3	have their applications on their website to apply
4	to be on their Community Boards for their borough
5	and it's worth taking a look. Some are one page
6	and some are seven pages and the questions they
7	ask really run the gamut and there's no
8	consistency from one borough to the other. We
9	recommend one formal appointment process to be
10	used throughout the City, like which should by
11	added to the City Charter that requires written
12	applications and interview of all appointees or
13	re-appointees by the Borough President. This
14	establishes a reasonable deadline for filling
15	vacant positions and requires Borough Presidents
16	to issue an annual report detailing their
17	outreach efforts, whom they notified of the
18	process, member reviews and the demographics of
19	those serving on the Community Boards in
20	comparison to the communities that they serve.
21	We also recommend that Community Boards
22	receive an independent budget allocation that is
23	not at the discretion of the Mayor or Council.
24	We believe that there are current insufficient
25	funding and greater resources are essential for

1	Community Boards to carry out their Charter
2	mandated responsibilities. So in that, Community
3	Boards should be provided enough funding to be
4	able to hire staff for Land Use and/or budgetary
5	expertise.
6	And we recommend that the Community Boards
7	is to be linked to that of the Borough Presidents
8	office, which we also believe should have an
9	independent budgeting. But I realize that that's
10	not something that you're looking as part of this

Charter Revision Commission.

And finally, we recommend that Community
Boards have term limits, serving five consecutive
two year terms. This limit of terms should be
phased in effectively, to ensure that there's not
a mass exodus of institutional knowledge, as we
have heard a Community Board member discuss
today. This will ensure that representation on
boards can keep pace with the changing
demographics of communities and does not become
inaccessible to the communities that they serve.
Thank you very much for this opportunity.

MR. PERALES: Thank you. I'm particularly pleased that you were so clear and direct as to your recommendations. But we are drawing late.

1	I'm going to move to Tom Angotti as quickly as
2	possible. Your prior presenter took a little but
3	more time than he was supposed to.
4	MS. BLOOM: I was happy to give my time to
5	the Comptroller.
6	MR. PERALES: Tom.
7	MR. ANGOTTI: Thank you. I'll also try to
8	be as brief as possible, since I can double down
9	on the next panel, which I sit on as well. My
10	background is, aside from being a retired
11	professor of urban planning for Hunter College
12	and prior to that, Pratt and yes, CUNY. I worked
13	for eight years in City government as a senior
14	planner, so I see some things from the inside and
15	continue to see them from the inside. And I do
16	agree with Scott Stringer, that we don't need to
17	tinker around the edges anymore. It's time to do
18	a fundamental revision of the Charter to empower
19	Community Boards. They were created almost 50
20	years ago and there's been no fundamental
21	revision of the role of Community Boards since
22	then and so much as changed in New York City.
23	But one thing that hasn't changed is communities
24	don't have a strong voice in planning for their
25	futures. And that's universal. That's all 59

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community districts. There's not one where
district where people don't care about what their
community is going to look like. Gentrification
and displacement are occurring all over the City.
Every community cares about who's going to get to
stay and who's not going to be able to afford to
stay. So Community Boards are really key.

The one thing sort of basically, since I've studied the history of this, and you're free to check out my best selling books, New York for Sale and a recent book about zoning. Community Boards we created as a result of the Civil Rights Movement. In the 1960s, there was a demand for community control. And it came out of neighborhoods that were mostly underserved and with people with low incomes; mostly Black and Latino neighborhoods. It was a step ahead, but right from the start, it started with so many limitations placed on it that it couldn't really truly serve them. And there was one revision since 1975. 1989, which was also the result of the Civil Rights Movement, when the City was taken to court and forced to get rid of the Board of Estimate Board, because it failed the constitutional rule of one person/one vote. And

1	at that time, the revisions were there was
2	testimony for a revision by the Civil Rights
3	Movement and with great support from
4	environmental justice advocates who were fighting
5	to control unwanted land uses in their
6	neighborhoods, in their backyards.
7	But there's one philosophy that has
8	continued all through this almost 50 years: That
9	Community Boards are dysfunctional. And I hear
10	this all the time from within City government,
11	"oh, you want to give Community Boards more
12	power? You want to give them money?" It comes
13	from within City government and it comes from
14	developers. It is actually good to have
15	dysfunctional Community Boards, because you can
16	then keep them dysfunctional. Now we've grown an
17	awful lot and Community Boards have become much
18	more proficient on their own. But what has
19	resulted is the kind of inequalities across the
20	board. I've been in the five boroughs. I've
21	been in many Community Boards all over the five
22	boroughs and some have excellent track records
23	and have boards who are fully participant in the
24	decisions that are made and are capable of
25	confronting serious Land Use issues. But there

1	are many who are helpless. And it coincides with
2	those neighborhoods where people are working two
3	or three jobs. They can't go to Community Board
4	meetings. It coincides with the fact that the
5	most functional Community Boards have an excess
6	of lawyers and architects who can volunteer to
7	sit on Community Boards and provide that
8	expertise that many of the Community Boards just
9	don't have. So this requires a Citywide solution
10	and a major responsibility on behalf of the City
11	as a whole, to make sure that the original
12	purpose of Community Boards
13	MR. PERALES: Let me ask you something: Do
14	you have some specific recommendations as to how
15	we would accomplish what you're asking?
16	MR. ANGOTTI: Yes. So one of the first
17	things is to stop saying that Community Board
18	votes are only advisory. That's a good way to
19	put them down. Community Boards have to have
20	revise the ULURP process, so that the Community
21	Board vote is equal to the vote of the Mayor.
22	Full-time planners by the way, it's
23	already in the Charter. It was passed in 1989,
24	but the Council to the City Planning Department
25	made a ruling that they would fulfill their

1	Charter obligation by assigning a City Planning
2	Department planner to Community Boards who needed
3	it. That is not the intention of the Charter
4	Revision. Every Community Board needs to have a
5	full-time planner on their staff. And that can
6	be changed without changing the Charter or you
7	can clarify it in the Charter.
8	No more conditional votes by the Community
9	Boards. Because one of the ways you express your
10	weakness is to say, "our vote is only advisory
11	and community based, so we're going to vote yes
12	or we're going to vote no but with conditions."
13	And then they have no weight. So that's it.
14	I think finance budget. Also the budget
15	process. Community Boards participate in a
16	budget process, which is inadequate. There's one
17	Borough-wide budget hearing every year and a
18	number of other local budget hearings. Every
19	Community Board should have participatory
20	budgeting, but for a significance of the budget
21	that affects those communities.
22	MR. SCISSURA: Any questions from the
23	commissioners? Okay. Thank you very, very much.
24	We appreciate you sitting here through this panel
25	and look forward to hearing more information in

Τ	the coming weeks.
2	Should we go right into the next panel?
3	Okay. So our panel will be on Land Use in
4	New York City. And I'm going to introduce, David
5	Karnovsky, who's a partner at Fried Frank.
6	David, thank you. And Mr. Karnovsky is going do
7	give us a short overview on Land Use in New York
8	City just so we have a context. Jessica Katz,
9	Executive Director for the Citizen Housing
10	Planning Council. Tom, you're not going too far.
11	Moses Gates, Vice President, Housing &
12	Neighborhood Planning for the Regional Plan
13	Association. Ron Shiffman, Professor Emeritus
14	for Pratt Graduate Center for Planning and the
15	Environment. Elena Conte, Director of Policy,
16	Pratt Center for Community Development. And
17	last, but not least, Adrien Weibgen, Staff
18	Attorney, Equitable Neighborhoods Practice,
19	Community Development Project, Urban Justice
20	Center.
21	I'm going to turn it over to our Executive
22	Director now. And we're going to ask if you can
23	really hit your points. I know many of you have
24	given us testimony in writing, but given the time
25	and nature of this afternoon, if you can give us

