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    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.
                A P P E A R A NC E S:
                    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 have the pleasure and the honor of serving as chair for the New York City Charter Revision Commission in 2018. I'm about to introduce the other commissioners, but let me just make a couple of opening comments. As you know, the Charter Revision Commission was appointed by Mayor DeBlasio. Mayor DeBlasio, like other mayors before him, felt strongly that there was a need to examine the entire City Charter. He had a particular interest and that was to see if there are ways of expanding democracy in our City. And that's not just limited to the way elections are conducted, but it also goes to the issue of Community Boards and other vehicles that exist for citizens to express their views to our government.

We've held hearings in each of the five boroughs. We've had neighborhood hearings. We're going to continue to hold hearings. But we wanted very much to have an opportunity to discuss the issues that have been raised at these community hearings with experts. And so today, we will be having expert testimony, enough to educate the members of the Commission and to give

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the members of the Commission an opportunity to ask questions. The theme is Community Boards and Land Use in New York City. We will have one more expert forum, if I can use that term, on Thursday. And that forum is going to relate to City Engagement and Redistricting. The meeting is being live streamed; the record is being made. We obviously have a sign language interpreter. And there is a lot to cover today.

So with that, let me ask the commissioners -- and I'll start on my right with Kyle and ask him to introduce himself.

MR. BRAGG: Good afternoon. I'm Kyle Bragg. I'm secretary treasurer of SEIU 32BJ. It's been an honor to serve on this Commission.

MR. SCISSURA: Good afternoon. Carlos
Scissura. I serve as secretary of the Commission. Currently serve as president of the New York Building Congress. And prior to that, ran the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce. And before that, served as chief of staff to Borough President Marty Markowitz, where I actually oversaw Community Boards and Land Use. So I'm excited to be here and I'm a former Community Board 11 member in Brooklyn.

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

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I just want to say and apologize, $I$ have a meeting that $I$ have to go to at 2. I feel awful, this is an area of great interest and want to hear from all of you. So I will be physically absent for a period and I will listen carefully to everything you say on live stream. And I'm so grateful for all of you here contributing all of your expertise. So thank you.

MR. HO. Good afternoon. My name is Dale Ho. I work at the American Civil Liberties Union, where I am the director of voting rights 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 attendance today.

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.

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MS. SEECHARRAN: Hello and good afternoon, everybody. My name is Annetta Seecharran. I am the executive director of Chia Community Development Corporation, when I'm not doing this.

MR. PERALES: I will now introduce Matt Gewolb, who's our Executive Director and he will briefly state the ground rules for today.

MR. GEWOLB: Thanks, Mr. Chair. So before we begin, just very, very brief background on Community Boards for those who may be unfamiliar, though many of you are. For each of the City's 59 community districts, the Borough President appoints up to 50 Community Board members for staggered two year terms. And at least half of these appointees must be nominees of City Council members. Established by the Charter, Community Boards function throughout a range of authorities, including State Law, the Charter itself, the City's Administrative Code and the rules of the City of New York. Although the roles of the Community Board is advisory in nature, they play an important role in many governmental decision making processes by allowing communities to share their views on matters of public importance. Thus far, the

Commission has heard many comments from the public regarding Community Boards, particularly regarding the appointment process, the potential use of term limits and the availability of resources to the Boards.

So Mr. Chair, for the ground rules, we will conduct -- we'll have each of the panel make statements of about five minutes. With about one minute remaining, I will give you a one minute warning and let you know. Then we'll conduct a very brief Q\&A after each speaker with questions that are particular to that speaker. And a longer and broader Q\&A session after all the panelists have spoken.

So again, because we have a lot of speakers and a lot of material to cover, we are asking that after each speaker, the Q\&A will be solely on clarifying and understanding what that particular speaker has said and saving broader questions till the end.

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

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the Pratt Center. Ebenezer Smith, District Manager of Community Board 12. Shah Ally, Board Member of Community Board 12 Manhattan. Myphuong Chung, Land Use Chair of Community Board 3. Rachel Bloom, Director of Public Policy at the Citizens Union. Tom Angotti, Professor Emeritus at Hunter College Urban Policy and Planning Development. And with that, I will begin. I suspect I should follow this order. So let's again with Elena Conte.