1	your points and then we'll follow-up with
2	questions today or in the coming week or two.
3	So, Matt, would you like to take it from
4	here?
5	MR. GEWOLB: Thank you very much,
6	Mr. Secretary. We don't have additional
7	substantive comments except to reenforce our
8	format, which is the five minute presentation for
9	our panelist. I'll give you the one minute heads
10	up. And then from the Commissioners, we'll ask
11	clarifying questions for each panelist and then
12	try to hold broader questions for the end of the
13	panel, if we can.
14	MR. PERALES: I'm back. Let's begin in the
15	order I've been given. We'll start with David
16	Karnovsky.
17	MR. KARNOVSKY: Good afternoon. I'm David
18	Karnovsky from the firm of Fried Frank. I'm not
19	here representing the firm. I'm here to as an
20	individual. I served as the General Counsel to
21	the Department of City Planning for 10 years
22	before joining the law firm. I was asked to
23	provide an overview of the Land Use in New York
24	City in ten minutes, which is impossible. Five
25	minutes is truly impossible, so I'll see what I

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I thought that rather than focus on Land Use in general, it's useful to think about what the role of the City Charter is in Land Use specifically. Obviously, the Charter establishes all the various agencies that are players in the process and I don't have to list them; you know them. But the most important task, at least I think, it establishes the procedures by which decisions, principally in form the Uniform of Land Use Review Procedure, ULURP. The Charter identifies players in the process, it establishes the pre-procedures that are followed. significantly, it doesn't express a point of view or perspective about what those policies and decisions should consist of.

So to illustrate, obviously, while the Charter creates the process for the review of zoning determinations, it doesn't address the content of the zoning resolution, that vast document, which has been compared unfavorably to the Internal Revenue Code, at all. It doesn't address topics like waterfront zoning or development rights, inclusionary housing. That is not its function. Rather its importance is to

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establish the legal, procedural and positioning
the framework within which decisions are made by
community planners and elected officials. And
the principle way which it does so, of course, is
ULURP.

So onto ULURP. I think it's important to understand ULURP in the context of what led to its origination in 1975 by a State-appointed Charter Revision Commission. That it was appointed at a time when the City was in fiscal crisis and the State was exercising heightened scrutiny of the City. And it was also against the backdrop, I think, of an increased call for community control and community involvement, as well as, the end of the infamous Robert Moses era of planning. What the Commission at that time identified was a series of issues. First, it identified the problem of insufficient community participation in the process. And at that time, the involvement of Community Boards was really ad hoc. They were involved in some actions and not in others and it was kind of an irregular system. Secondly, fragmentation and lack of accountability. The Commission observed that there were too many procedures and too many

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different kinds of actions and that undermined public confidence. And third was delay. They observed that there was a lot of delay in the process with no way of resolving conflicts and that they festered for a long time.

So in thinking about how to create a system, they had to address a bunch of issues. First of all, how to balance local Borough-wide and Citywide interests in the process. And there's a really interesting quote from that report; it says, "The dilemma for the Charter Commission is how to give local communities a say in shaping important Land Use policies without granting them veto power over the public's welfare." words, how to strengthen, not balkanize the City's neighborhoods and communities. What they concluded was that there is actually no way to distinguish between purely local issues and purely Citywide issues. That all issues have elements that are local and elements that are Citywide and if there wasn't this category of action where the local voice should have veto power.

So it was decided that the best way to deal with this was to give the Community Boards first

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action on all Land Use issues that affect their
area, allowing them to shape the proposals in the
early stages and influence the decisions made at
a later stage by the City Planning Commission and
at that time, the Board of Estimate.

In terms of predictability and consistency, they decided to establish the Uniform process -this is where we get the word uniform out of ULURP -- a single process for all major Land Use actions, under which a zoning change goes through the same process as let's say, disposition of City property. And in terms of delay, they prescribed a time clock. A time clock for action by each of the parties from the Community Board to the Borough President, to the Planning Commission, to the Board of Estimate, with no ability of any party to stop the clock. And they also looked very carefully at the balance between the professional role and the political role recognizing the Planning Commission as the planning body as an important role, but that the last stop should be the Board of Estimate as the political body.

So the end result of all of this was a system that provides for a graduated sequence of

1	public review under mandated time periods that
2	moves from the most local level to the regional
3	level to the Citywide level. The underlying
4	thesis of all of this was that a Land Use
5	application, as it moves through the process, is
6	shaped in ways that produce a better decision.
7	That the local input at the early changes
8	influences the other decision makers. That the
9	projects changes and responds to comments and
10	that the decision makers modify the project as it
11	moves along all within this prescribed time
12	clock.
13	Moving along to 1988, you have the abolition
14	of the Board of Estimate and a whole lot of
15	decisions that have to be made about how to deal
16	with that in terms of ULURP. The first big
17	question of course is, what's the role of the
18	City Council? The Charter Commission at that
19	time and I had the pleasure to attend all of
20	their meetings as a young lawyer had to decide
21	what jurisdiction they should have. Should it be

question was, are there some actions that

shouldn't even go to the City Council? The

the same as the Board of Estimate? And the big

legislative actions like zoning, of course. They

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1	are legislative in nature. But there are many
2	administrative actions in Land Use and they
3	wrested with it. But they concluded that just as
4	in the case of this distinction between local and
5	Citywide, that there really wasn't a clear
6	distinction between purely legislative and
7	administrative. You have an administrative
8	action, which in a locally community are so
9	important, and have so much potential impact,
10	that they decided that everything should be
11	capable of going to the City Council. And they
12	created a process around it by which some items
13	are automatically going to the Council, while
14	others are within an elective jurisdiction. The
15	Council has to decide to review them. That was
16	their solution to that dilemma. They had to
17	worry about the Borough Presidents, since the
18	Borough Presidents were on the Board of Estimate
19	and they had a lot of power and now they were
20	disempowered; the Council was empowered. And
21	they created a review role of the Borough
22	Presidents, which was advisory. But the theory
23	was that the Borough Presidents would use their
24	ability to achieve change in these projects. And
25	the prior procedure of the Comptroller was to

1	ensure	the	role	of	the	Borough	Presidents	was
2	communi	cate	ed.					

Then there was the big question about what should be the composition of the Planning Commission. The Commission, up until that time, was purely mayoral and the question was, should they try to recreate the Board of Estimate within the Commission by giving the Borough Presidents a role there as well as the public advocates? Ultimately they came down in favor of a balance of power between the Mayor and the Council, where the Planning Commission was nominated by the mayoral appointees with some appointments by the Borough Presidents as well. So that's the system we have today.

ULURP applies 12 categories of actions and I can't go through them all. But just to highlight some important ones within the theme: With respect to zoning, changes in zoning maps, it's simple to change from manufacturing district to residential district, let's say. Those all go through ULURP and there are two types of applications generally speaking. One application is made by the private party for their property and secondly, applications made by public

1	parties, like the Department of City Planning,
2	for larger areas. Then you have categories of
3	actions that are commonly applied for by private
4	parties developers, owners like special
5	permits, when someone is trying to modify the
6	regulations that apply for a particular building
7	that they'd like to develop, whether it's the
8	height, the height and setback, the use. Those
9	are predominantly the private applications. And
10	then you have applications, which are by nature,
11	City-driven like site selections. Those are
12	applications made by City agencies in the case of
13	a site selection, which is a vow to establish a
14	new City facility, whether it be a new Sanitation
15	garage or a new waste water treatment plant.
16	Those are obviously applications for capital
17	projects made by City agencies. And so ULURP is
18	kind of a montage of those different types of
19	applications.
20	I think you understand and I'm not going
21	to go in detail of how the process works and how
22	it marches through the sequence but basically
23	you understand that there's 60 days with the
24	board, 30 days with the Borough President, 60
25	days at the Planning Commission and 50 to 65 days

1 at	t	the	City	Council.

2 One of the questions of course is, well, 3 where is the Mayor in all of this? What happened to the Mayor? And the answer is that the Mayor has a veto power over the Council's action and 5 the Council can override the Mayors decision. 6 Veto, like in the case of local legislation. But 7 the Mayor's veto is not a line item veto and so 8 9 it's rarely used. Let's just assume City Planning proposes a big rezoning like East 10 11 Midtown. The City Planning Commission approves 12 it, the City Council approves it, the but it adds 13 modifications that the Mayor doesn't like. the Mayor vetoes, he's vetoing the entire 14 15 project. He can't single out the modification. 16 That's the way it works. And as a result, the 17 veto is extremely rare. And as a practical 18 matter, Council is the last say. 19 So in conclusion, this is a very intricate 20 process. It's guided by a set of objectives that 21 were identified in 1975. They were reenforced by 22 changes made by the Fritz Schwarz Commission in 23 the '80s and that continue in place today. And 24 those objectives in role remain as important

today as they were back then.

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1	No process is perfect and ULURP is by no
2	means perfect. And no process guarantees a
3	particular result either. But I think overall
4	that it has stood the test of time. I would
5	suggest that major changes and adjust to ULURP
6	should not be made without a huge amount of
7	study, a very significant investigation, so that
8	we can ensure that some of the values that were
9	vetted in in 1975 and used today are maintained
10	and that we don't lose them. Thank you.
11	MR. PERALES: Thank you. That's been very,
12	very instructive for those of us on the
13	Commission who are not planners.
14	I'm going to ask that you all go through
15	your presentation. We took too long in the last
16	panel. So it's five minutes for each and then
17	the Commission can get at you. Is that fair?
18	With that, Jessica Katz.
19	MS. KATZ: Hi, how are you? Thank you. I
20	want to thank the members of Charter Revision
21	Commission and for this important discussion and
22	for asking me to speak here today. My name is
23	Jessica Katz. I'm the Executive Director of the
24	Citizens Housing and Planning Council, CHPC.
25	Founded in 1937, we began our mission as a civic

organization, which was to develop and advance practical public policies to support the housing staff of the City of New York. We're a Council of 90 leading professionals across all aspects of the housing and planning sectors.

Prior to joining CHPC this year, I spent 12 years at the New York City Department of Housing and Urban Development -- of preservation and development, where I held various positions. But for most of my time with City government, I was responsible for the City's Supportive Housing Pipeline to create homes for chronically homeless and disabled New Yorkers throughout New York City's neighborhoods. I'm very proud of the communities and strategies that we have built in the supportive housing sector and will say that it was only by engaging in a robust community process, that we have been able to create so many successful supportive housing projects throughout New York City.

I'm here today in my capacity as Executive

Director with CHPC, eager to engage in a

discussion about how to include the quality of

our public discourse and ensure a better decision

making process to guide Land Use decisions in our

l complicated ever changing (

And on a personal note and as a policy nerd, I'm very envious of your role as members of the Commission. You have the opportunity to reform the circulatory system and the skeleton of the New York City government and I hope you're all enjoying the process and I'm happy to be in the conversation.

CHPC has been working over recent years to change the City's approach to Land Use issues. We want to make it easier for community members to say yes to local Land Use actions that they support and not simply easier to say no. That means having a more streamlined review process that incorporates community feedback, environmental reviews and input from government agencies in a way that is collaborative instead of adversarial. Rather than simply putting more potential roadblocks in the hands of those who would oppose any change, the City should make adjustments to its planning procedures to make a new housing a positive asset for communities and their existing residents.

Community input is a core value of our democracy. But not all community processes are

created alike. We must ensure and secure that
the community process can incorporate both local
and Citywide needs and drive the creation of
affordable housing, rather than act as a
deterrent. Community planning rather than
new-deism (sic) should rule the day.

City Charter reform creates an opportunity to make meaningful change, but it also runs the risk of handing the keys to those who resist the creation of much needed affordable housing or give too strong a voice to a local few, while those most in need are shut out of the process.

Now, I would like to put forth five key recommendations. First, a predictable timeline, which is critical. The ULURP process currently has as a well defined timeline in its ritual. That should not change and any discussion of lengthening that process, must be bound against the costs of doing so. Second, the process must find a way to balance Citywide needs against neighborhood goals. Third, we need to start by establishing our goals for the land use process. Community input and participation is a valid view and a goal in itself, but New York City has many other planning and development goals. Creation

1	of affordable housing, returning City owned land
2	to productive use and neighborhood
3	revitalization, among others. Fourth, the
4	Department of City Planning must have the
5	resources, so they can better process Land Use
6	actions and provide more robust technical
7	assistance to Community Boards. Fifth, we must
8	create a process that gives voice to the
9	voiceless. Currently the only people who don't
10	have a vote in the ULURP process, are those who
11	may someday live in the new housing proposed.
12	For an example that is near and dear to my heart,
13	there are 60,000 homeless people in New York City
14	and they do not have for the most attend
15	Community Board meetings. And yet, it's both our
16	legal and moral responsibility to ensure that
17	their needs are met.
18	And to wrap-up, I just want to say, the
19	ULURP process as it currently stands is long,
20	it's technical and it's messy. Communities
21	complain their voices are not heard. Developers
22	complain that their needs are not being met. The
23	pre-ULURP process is used for productive
24	negotiations and as a stall tactic. In the
25	course of your public hearings, you will hear

1	complaints that the process is too rigid and at
2	once too open-ended. That there's too much
3	community input as well as not enough. So where
4	I started my testimony today with all the reasons
5	why ULURP reform is needed, there will be no
6	perfect solution that satisfies everyone. And it
7	just may be that like any god negotiation, we
8	know we've succeeded when all parties walk away
9	unhappy with the result. It may be that the
10	ULURP process for all its faults is simply a
11	reflection of how difficult these Land Use
12	choices are and that the controversy is not a
13	reflection of a broken process at all, but of a
14	productive push and pull among stakeholders.
15	Thank you, again for inviting me to continue to
16	be part of the discussion and I'm happy to answer
17	any questions.
18	MR. PERALES: Well, we'll have questions
19	after we've heard from everybody.
20	Tom, we're going to go to you next.
21	MR. ANGOTTI: I think one big problem is not
22	the ULURP process or the length of the ULURP
23	process itself. I'm not suggesting lengthening
24	it or shortening it. It goes through necessary
25	steps. The problem is pre-ULURP. All of those

1	discussions that go on, side discussions,
2	agreements that get made behind closed doors are
3	part of the undemocratic process that precedes
4	ULURP. And it's followed by a series of public
5	hearings at the Community Board level, at the
6	Borough President level, at the City Planning
7	Commission level, at the City Council level,
8	which are more theater, than true democracy.
9	Why? Because we're stuck in a method for
10	participation that is bankrupt. I've attended
11	many of these and have heard people upset because
12	they have to wait eight hours, ten hours to give
13	a three minute presentation to a panel that's
14	absent. There's only a stenographer and there's
15	one or two people on the panel that happen to be
16	there with their eyes open. This is broken. We
17	need true democratic participation and dialogue
18	between the people who are going to make those
19	decisions and and perhaps we need to have
20	public advocates or perhaps the public advocates
21	office getting involved in structuring a truly
22	democratic process.
23	The other thing that's broken is the
24	environmental review process. It occurs mostly
25	before a ULURP application is certified and goes