MS. CONTE: Good afternoon. I am Elena Conte. I'm Director of Policy at Pratt Center for Community Development. Thank you very much for the invitation to speak with you all today. I'm as interested in the conversation with all of you, than in giving any particular remarks, especially with regard to Community Boards. Because I have to say, what I'm offering today is based out of my experience at the Pratt Center for Community Development, where we work with community based organizations on other planning issues. And I have five years previous experience working for a community based organization in the South Bronx.

And so what I'm offering today are not

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 specific recommendations on behalf of our organization, but general thoughts and reflections about the role of Community Boards in general and topics for sort of attention or further discussion. So I think the first key point that $I$ wanted to make is that when we think about the function of Community Boards, we often narrowly go to the function in the Land Use review process. And of course, Land Use is certainly an essential role on Community Boards and consideration of applications. But the theme I want to talk about now as well in the second panel is that planning is much more than land use in community boards -- should be much more than Land Use. They're and Community Boards should be much more than Land Use. They're there to represent the community and serve as a vital link between marginalized communities and government and vice versa. And they should be the place that helps people understand the relationship with local institutions, conditions and structures. And as such, they should be the place of access for education and of debate. And Boards, as they're structured in the City, have this great potential. I think we would be hard
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pressed to find folks that feel like their current Boards are at that potential. And I think part of the considerations or concerns around that are related to -- the questions of representation are often seen through the lens of how the boards will interact with the Land Use process. So obviously, the prompt of the Boards is built around adequate representation and that includes especially the marginalized communities to be represented. They should be able to reflect demographic changes sooner than the political establishment and not the other way around. There should standardized rules and requirements for representation that allow for flexibility, but that actually ensure that there's an alignment of who's living in the community and working in the community and who is active on the board. And part of that would include having pathways to joining Boards that are not dependent on vetting by the Council member, by the borough president. So if this is supposed to be the first place of democracy, the quasi-governmental structure where neighborhood meets government, there should be mechanisms that allow for folks to access that space, learn and

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

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MR. GEWOLB: You have about one minute remaining.

MS. CONTE: Thank you. So not wanting to allow for any of my points to end up muddled, perhaps I will summarize in the following: There are absolutely needs to be a more systemized way to address representation in Community Boards, because even though there have been recent reforms, it's still largely at the discretion of the Borough Presidents and the Council members and there isn't a consistency that encodes what our aspiration is for representation at the Boards. There needs to be increased staffing support for the Boards in and beyond Land Use, so that the Boards can manifest their relationship with the community based organizations and really be this portal or link to the neighborhood. And that creating pathways for there to be turnover in the development of new leadership on the Boards is of paramount importance if we're going to truly utilize this function. Thank you.

MR. PERALES: Thank you. Just a very quick question from me: I'm somewhat confused. It seems to me that there may be some conflict in your saying you're not supportive necessarily of

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term limits and yet, you do want to see turnover and you do want to see rapidly changing communities represented by the people. Could you respond?

MS. CONTE: Thank you for your clarifying question, Mr. Perales. That would be an instance of the muddling of the point that I feared took place. So I am in favor of term limits for Community Board members. It got confused with the point that -- the strong argument against the point that I'm making, which is being in favor, is that folks develop a capacity. And I think that that capacity should be ongoing and supported by staff. So thank you for that clarifying question.

MR. PERALES: Anyone else have questions? With that, we want to move along very quickly, Shah Ally.

MR. ALLY: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Good afternoon. Good afternoon to the commissioners and thank you to the Commission for the courtesy of letting me go out of order. I have to return to work. I'm an attorney by day and attorney by night and I have court at 2:00. Which segues perfectly into that Community Boards are

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

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The Executive Director laid out the functions of the Community Boards and the vocation of the Community Boards. I encourage everyone to read Section 2800 of the Charter to understand Community Boards. The roles of a chairperson, I have -- I play two functions. One, you're CEO; one, you're chair leader. You promote the good work you're doing in your neighborhood. You also run the functioning of your particular board.