1	through ULURP. It's done in a very highly
2	technical language that most people don't
3	understand, including many elected officials, who
4	have to take the vote. And in the meantime, the
5	environment suffers because the real
6	environmental issues that we need to be addressed
7	when you have massive development, go through a
8	process of environmental review that is only
9	geared toward disclosing potential negative
10	impacts and not necessarily mitigating them and
11	not necessarily changing the way the City does
12	business, so that future Land Use actions don't
13	have negative environmental impacts. So
14	environmental reviews have a disclosure process.
15	It does not require anybody to do anything. And
16	there's no follow-up. Even when there's a
17	promise of a mitigation, there's no follow-up ten
18	years down the line, to see if that school was
19	built.
20	So there have been several proposals for
21	changing this pre-ULURP process. Community
22	benefit agreements, memorandums for understanding
23	written coming out of the Mayors office or other
24	offices in City government. But they don't
25	they disappear very quickly. The Williamsburg

1	rezoning in 2005 was followed by a memorandum of
2	understanding of about 30 pages coming from the
3	Mayor's office, that nobody can seem to find
4	today. There's nothing in it that requires the
5	City absolutely to provide the financing
6	components that were promised in that memorandum
7	of understanding.
8	MR. GEWOLD: You have one minute remaining.
9	MR. ANGOTTI: So my recommendations are
10	basically sunshine for the pre-ULURP process.
11	Make it out in the open, public and don't let it
12	be negotiating behind closed doors, because then
13	people get to the ULURP process and say all the
14	deals have been made. We can't change anything.
15	The applicants are reluctant to make any
16	significant changes, because it might set them
17	back and they might have to do another
18	environmental review and start all over again.
19	Change participation. Make it a truly democratic
20	participatory engagement, so that people can
21	engage with the issues at hand. Community Boards
22	again need the financing provisions to have the
23	professional help and also to be able to provide
24	information to the citizens and the people who
25	participate in the ULURP process.

1	I do think Community Boards need to be
2	elected and more representative and again, that's
3	very uneven. There are many Community Boards,
4	particularly in the new immigrant communities,
5	that are multi-laboral and conduct all of their
6	business in one language, English.
7	Training, paid for by the City, of Community
8	Board members in the areas that they are engaged
9	with. And I do think the Community Boards are
10	old and mature enough now that their votes could
11	be equal to the Mayor's votes. "Not in my
12	backyard" exclusionary thinking is not only a
13	thinking that resides in neighborhoods; it
14	resides in government as well. It takes a
15	different form. So lets attack new-deism
16	wherever it may occur and let communities have a
17	real stake in the ULURP process.
18	Just in the last year, I've attended many
19	Community Board hearings, Land Use community
20	hearings, where hundreds of people as a result
21	of rezoning that's very popular. Hundreds of
22	people turnout to demonstrate and loudly and
23	disrupt and close down the meetings. That's a
24	symptom of a lack of power. It's not power.
25	And finally, I have one other detail I think

1	that should be reconsidered, are the fair share
2	requirements that were in the 1989 Charter
3	Revision and are extremely unique. This is that
4	every community should get no more than its fair
5	share of burdensome land uses by City facilities.
6	MR. PERALES: Your time is up. We'll get a
7	chance to ask you some follow up questions.
8	Thank you very, very much.
9	Our next name on the list is Moses Gates
10	MR. GATES: Thank you and I do apologize. I
11	have a 4:00 meeting downtown and I have to leave
12	after this. My name is Moses Gates. I'm the
13	Vice President for Housing and Neighborhood
14	Planning and the Regional Planning Association.
15	And we work not just in New York City, but in the
16	kind Tri-State area, Connecticut, Hudson Valley,
17	Long Island and Northern New Jersey.
18	And the first thing I kind of want to
19	acknowledge is that compared to many other
20	municipalities, ULURP is more transparent, more
21	community involved and more predictable for
22	developers than many, many other Land Use
23	processes in the region. I think we need to
24	start by kind of acknowledging the parts that are
25	good as well as the parts that need improvement.

Τ	In our experience, the symptom of kind of
2	the conflict, the theme of the conflict
3	throughout most of ULURP process that can stop
4	good things from happening and also not give
5	communities the power over unneeded or unwanted
6	uses, is a sense that there's no ability to
7	proactively community plan. That unless you're
8	able to put forth a positive vision that has some
9	oomph behind it and some ability to be
10	recognized, that the only option you're left with
11	is an option of obstruction or an option of
12	essentially trying to go through the process and
13	make the best of what might be perceived as a bad
14	deal. And I think the Charter Commission has a
15	really interesting opportunity to kind of revisit
16	that and make things a lot more predictable for
17	the development community as well as a lot better
18	for other communities that are going through
19	this.
20	I would say that the biggest thing in terms
21	of Community Board Reform and we've kind of
22	discussed that, there are many, many tools and
23	processes. One I want to point out is a civic
24	engagement tool that was actually developed by
25	the government of Madrid, called Console, which

1	is kind of an open-source software tool. When I
2	was a tour guide routinely working till around
3	11:00 at night, I was not able to attend any
4	Community Board meetings and I actually really
5	wanted to at that point in my life. If you work
6	nights, if I can't get childcare, if you are
7	otherwise kind of have life obstacles, you are to
8	a large extent kind of shutout of the community
9	process, even though we've advanced to the point
10	where there are other tools, other than going to
11	a weekly evening meeting every alternative
12	Tuesday, to kind of give our influence and have
13	communities give thoughts as to the Land Use
14	process and we're long overdue to embrace those.
15	The other thing that we can do as an able
16	community is to kind of proactively plan for
17	their neighborhoods, which is again, starting to
18	happen a little bit in a very interesting way.
19	The ULURP process is essentially a disclosure
20	process in decision making. It's more or less a
21	tri parte negotiation process between the
22	relevant City Council person, the administration
23	and whoever is proposing the project. And if
24	you're proposing the project, you kind of have a
25	seat at the table. And what communities are

1	starting to learn is that if they propose a
2	project, it might not come out the other side as
3	they are envisioning, but they're able to drive
4	the discussion and they both have a seat at the
5	table. Because in the ULURP process, anyone is
6	able to propose a rezone. If it is legal and
7	meets all the requirements, you're able to put it
8	in and legally City planning needs to move
9	forward with it. What is happening and what
10	we're seeing is that communities are doing this,
11	but only communities that have the financial
12	resources and social capital to be able to do it.
13	For instance, the rezoning process on the Upper
14	East Side, that was done essentially to try to
15	knock some height off of a proposed tower. That
16	was able to be done because of the finances and
17	social capital of the community on the Upper East
18	Side that
19	MR. GEWOLB: One minute remaining.
20	MS. GATES: An office of community based
21	planning that would be able to both give
22	resources and assist communities in developing
23	kind of a proactive framework, would be very
24	interesting. Not necessarily a rezoning
25	framework, because I don't think that addresses

1	most community needs. But communities were able
2	to put forth a positive vision that included
3	and I must stress this included fair share
4	provisions; not just for infrastructure, but for
5	housing development and affordable housing
6	development and that was part of what was worked
7	out with the administration. You'd be able to
8	kind of create a blueprint that developers would
9	be able to work within and have a lot more
10	understanding and be able to kind of move through
11	the process with a lot less resistance if there's
12	a little more definition of what the community is
13	looking for both in terms of development and also
14	in terms of any kind of added amenities that
15	might result in the development process. So we
16	want to stress kind of the office of community
17	based planning that can kind of help facilitate
18	this, as well as more modern tools for civic
19	engagement, which will allow a much, much greater
20	voice of people to be present in the development
21	process, as opposed and I must stress, more
22	voices, does not necessarily lead to a different
23	outcome than less voices. I think that's fairly
24	neutral in the outcomes that might happen. And
25	thirdly, some form of fair share process. But a

1	fair share process that also acknowledges a
2	community's need to meet housing obligations and
3	meet the affordable housing obligations in kind
4	of a growing and increasingly expensive City as
5	well as new community amenities and
6	infrastructure obligations.
7	MR. PERALES: Thank you very much, Mr. Gates
8	and I hope you make your meeting.
9	MR. GATES: I will give it my best shot.
10	MR. PERALES: Ron Shiffman.
11	MR. SHIFFMAN: Thank you very much and thank
12	you for inviting me, commissioners and dear
13	colleagues. I'm Ron Shiffman. I'm Director
14	Emeritus for the Pratt Center for Community
15	Development, which I founded in 1964. I also was
16	Chair of the Planning Department of Pratt for a
17	number of years and a Professor Emeritus there.
18	I served on the City Planning Commission between
19	1990 and 1996.
20	I want to step back a little bit, because I
21	think a lot of the decisions to be made have to
22	be made within a framework. The year I graduated
23	from high school, then developed an architectural
24	school, bus segregation in the United States was
25	being vigorously challenged and eventually ended.

1	Until the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Americans
2	accepted the fact that African-Americans had to
3	sit in the back with Whites in the front. And
4	when a White person entered the bus if there were
5	no empty seats, a Black person had to get up and
6	yield their seat to a White person. Today we
7	acknowledge that outrageous wrong, except when it
8	comes to Land Use and development decisions.
9	Displacement of residents because of their class,
10	race or income or place of origin has become
11	commonplace in every community in this City and
12	in too many City's across the nation. This is in
13	large part because we allow Land Use decisions to
14	be guided by marketplace principle and the
15	highest and best use principle. The appraisal
16	institute defines highest and best use as the
17	following, the reasonable, probable and legal use
18	of land for an improved property that is
19	physically possible, appropriately supported,
20	financially feasible and that results in the
21	highest value. We allow concepts like highest
22	and best use when we engage in market and
23	development for Land Use and development
24	decisions, all of which dictates how Land Use
25	decisions are made in the City. Highest value is

Ι	a purely a marketing terms and not based on a set
2	unique scale alternatives for a shared vision of
3	our City. A City of social, economic and
4	cultural diversity. A City of inclusion and
5	opportunity. We ignore the phrase of the
6	definition, legal use of, which can and should
7	include factors such as social, economic
8	integration and other values that can result in
9	engaging their planning process to achieve
10	constitutionally numerical rights and
11	selectively desired outcomes. Instead, we engage
12	in Land Use decisions predicated on policies to
13	attract the creative class, middle income
14	families and to maximize the return of the
15	ordinance speculation. When we do this, we're
16	telling more impoverished, low income residents,
17	new immigrants and people of color that they are
18	to yield their seats to those of higher income
19	and to those that generate more wealth for a
20	select few. 53 years after Montgomery, we use
21	the same principal of racial segregation in a
22	sophisticated way to sort out and segregate our
23	society; not in buses, but in our neighborhoods.
24	We are all victims of that policy. We all pay
25	for the resulting disparities. This City needs

1	to stop the Land Use policy driven by development
2	and instead adopt a policy based on principles of
3	inclusion and opportunity coupled and driven by
4	community based planning. Planning must precede
5	land use and associated action. Planning
6	properly undertaken would include social,
7	economic, environmental, education and
8	transportation factors at the outset. It should
9	be comprehensive and integrated; not separating
10	our needs into Cylos, but weaving together a
11	strategy that leads to qualitative and viable
12	places. Planning needs to be people centered;
13	not driven by speculative, narrow economic
14	returns. Specifically, I would like to refer you
15	to the testimony of Paula Segal, that outlines
16	some steps that need to be taken and that should
17	be an integral part of any proposed Charter
18	charge. I would also suggest that you read and
19	re-read the very important title, "The Inclusive
20	City: Strategies to Achieve More Equitable and
21	Predictable Land Use in New York City," and meet
22	with members of that working group that produced
23	that report. In large part their recommendations
24	are an outlook of the experience and the
25	deliberation of two dozen of New York City's

Τ	political organizations dedicated to the healthy,
2	vitality and qualitative growth and development
3	in the City. Indeed there are many communities
4	in New York City, especially environmental
5	justice communities, many of whom have been
6	engaged with the New York City Environmental
7	Justice Alliance and engaged in their own
8	inclusive proactive comprehensive command for a
9	long time with neither assistance for support
10	from the City.
11	MR. GEWOLB: One minute.
12	MR. SHIFFMAN: the impact the planning
13	for inclusive and just City. Today is June 19th.
14	A day, Freedom Day, that commemorates the
15	announcement in Texas of Lincoln's Emancipation
16	Proclamation ending slavery throughout the former
17	confederacy issued two years before that.
18	Unfortunately, the legacy of slavery and the Jim
19	Crow Laws that followed have not all been
20	eliminated. Indeed, many of them continued in a
21	sophisticated way and are perpetrated by too many
22	in our profession in the way that we develop our
23	Land Use and zoning policies and in the
24	development that basically won. This Commission
25	has the opportunity and indeed the obligation to

1	craft the Charter that sets a new direction.
2	Please seize the opportunity to reject the Land
3	Use policies of today and engage in a planning
4	first policy that in turn leads to the Land Use
5	and zoning policies necessary to create an
6	equitable and sustainable City of opportunity.
7	One based on principles of social, economic and
8	environmental justice. I think through that kind
9	of framework, then the details fall into place.
10	We had a City Planning Commission like a
11	Community Planning Board that has no longer word
12	the word planning. There are Zoning Commissions,
13	there are Land Use Review Commissions. They're
14	not looking at planning. They're not looking at
15	the totality of what we do in our City that comes
16	to rest in the neighborhoods where our people
17	live. And I think it's about time that we began
18	to reinstitute the planning process. We stripped
19	away from the Planning Commission years ago, the
20	right to review the capital budget. And with
21	that, we also stripped away any creativity of
22	that agency to go out and work with communities
23	in a true and honest way. Missing are the
24	community initiated efforts to begin to see how
25	the people can craft and develop their

1	neighborhoods. Sure we need a predictable
2	timetable. Sure we need more affordable housing.
3	But our affordable housing strategies are such
4	that they're creating greater displacement in the
5	communities while it's bringing in more
6	affordable housing for a different income group.
7	The people on the local level are not stupid.
8	They know what's happening when the area is
9	changing. They know what's happening when their
10	schools are overcrowded and they don't see a new
11	school in the pipeline. We've got to reinstitute
12	the 197A planning process, which is a community
13	initiated planning process that has teeth. That
14	engages the community and the developers and
15	others in predictable forms that can take place
16	today. But unless we think about the words and
17	at processes and the framework of justice, then
18	we're going to be failing on this Charter
19	Revision.
20	MR. PERALES: Thank you. We appreciate your
21	comments.
22	Elena.
23	MS. CONTE: Thank you. Good afternoon later
24	in the afternoon. Thank you again for the
25	opportunity to speak and listen. Again I'm with