There are some challenges that boards face and this Revision offers that opportunity to address those challenges. I'm particularly excited by this topic; that is of Community Boards and Land Use. When asked now what are the quick topics that Community Board 12 is facing, I'll say Land Use, Land Use and I forget the third. Because we are dealing with Land Use. Community Board 12 is dealing with the Inwood rezoning, which is the fifth, I believe, in the City and we just went through our ULURP process, which is again, another area that Community Board 12 did a good job in. There was also some work that we could have done in strengthening our position. We are advisory; I think everyone gets

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that. But we have something much more powerful than just an advisory role. We have the power of persuasion; we have the power of the people. Even though someone tells me I'm advisory, I say look, we have the power of the people. The power of the people to network, advisory, we give our roles.

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

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

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 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 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?

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MR. ALLY: We certainly could use an independent Land Use expert. Land Use is one of these things that's highly technical. You can't sort of fake it until you figure it out. Someone who understands the steps, especially the ULURP steps, would be highly valuable. I think appointments should be made of members with specialization with certain expertise. We have those on our board who are experts in this area and they're valuable. But the scary part to a chair is without that mandate for them to be there -- so if they're absent one day, we're without the expertise. So if we have someone who is a salaried employee, then there's a reliance that that person is there. I can turn to that person. I'm not an expert. I can turn to that person and say -- I ask the questions. Are we doing the right thing? And we have that person to answer. So I think you need to put someone on staff.

MS. CLARKE: I'm sorry to be late. I'm Una Clarke. I'm a former member of the New York City Council and I'm a trustee for the City University of New York. And I'm pleased to serve on the Commission.

MR. PERALES: Kyle.
MR. BRAGG: Good afternoon, Mr. Ally. Thank you for coming here and testifying for the Commission. I failed to mention, but I am a Community Board member of Community Board 13 in Queens. And I'm interested in hearing from you again, your thoughts on term limits. I think that my particular Community Board might be the exception versus the rule in regards to diversity and representation. And I would like to hear from you about your feelings on term limits, so that you can ensure continued diversity and representing that ever changing populations in those Community Boards and also the turnover of leadership and your opinion on that. And not only diversity of culture, but diversity of age. A lot of young folks who have been excluded from serving on the Community Boards because of the current rules on how you're appointed. And I would like to hear your opinion that.

MR. ALLY: Thank you for that question. Each board as 50 volunteers. At Community Board 12 we just received 10 new appointments. So at one point, 20 percent of our board are new. So my opinion is that we need a term limit that -- I

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

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION see that that's being discussed -- the turnover of leadership. I'm of the belief that you don't need to be on the board $X$ number of years before you can be put to leadership. I'm of the philosophy that if you put someone in leadership, people will respond to it. So I've recently appointed people who have been on the board for six months or a year into leadership positions, because we all come in with subject matter expertise. We don't leave out expertise at the door. In fact, we want to have experts on the board. So it would be a shame -- it would be a missed opportunity by any chair, not to identify the experts that coming in and putting them to leadership positions. So you can be on the board for 30 days. I will identify how we can extract your leadership abilities. So again, that answer has to be do we have a chair who understands that that -- so our chair is a representative who understands.

In terms of diversity, we absolutely have to diversify and make sure that all the boards 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

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION possibly run for chair in a district that's 60 percent Hispanic?" And I'm Indian. I said, well, why not? Diversity helps everybody. It has to be promoted. It has to start from the top from the ground level. Our borough president, our Council members have to say, we need to diversify. Diversifying reflecting our composition, diversifying to reflect the cultures of our neighborhoods and I hope that answers your question.

MR. PERALES: Seeing no more questions, then I would move immediately to Ebenezer Smith, who will continue.

MR. SMITH: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for inviting me to participate in this conversation. As a District Manager, I am responsible of the implementation of the day-to-day work of the Community Board. As directed by the executive committee and by the board. So I am responsible to make happen everything that the board wishes to happen. And it's not an easy job, because sometimes you have requests coming from board members or chairs of the community that are not according with the reality of the City's functionality. As a

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

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

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MR. SMITH: The question also that we have for the City Charter is sometimes it's very vague. The District Manager works at the pleasure of the board and that is interpreted -the pleasure of the board, what that means. And you need to serve according to the standard of the board. Sometimes the standard of the board is not a reality that it is the managers job and you need to manage that.

And the last question that I'm going to talk about is the time limit. It's very complex one. It needs to be fixed in one way. You need to preserve the institution of the memory, but at the same time, you need to give opportunity to new residents and members of the community to serve. I will say that probably a cap of years of service will be good. How many years? I don't know, 10, 12, 14. Because members of the board, they serve two year limits. It has to find a way not to pry away progress that may be going forward if a cap is placed to limit the term in service. Thank you.

MR. PERALES: Thank you. I'm going to ask you a question, if I might, and I would hope Ms. Chung when she speaks, will also respond to

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

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

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and then I will have to do the research to provide answers to that person.

MS. SEECHARRAN: Just to clarify: Are you the only paid staff?

MR. SMITH: I have two more paid staff with me.

MS. SEECHARRAN: And then some of the responsibilities or duties that you described for you and your team seems to me are similar to what a local Council member's office would address. How do you see the difference in residents choosing to go to you to address concerns versus the local Council member? And what is the sort of relationship in addressing issues? I'm not sure I'm being clear in my question. It sounded like there was some overlap in roam --

MR. SMITH: What I hear from your question is how people prefer me as the District Manager than a Council member to go to solve the problem? Is that the question?

MS. SEECHARRAN: I mean, I hear that the role you're playing is --

MR. SMITH: It's very similar.
MS. SEECHARRAN: And I think that there seems to be some arguments thus far about

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strengthening the Community Boards. So I'm just wondering if Community Boards were to be strengthened, how then would that either overlap in the role that the local Council members play and their offices play or not? And what is the sort of relationship there?

MR. SMITH: Many times the Council member will refer people to me to solve the problem. And why people choose the Council member over me is because the Council member have the title and have the more dues, political connection to solve the matter. That's the only way I can word it. But then the office of elected official they refer the people to me to solve the problem when the new Council member came to my district, his staff, they used to call me three or four times a day, how can I deal with that matter? How can I explain it more to you? Well, if I can control issues that take a lot of time for me to figure. Find a room to have my executive meeting every month. My board wants that the meeting be around the district. I need to have a room with a capacity at least 100 people, has to be free and we need it from 6:00 to 10. But one of the problems is the meeting never finish at 10. And
then, "I thought you said 10." It's now 11:45, those persons say, "you told me at 10 and what happened?" And how am I going to go back to those people right away. They need to cool down. That's a hell of a job to find location every month. When we have a special meeting, we need to find a location. It has to be free. It has to be accessible. And the other day I got in trouble from everyone because I find a location that was not accessible and people tell me they don't want it and we have to change. We changed location three times and people were very upset. I had to get a location that was suitable for the meeting. That is a lot of time consuming that when people call me with an issue, I need to put it on the side. Because at that time I need to resolve the location of that meeting.

MR. PERALES: Are there any other questions from the board?

MS. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, it's not so much a question. I just want to place something. While I was on the City Council, there was members of the City Council, especially those in Queens, who felt that the Community Boards just confused their constituents as to where to go for

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service. So I would like to clarify for you what issues that would come to you that you would call the Council member and say, "I'm sending a constituent to you, because this is not an issue for Community Board."

MR. SMITH: When somebody wants some type of legislation or some type of change that we're not able to pass that. But the day-to-day delivery of service that come to my office we resolve. Remember, as a District Manager, I chair district service meeting that deals every month with the agencies' representative which I have a very good connection. And I resolve issues with Parks Department, Department of Transportation, Con Edison, et cetera, et cetera. So those issues related to delivery of service, $I$ am very able to resolve with those people. But when somebody call me that they sidewalk repair or they want a liquor license, that's according to the rules cannot be passed and you need to change the legislation to get what they want, I need to refer them to the City Council to introduce legislation.