1	begin with the Pratt Center Development. I'm a
2	spring chicken compared to Ron and Tom. I have
3	about 15 years of experience in this and what I
4	didn't say last time was that I really appreciate
5	the openness of this Commission to really
6	interrogate us, even though it wasn't an official
7	formal charge. I think it's a really critical
8	time in the City to be considering this. Things
9	are at a fever pitch in terms of the development
10	battles in the City and the consideration of
11	what's happening on a neighborhood level.
12	The overarching point that I want to make is
13	that planning is more than Land Use. Right? It
14	properly considers the systems and structures
15	into which Land Use sticks. Right? It's about
16	the social, environmental and economical change
17	and land use is not just planning. Right? And
18	so I think we're asking the wrong questions about
19	Land Use procedures about government,
20	stakeholders, developers and communities is that
21	too much is being lumped onto the process
22	unfairly. Right? Communities feel as though the
23	structural issues that are related to employment
24	and right to stay, access to quality education,
25	environmental health and quality, all of these

Ţ	things are being ignored through the Land Use
2	process and that Land Use changes have impacts on
3	those things that are not being addressed. And
4	on the flip side, government agencies and private
5	actors feel as though they're being asked to
6	address questions that are outside of their
7	jurisdictional responsibility, that are outside
8	the bounds of the Land Use process. And in
9	government, they either question the connections
10	that community members are making about cause and
11	effect or even if they are inclined to trust
12	those connections, they are without the tools to
13	incorporate them into work. I'm sorry. Not a
14	professional testifier fire. And the response
15	that communities often looks like, we need to
16	oppose this in order to get less of what I don't
17	want. Right? And often times, Council members,
18	especially in lower income and communities of
19	color, are saying, I need to embrace or invite
20	this in order to get more of what we deserve in
21	terms of structural investment. And all of that
22	just puts too much on Land Use. Land Use can't
23	do all of that. Right? But planning can do more
24	of that. So again, I'm a spring chicken, but I
25	still have coauthored in 2010 for the last

1	Charter Revision Commission. I'm going to
2	reference it and followup here again, very
3	short, it says we need to plan comprehensively.
4	It says we need to strengthen community based
5	planning, we need to address fair share and we
6	need to track commitments. Right? All of those
7	things are still true. There's been lots of
8	progress with neighborhood commitments, although
9	little has been done about tracking specific
10	commitments. But honestly, that's the smallest
11	piece. The biggest piece, the structural cause,
12	the root of it all is that we're not planning
13	comprehensively as a City. Right? So we've got
14	a bunch of different polices, Next Gen, Lead by
15	50, One New York City, Turning the Tide Against
16	Homelessness, The Capital Planning Process, the
17	Neighborhood Development Fund, 100,000 Good Jobs.
18	There's lovely policies or many policies that we
19	can repeat or vote, right? But they don't speak
20	to each other. Right? They're not Tom's
21	reference, right? The relationship of that to
22	the planning that's happening on the ground is
23	unclear. I think a lot of times people brand
24	communities as stupid in terms of thinking that
25	the Land Use process can address all of these

problems. They just don't understand that that's
not how it works. I think folks very well do
understand that all of the action, attention
political capital and energy is being placed into
the Land Use process and there's vacuum of energy
around consistent policymaking that treat the
social, environmental and economic needs of the
community and they are going right to where the
action is in order to get needs met, because
system around it is deficient, the planning
system.

MR. GEWOLB: One minute.

MS. CONTE: Wow, all right. So quickly, the zoning resolution is not a well considered plan. Environmental review is certainly insufficient, but the same thing about ULURP applies to environmental review. We're debating the displacement characterization and we should and we should reform that. But we're doing that because that's essentially the only place in the City of New York where displacement is being discussed in terms of real policy. We have an opportunity with the way we do this process, but it's not letting us tackle it. So if there's one thing that the Commission addresses, it would be

1	this vacuum around comprehensive planning. 197A
2	planning should not be advisory and actually
3	planning in general shouldn't be advisory. DCP
4	says we need a credible plan to accompany the
5	rezoning that are in displacement studies and yet
6	it's unclear to me what standing those plans
7	actually have if the commitments in those plans
8	aren't listed in a tracker bill. They're getting
9	actually a systematic way to go back and check
LO	and see if those things happen or to see how
L1	other community displacement. And it
12	disadvantages us on the State level as well,
L3	right? There's an example happening right now in
L4	the South Bronx where there was a tremendous
L5	planning process that was done by the City and
L6	now the State is proposing something
L7	substantially different in terms of a highway
L8	plan and there isn't actual standing for that
L9	plan. So we need to strengthen community based
20	planning and planning at the same time. And I
21	will submit more in terms of further
22	recommendations in writing. So thank you.
23	MR. PERALES: Thank you. Adrien Weibgen.
24	MS. WEIBGEN: Hi, good afternoon. Thank you
25	for the opportunity to testify. My name is

1	Adrien Weibgen. I'm a staff attorney at the
2	Community Development Project in Equitable
3	Neighborhoods Practice. We work directly with
4	impacted communities to further assist in
5	prejudicial, racial, economic and social
6	oppression. And in particular, we work with
7	communities to respond to City planning processes
8	and project developers and make sure that folks
9	who lived in those neighborhoods for a long time
10	aren't forced out in the name of progress. So I
11	have little to add to the excellent
12	recommendations you already heard from the
13	remainder of the panelists all of whom are very
14	big players, which I am not. But I do want to
15	offer some perspective from the work that CDP
16	does with community based organizations
17	throughout the City, many of which have become
18	the targets of neighborhood rezonings and next
19	generation neighborhood development. My main
20	objective is sort of to offer the perspective of
21	why it's so essential to similar to the
22	recommendations that the panelists have spoken
23	about in particular the need for transparency
24	in the pre-ULURP process and clear timelines.
25	And the support for community based planning,

1	which is most certainly not the departments is
2	not mandated and not what they do. And also to
3	ensure there are ways to allow communities to
4	have a meaningful voice without involving
5	incident new-deism and segregation and other
6	efforts to be used as forms of local control. So
7	as I mentioned, we have done a lot of work along
8	with Elena and others on this panel on keeping
9	communities that are being displaced throughout
10	the City. And the reason it's so essential to
11	have independent support for planning within the
12	communities is that when the City comes to you, a
13	neighbor rezoning process that is not a process
14	that's initiated by the community almost ever and
15	it's a process that's in furtherance of a goal
16	that the City has set Citywide, that may be a
17	worthy goal. I think many of us on this panel
18	really disagree with the answer to the
19	affordability crisis plan which is just make more
20	houses. But to me, that's a plan designed to
21	create more affordable housing that, which is a
22	goal that many of my clients share. But because
23	the orientation of the plan is to say essentially
24	because the administration to meet the demand of
25	300 units of affordable housing, that we have to

1	build a reserve. They have set a goal that's
2	based on the number of units, but it is not a
3	goal that was set by the most directly impacted
4	communities. It's not a goal that is supported
5	by anyone in the affordable housing communities
6	or any of the organized communities that I work
7	with nor any of the people it purports to
8	benefit. Be that as it may, that's the goal that
9	doesn't set the driver of neighborhood
10	rebuilding. It to a great extent is helping to
11	meet that goal and that is also too true of plans
12	to develop in-full projects on NYCHA land where
13	again, the City plans with NYCHA to build between
14	80 and 100 NYCHA campuses around the City. NYCHA
15	Housing is of course a demand of deeply
16	affordable housing in the City and also of
17	largely a Black and Brown population that does
18	not have its needs met and will not have the its
19	needs met by the program that's being proposed.
20	In the face of all of that, my clients have an
21	unending amount of optimism that I respect them
22	for tremendously, because in many cases, they and
23	their families have been displaced by previous
24	planning processed be it a rezoning in
25	neighborhoods such as Williamsburg or earlier