MS. CLARKE: Would you surmise, if not knowing, does each Community Board operate the

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION way yours works or you are unique in terms of your orientation towards your community and the service?

MR. SMITH: Definitely not. Each Community Board is an independent community agency and that all depend on the notices of the District Manager and the chair. It happens that I worked for Parks Department ten years and I worked for DOT ten years and I work for the Community Board 12 ten years. So I have 30 years of experience in work that I can guide people in the right direction.

MS. CLARKE: That's why I asked are you unique? And for us who are making the decision here, who wants to make to the recommendation to make sure that every community is equal in terms of the kind of interface and impact that Community Boards have; what would you recommend? MR. SMITH: The quality of District Manager and the experience of the District Manager. If the District Manager doesn't have City of New York government experience, would not be working well at any given time because they're going to be confused.

MS. CLARKE: Whom would you say you're

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION accountable to? Are you accountable to whom within the City for the kind of work that you do? To whom are you accountable? Your chairman and your chairman to whom? How does it work?

MR. SMITH: I am accountable to my chairperson. That's my immediate supervisor. Then the executive committee and the Community Board members. We are under the umbrella of the borough president. When the borough president's office indicates something, we need to follow that direction. And ultimately, we are directed by the mayor's office as well. But also we're accountable to the community in many different sects of my district. If they demand service, I need to deliver it to them.

MR. PERALES: Okay. Thank you very much. Well me move on to Ms. Chung.

Will you wait for just a moment. Would you like to hear Ms. Chung, Mr. Stringer?

MR. STRINGER: Yes.
MR. PERALES: All right. There's a chair at your disposal. Ms. Chung, you've got the floor for five minutes and then we'll ask you questions.

MS. CHUNG: Thank you Mr. Chair and everyone

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION on the Commission for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Myphuong Chung. I am currently chair of Land Use for Community Board 3 Manhattan, which encompasses the Lower East Side, East Village and Chinatown. First, I'll get straight to the point: I'm generally not in favor of term limits.

MR. PERALES: Generally or in this particular situation?

MS. CHUNG: In this particular situation. I am for the most part not in favor of term limits. I'll give you a little bit of background of my personal experience on the board and talk about CB3 specifically and then why I feel the way I do about term limits. So I started serving on my board in 2010. I'm an architect. So in 2010, I was towards the beginning/middle of a very demanding career in New York City. So I was working all the time basically and I basically had no time to serve on the Community Board or I thought I had no time. I had different priorities as a young person in New York City. So in 2010 I started serving on CB3 first, as a public member. I did that for a year before I was appointed onto -- not my first choice

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

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

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION the role and become comfortable in that leadership position. I think Community Boards provide a unique opportunity for people with different backgrounds and expertise to serve their communities who wouldn't otherwise go into public service. The fact that you don't have to campaign for this job, I think, opens it up to a much wider variety of people, who don't have to go out and socialize and glad hand and go out there --

MR. GEWOLB: You have about one minute remaining.

MS. CHUNG: Thank you. So and also I personally rely a great deal on the members of board who have been very, very long serving members. Not just because of their life experience, but specifically their Community Board experience. Some of the projects that we work on take many, many years, especially the Land Use projects. Over 10 years sometimes to build consensus from the greater community to push these actions through all the agencies that we need to work together with different agencies and electives to get -- to enact. And it's very hard to find good candidates that are, you

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know -- that become good members of the board. And I feel like term limits are a very blunt rule that cuts out as many good people as it does bad. And in terms of having a process for increasing turnover and diversity, I agree, diversity is a problem and we need to make more efforts to make sure our boards represent the community. But I feel like that should happen on the front end; not the back end. I think that's what term limits do. I think we need to increase our outreach process, improve the -- have a more vigilant appointment and reappointment process. I think we already have a structure in place to make sure that boards have adequate turnover and provide more opportunity. And I think that's really just strengthening the process we have today.

MR. PERALES: Let me interrupt you with two questions that I have: One, has to do with whether you would accept or advocate for term limits if you could come back on? That is go off for a --

MS. CHUNG: Right. Well, I think that could be a good way to balance the competition. Being able to step away for two years, could be a good

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION way not only to open up the opportunity, but also for a long serving member --

MR. PERALES: My second question is about capacity in terms of Land Use. Given your own expertise and experience, do you think that there should be greater capacity provided to Community Boards to address questions of Land Use.

MS. CHUNG: I think we absolutely need more technical expertise. And I think it's really hard to rely on the members themselves to provide that. I'm an architect and I have worked on several different ULURP applications in my professional capacity. But it's different. You play a different role as an architect than you do as a Community Board member. As an architect, I am versed in certain aspects of ULURP, but not in the aspect where Community Boards participate. So I -- yes, we definitely need more --

MR. PERALES: Thank you.
MS. SEECHARRAN: Can you say some more about the process that you have in place to ensure turnover and that there's diversity?

MS. CHUNG: We currently have two year term limits. We currently serve for two year terms and then there's a reappointment process. So I

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION think that process could be --

MS. SEECHARRAN: But does it work to increase diversity.

MS. CHUNG: The reappointment process? I think that's one way it could help. Another way is to it do more targeted outreach to people in the community and get the word out. And frankly, that's something the Community Boards need to do better in general, just to let the community know who we are and what we do. I think there are tools in place and if we use them properly, that should take care of the issue.

MS. SEECHARRAN: What are some of those tools?

MS. CHUNG: Like having -- well first, having targeted outreach, which is a tool that we haven't really -- we aren't using enough. I think there's -- there's a reappointment process and that seems to change and evolve with new borough presidents. Sometimes it's an interview. Sometimes it's an interactive workshop. I'm not privy to the actual decisions being made about who gets appointed and why. I understand that the board chairperson can help influence that process, but the rest of the Community Board

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members and community chairs as far as I know, don't have a formal role in advising the borough president and the Council members of the types of members that are needed.

MR. PERALES: Thank you, Ms. Chung. I would like to move on now to the New York City Comptroller, Mr. Stringer.

MR. STRINGER: Good afternoon, Chair Perales, and members of this distinguished Charter Revision Commission. Many of you I know very well, so it really is great to present to you especially on some very favorite topics of mine, both when I was Manhattan Borough President from 2006 to 2013 and in the beginning of my political career at the age of 16 , when Percy Sutton appointed me as the youngest teenager ever to serve on a Community Board, way back in 1977. For the record, that appointment made front page news in the New York Times below the fold and it changed my life. Little did I know, when I became Borough President, I would play a role with our Community Boards. But I do think it's important that you convene this forum on Community Boards and Land Use. And I'm going to submit formal testimony, but if you bear with me,

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I just want to give you a sense of my experience when I served as Borough President.

The first thing I want you to know is that the Community Boards play a central role in shaping neighborhood development and in advising government on the needs and interests of our communities. I do commend you again for examining ways to strengthen and support Community Boards in fulfilling their mission and I think it's important to know the history of Community Boards. They were originally established as community planning boards by Manhattan Borough President, Robert Wagner, back in 1951. And that was to conduct comprehensive community-based planning for the growth of Manhattan. In 1975, the Charter Revision 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 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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and Sanitation, were consistent among Community Boards. Established for the first time, district service cabinet, and officially created the district service manager position. In addition, it gave Community Boards other advisory functions, such as, budget analysis, capital needs recommendations, oversight of City service delivery and the creation of district needs assessment.

When the Charter laid the groundwork for 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.

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While the Community Boards had a dual mandate and many tried to focus on both service delivery and community based planning, due to limited resources, proactive planning often took a backseat to service delivery. However, at the same time, many elected officials began to professionalize their operations going back to 1974 in the Post-Watergate era. So suddenly where the Community Board at that time was the service delivery agent, now you had the local Assembly member with a district office, the local Council member, the Congress member. You'd get elected to office and suddenly you had different offices in the cabinet area delivering those services.