1	initiatives for urban renewal. I have clients
2	from the South Bronx who were displaced from
3	Harlem as part of an urban renewal. As Elena
4	alluded to, the issues with the highways in the
5	South Bronx that have been going on for quite a
6	long time. We also have clients who were
7	displaced by various Robert Moses projects to
8	build highways. So all of our clients have
9	witnessed over and over the City initiating
10	planning processes that from the perspective of
11	the City seemed like a really excellent idea and
12	almost always are enhanced by lay planners who
13	think they have really great ideas for the low
14	income communities of color that they want to go
15	in and fundamentally change. So despite all of
16	this extremely negative history that our clients
17	are very aware of from their personal experiences
18	from being displaced and yet they engage in the
19	City's formal ULURP process in every possible way
20	that they can and then some. So they send
21	letters to agencies before the process even
22	starts telling them what they want. They make
23	certain community plans and hopes that is going
24	to influence what the City does. They turn out
25	in droves to every single hearing, as Tom was

1	pointing out at least all of the hearings that
2	I have been at, if it was an any sort of voting
3	process based on what community members say they
4	want, not one of those neighborhood rezoning that
5	this administration has advanced, would have
6	passed. And think

MR. GEWOLB: One minute.

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MS. WEIBGEN: So this is just to say that the support for community planning are absolutely essential, because there's nothing worse for democracy than when people actually go through the process and participate and they turn out in droves and they do absolutely everything they can, only to at the end of just say, that was a just waste of my time. And there is a real opportunity today to say it's not of waste of peoples' time if they know that chicken is not cooked when it's put in the over already. if they can have an opportunity to participate in the earlier portions of the planning, if the City is required to disclose several different options when it proposing a neighborhood rezoning; not here's what we're presenting, take it or leave it. Which is by and large what is happening. But instead, here's one version of what we think

1	and here's why. And we understand that you all
2	have different goals, so heres what that would
3	look like and here and the impacts of that
4	alternative. There's some very inadequate
5	version of this in the City's environmental
6	review process, but it comes way too late to
7	allow anyone to meaningfully consider, which of
8	these alternatives would meet the goals of the
9	Community Board. In my waiting ten seconds, I
10	also want to make a quick pitch for NYCHA
11	development. All NYCHA development to be subject
12	to ULURP. At the moment, some of the development
13	that takes place on NYCHA campuses is not subject
14	to the ULURP, which completely disenfranchises
15	NYCHA residents in the process. There have been
16	a lot of recommendations on Land Use. What I'm
17	asking today is that that is a relatively simple
18	one that would make a huge impact specifically as
19	the City planning between 80 and 100 in-full
20	projects around the City of up to 10,000 units of
21	affordable housing, which will have a huge impact
22	on NYCHA residents. And today many of them have
23	absolutely no say in the matter and their Council
24	members don't either and the Borough Presidents
25	don't either and that is something that could be

1 addressed by the Commission.

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MR. PERALES: Thank you very much. Let me tell you what my problem is. We're supposed to put something clear and concrete before the voters in November. We're not decision makers here. We're here to determine what are the issues that you think should be addressed in a revision of the City Charter. And if you have the opportunity or are so inclined, maybe you can go back and send us something that will help us to digest, better understand what your positions are on what we can do about Land Use with what are going to be relatively modern changes in the City Charter. Remember, you don't want to go into a voting booth and have to review a three page referendum that this Planning Commission put before you. So we have a tough job. And while we have been persuaded by many of your comments, I'm not so sure we understand what to put before the voters.

One question I have is actually David

Karnovsky -- either I missed it or you didn't say

it -- but there have been lots of issues around

or disappointment dissatisfaction with something

called pre-ULURP process. Can you take a minute

1	and tell me what it is?
2	MR. KARNOVSKY: Sure. Okay. The pre-ULURP
3	process is fundamentally about two things from an
4	applicant's standpoint, whether it's a City
5	applicant or private applicant and then I'll talk
6	a bit about the interaction with stakeholders
7	during that same period. It's about preparing
8	the application and preparing the environmental
9	review. Getting everything in order to the point
LO	where it's ready for public review.
11	MR. PERALES: There are no time limits for
12	this?
13	MR. KARNOVSKY: Well there were no time
L4	limits for a long period of time and there were
L5	lots of complaints and the Department of City
L6	Planning, towards the end of the Bloomberg
L7	administration, promulgated some rules that were
L8	designed to systemize this whole process and
L9	create not absolute timelines but cycles of
20	review within the department to try to ensure
21	timely response by the department through
22	submissions by applicants. So for example, if
23	you prepare a draft application or a draft
24	environmental review document, you submit it to
25	the department. The department comments on it

1	sends it back to you within a period of time.
2	You go through a period of processes to the point
3	where the department says this is complete and
4	ready for review. So there's no absolute
5	timeline. No one can say it takes only this
6	number of months. But there is a sequence that's
7	followed and it's standardized now and the
8	intention of the department is to create some
9	order in this process that didn't exist before.
10	And I think it's been relatively successful. The
11	overall timeline is long, but there is more
12	certainty about how you do it, what steps you
13	have to go through, who you have to talk to and
14	all of that sort of thing. I think what was
15	discussed by others here has more to do with
16	what's going on between an applicant between a
17	private applicant perhaps but also the department
18	which goes on an area wide rezoning during that
19	time period in terms of interaction with the
20	community with the local electives the Community
21	Board and so forth and so on. That interaction
22	takes place, which refers to dissatisfaction
23	about some aspects of it. But I'll tell you from
24	the point of view of private applicants, those do
25	not engage in that kind of consultation are

1	making a huge mistake and they do it, because
2	they're never advised or they ignore those
3	parties, because you can't go into the ULURP
4	process and expect to come out with any form of
5	success if you haven't touched base and had those
6	discussions. Now, the transparency of that
7	process is something that Professor Angotti has
8	talked about and written about and those are some
9	potential questions ans issues. But it takes
LO	place because applicants want to improve their
11	proposals and better assure that they will get
L2	support when the process is actually launched.
L3	So that does take place, whether it be a
L4	Community Board or the Council member or the
L5	Borough President. The Department of City
L6	Planning obviously does the same thing in its own
L7	ways. So that's that whole chunk of time.
L8	MR. PERALES: That helps. Other
L9	Commissioners have questions?
20	MS. SEECHARRAN: So I was also interested in
21	the pre-ULURP process and I wonder, Professor
22	Angotti, if you could share with us some very
23	concrete recommendations for increasing
24	transparency? And I also wonder if any of the
25	panelists could comment on the Office of

1	Community Based Planning that was recommended by
2	Moses, if that would be an opportunity to address
3	some of the recommendations that you share and
4	that second question is really for anybody.
5	MR. ANGOTTI: I would suggest an Office of
6	Community Based Planning should exist, but not
7	within the City Planning Department as it exists
8	today. In fact, there was at one time a
9	Community Planning Office and it did not really
10	engage with communities. It didn't have the
11	resources, the capacity nor did it have the
12	administrative support that's needed in 59
13	community districts. So I think it should be
14	the problem is the Department of City Planning is
15	misnamed. It's a zoning department. They do
16	zoning. They don't do planning. I think the
17	biggest single reform could be a Charter
18	requirement that every ULURP action be consistent
19	with a 197A plan, with a community based plan.
20	And a community based plan that is also done with
21	the support, financial and technical support, of
22	City government in different agencies. Every
23	zoning should be based on a well-considered plan.
24	In fact, the State Constitution requires that.
25	Unfortunately, we have an historic blank here.