That was expanded back in 2007 with the beginning of 311 . So we had to move and we should move Community Boards from service delivery to planning. And I believe we should, rather than focus on those constituent services, we should be empowering Community Boards to fulfill their intended role as neighborhood planning bodies. So I do think you should call these boards, not Community Boards, but Community Planning Boards. I think that's critical because

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 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.

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Our reform initiatives had positive results and they form my recommendations for this Commission to strengthen and empower Community Boards. One of the simple responsibilities of Community Boards is to enable community based planning and make recommendations on Land Use. However, Community Boards face challenges in their ability to adequately review and analyze Land Use matters, due to a lack of resources and expertise. Most boards do not have trained urban planners on staff and must therefore rely on their volunteer members to analyze Land Use proposals and develop recommendations. And yet, we expect them to argue their positions against the 800 -- I think it's now $\$ 1,000$ an hour lawyers, hired by major developers in front of the City Planning Commission. It's just not a level playing field.

In an attempt to level the playing field, when I was borough president, our office created the Community Planning Fellowship Program, which at the time placed graduate urban planning students in Community Boards offices. It was the Urban Peace Corps. The program enhanced the ability of Community Boards to undertake

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

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,

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION architecture, real estate development, public policy or similar disciplines and include the necessary budget for creation to fund this position. A community planner would be a game changer in communities that experience extraordinary Land Use applications and quite frankly, they don't have the expertise and they're at a tremendous disadvantage.

Now in addition to creating this fellows program, my office invested in training and continuing education for Community Board members. Once appointed, new members were required to attend trainings on the New York City Zoning Code, ULURP, Land Use actions and planning concepts. Returning members were also encouraged to regularly attend these trainings to refresh their skills. This continuing education, helped their knowledge, better prepared them for work of the office. And I have to tell you, people couldn't get enough of Urban Planning 101 and 102. People went to these courses. It was quite extraordinary. I couldn't believe people who had jobs and responsibilities couldn't wait to go.

Now communities were able to successfully advocate for meaningful changes in spite of

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION development. Some of the issues they had attacked during my tenure was Columbia University's expansion in West Harlem, the City sponsored development by Suaz Park urban renewal area and a whole host of different development project, NYU expansion, Fordham University expansion. The advocacy around these projects just resulted in a better relationship between what the community needed and what these universities needed. All recognizing that skylines change, but they cannot change without our community. So based on this fruitful experience, I would ask you to think about the City requiring that we do provide training, support and educational opportunities in all of these disciplines for Community Board members. And really codify this in a more holistic way; not just based on who the Borough President is, but really create a five borough agenda in this area. That is something that I'd ask you to do.

And finally it is about recruitment. We have got to do more to recruit people to serve on Community Boards. Now under our administration, our outreach and improvement strategy was comprised of four components: Individualized

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

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community based organizations. Our panel, our independent screening panel, helped to ensure the public and all who were concerned, that appointments were merit-based and helped to recruit applicants from their organizations and communities essentially serving as ambassadors to what we called Community Board reform. All applicants, including those who had previously served on the board, were required to complete an application and come into the office to be interviewed, effectively ending automatic reappointments. We endeavored to appoint committed candidates. We made sure that there were no vacancies on the Boards. We left very few vacancies. Our policy was to fill every vacancy in 30 days. We had a list of panel-approved candidates that met our very high criteria. We basically took the politics out of Community Board appointing. One of the things that we did, much to my chagrin, was this whole notion that it didn't matter who you supported for Borough President, it didn't matter whose friend you were, because like the judicial selection process, if you weren't approved by the independent panel, we couldn't help you. And I
will never tell you the stories of people who were not reappointed that are still mad at me today.

So what was the proof in the pudding? Over eight years, 715 new appointments were made to the Boroughs 12 Community Boards. We gave hundreds of New Yorkers the chance to participate in shaping the future of their neighborhoods. So in ensure this momentum, the Charter should set additional standards for a Citywide process and timelines for Community Board appointments.