1	The City Planning Department considers the Zoning
2	Resolution to be a well-considered plan. It is
3	not. It's a regulatory mechanism controlling
4	building size, height and so forth. But people
5	in communities want real planning. They want to
6	know ten years from now, are we going to have
7	enough school seats? Are we going to have better
8	health services? These are our problems. Our
9	problems aren't that we need more housing only.
10	That's what planning is. So I would say section
11	197A of the City Charter was revised in 1989
12	specifically to and it was a response to
13	community based organizations that were doing
14	their own plans. And it specifically allowed
15	them to do their plans, be considered by the City
16	Planning Commission and voted on. Well since
17	then, there have been only 17 approved. And Ron
18	and I know because we worked with many of the
19	neighborhoods and communities. They stopped
20	doing them. Why? Because the City Planning
21	Department votes on them, it approves them and
22	then they store them and put them on a shelf.
23	It's the classical planning problem
24	MR. PERALES: Tell us, Ron
25	MR. ANGOTTI: I say making that a

1	requirement and making it a hard requirement in
2	the Charter and also clarifying the language on
3	having a professional City planner.
4	MR. SHIFFMAN: First of all, I'll give you a
5	quick point that I submitted in my written
6	testimony but amended to it a set recommendations
7	that I would like you to review and I think they
8	make sense, so I'll have to simply them in
9	someway so they can be put on a ballot. I agree
LO	very much with the fact that we need some form of
11	community based planning in the City of New York.
L2	However. We have to be careful. Once we mandate
L3	it, a 197A plan that becomes actual law, it also
L 4	has to go through an environmental review process
L5	and it needs the resources by which to get that
L6	through the process. So we might wind up with
L7	having that as a law but there is no resources to
L8	pay for the environmental impact statement if it
L9	doesn't come through. And I think it's really
20	important to do that. The other thing is we
21	really have to get to the root of the
22	environmental impact analysis. What we do is now

is that because all of the environmental

the reason there's so much constant complaining

considerations are done once a developer or the

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Ţ	City has an idea of a project they want. And
2	it's a project that's already fixed in their mind
3	and so they go about doing it. Planning is
4	setting down the principles that you want,
5	developing the framework that you want to achieve
6	and then you develop the projects. So it's in my
7	mind the environmental impact statement is at the
8	end of the pipe when it should guide. It should
9	be principle by which a plan is developed. No
10	displacement. No environmental adverse effects.
11	A whole variety of other issues. Once you do
12	that, then you make it predictable for the
13	developer and the community has a say upfront.
14	What we do now is the developer comes with and
15	I represented the community and worked with
16	Community Board 9 and the neighborhood was on the
17	other side of the fence around the Columbia
18	University expansion. And so all we could do is
19	work around what those developers had proposed as
20	opposed to saying we want to allow Columbia to
21	expand into the community, rather than takeover
22	the community and these are the principles we
23	want them to achieve. But it came after. It
24	came after Columbia developed their plans. After
25	they spent thousands upon thousands of dollars.

1	So what they did is they brought in a whole
2	barrage of attorneys and the only person who had
3	any background in planning was myself and many of
4	the Community Board members. I think it was 1
5	against 100. And I think it really is important
6	that we revisit how we do the environmental
7	impact analysis. That is that would be the
8	framework, so it's predictable, rather than
9	responding to each individual developer that
10	comes along.
11	MS. CLARKE: My question is going to go
12	directly to Mr. Shiffman, because I know him my
13	whole life in Brooklyn. And I just wanted you to
14	explain not only Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn and
15	how that became alive as well Community Board 9
16	in Brooklyn, Rogers Avenue, and what kind of
17	input you had? If you were going to put
18	something on the ballot in a statement to make
19	sure that community fully participates, what
20	would it be?
21	MR. SHIFFMAN: Well, if I knew exactly what
22	you're talking about I think it boils down to
23	the fact
24	MS. CLARKE: On Pratt and Lou Bryant as well
25	as Horace Williams worked with you

1	MR. SHIFFMAN: Absolutely. I think what
2	happened is that in every case, including we hope
3	this will occur in Williamsburg and Tom's Red
4	Hook and other places is when you really work
5	directly with the people. People want to see
6	development. They want to see change. They want
7	to see economic developments around their area.
8	That's the jobs it creates. They want to see
9	that community develop in a way that's
10	accountable to them. So that the opportunities
11	that are made available allow them to grow. We
12	worked with the people on Rogers Avenue. We
13	worked on Myrtle Avenue. We worked with the
14	Flatbush Development Corporation. They developed
15	plans that came out of the neighborhood. We
16	worked with the folks in Bed Stuy that gave root
17	to the first community development corporation in
18	the country. There are now 7,000 of those.
19	That's because we didn't know anything until we
20	met and worked directly with the people. The
21	relationship between the professional working
22	with the community creates a new entity. And
23	that new entity understands the nature of what
24	the plans that are necessary. And once the
25	community buys in and has the power and the

Ţ	capability to pursue the goals of that area plan,
2	even if it take 10 or 15 years, they do it. So
3	it took a long time for Myrtle Avenue to
4	revitalize after the L came down. It took a
5	while for Rogers Avenue after the 1972, whatever
6	it was, blackout to come back. People worked at
7	it day in and day out. The problem is the
8	problem in every community that we're working in
9	is that their success is now being used to allow
10	other developers to come in that are now pushing
11	the people out of the neighborhoods. The success
12	of the communities that saved the City is that
13	they're now being displaced by that same energy
14	that revitalized neighborhood after neighborhood.
15	CHPC and others in 1983 said New York City would
16	be a City of 5.3 million. Today we're close to 9
17	million. And what we need to do is not go by the
18	plan shrinkage policies that some promoted
19	earlier on and I don't mean to blame you but
20	what is the vision that we want for the residents
21	that are living here; for the new immigrants that
22	are coming into New York City. They see the City
23	as a place of opportunity and what we're doing is
24	stealing away that opportunity by thinking the
25	only we grow is by importing people from other

1	places. We have to think about how we invest in		
2	the people who live in this City who immigrated		
3	to this City who are here, rather than trying to		
4	attract the new creative class of the City. We		
5	need policies that invest in our City, rather		
6	than others. And that's what the people of each		
7	of those opportunities that you referred to		
8	worked on that and that's how they educated us.		
9	MR. PERALES: I think that's the right point		
LO	to close this session. My thanks to all of you.		
L1	Its been very instructive. As you can tell,		
L2	we're trying to learn as much as we can, so that		
13	at the end of the day, we can put something		
L4	before the voters in November. And we're very,		
L5	very pleased by your presentation. Thank you all		
L6	very much.		
L7	(Whereupon, at 4:21 P.M., the above matter		
L8	concluded.)		
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1	CERTIFICATE
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3	STATE OF NEW YORK) : SS.:
4	COUNTY OF RICHMOND)
5	
6	I, JAMIE WILLIS, a Notary Public for and within
7	the State of New York, do hereby certify:
8	That the above is a correct transcription of my
9	stenographic notes.
LO	I further certify that I am not related to any
L1	of the parties to this action by blood or by marriage and
L2	that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this
L3	matter.
L 4	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
L5	this 19th day of June 2018.
L6	
L7	Jamie Willis
L8	JAMIE WILLIS
L9	OAMIE WILLIS
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