And lastly, I just want to say --
MR. PERALES: But this one is lastly?
MR. STRINGER: Yes. Well, I was only going to come today to this chair if I could give you my stem winder, because if you're going to tinker on the edges, don't tinker at all. You need to have, in my view, with all due respect, a comprehensive look at Community Boards or we're going to get into the narrow discussion of term limits/not term limits and not address five borough Community Board reform. So I will stop there, because I see you're a little chagrined. But thank you.

MR. PERALES: I am not chagrined and I do

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appreciate your very thoughtful presentation and we're looking forward to getting your written proposal.

MR. STRINGER: Thank you.
MR. PERALES: Again I'm going to cheat my fellow members and ask this sort of two point question. There's two things you said that intrigued me. One had to do with those 800 or $\$ 1,000$ an hour lawyers. And then your solution, it seems to me, is to hire a recent graduate from an architectural school or something. And do you think that will even out the process?

MR. STRINGER: So the point I was making is when -- when I became Borough President, we realized that most Community Board members, even with the board members who had specific Land Use experience, could not begin to compete with the resources that a developer would have at their disposal. They obviously had the best lawyers in town. They were proposing to build $\$ 100$ million developments. Think about just in Manhattan alone at that point. You had Columbia University, Fordham University, NYU. Their budget for engaging the community was unlimited. MR. PERALES: I understand that.

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MR. STRINGER: What we were able to do was create an Urban Planning Fellowship that began this process of getting expertise, people who actually would graduate students in urban planning, into these Community Boards, so that we could at least give them some ray of expertise on an ongoing basis. What that experience proved to me was that, yes we cannot rely on graduate students to stem that tide. So why not hire or mandate that every Community Board should have a professional urban planner working full-time on Land Use issues.

MR. PERALES: I was being a devils advocate. Obviously I agree the idea of greater resources. It's just that I'm trying to come up with a vehicle where there's even stronger than one person attached to the office. And that was the reason I was poking fun at the $\$ 800$ an hour attorney.

The other question you didn't answer is term limits. I think you're term limited. Lots of people are term limited and develop expertise in that particular job. Would you be for term limits for Community Boards?

MR. STRINGER: So I respect certainly the
will of the voters who have now spoken at the ballot box, that there should be term limits Citywide elected officials. And I would never seek to change that, nor would you.

MS. CLARKE: What?
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?"

Came back to me and said he's perfect. He's the perfect board member. I said, "he's never missed a meeting in 20 years? He does all of this? Who does that on a Community Board?" And I
reappointed him. And once we reappointed him, we basically said the politics of Community Boards, we're done with that. We're going to create a merit-based system. You have the opportunity of creating a system that will elevate the borough presidents and the new ones by 2021 and you will make Community Boards something that's even more attractive to people who want to access potential public service.

MR. PERALES: Kyle.
MR. BRAGG: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Mr. Comptroller for being here. You've been an innovator throughout your political career on how the constituents access and participate in government. I want to thank you for that.

There's a couple of things that $I$ want to ask and I want to make sure it comes out clear as I speak it in my head. Ms. Chung actually made a 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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Boards throughout the City and new development is not particularly equal throughout those Community Boards. And I think over the last 20 years, there's been a huge increase of development in the City and overwhelmingly in a new communities throughout the City. So there are other issues that are very important to Community Boards that are not going through Land Use or the ULURP process on a regular overwhelming basis. And so you had suggested that each Community Board receive or be given an expert on those issues and I'm not sure if through your experience in the past, if you think that each board actually needs one. And I know geographies changes and the interest in our communities change, but I think currently, the vast majority of these Community Boards have not experienced that overwhelming having to face ULURP as happens in Manhattan and parts of Queens and Brooklyn that's currently taking place. And so I'm interested in knowing whether or not you think that each Community Board actually needs that expert or needs access to someone who is an expert. And then I'd say that -- well let me ask that. MR. STRINGER: That's a very fair question

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

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affordable housing plans and how you grapple with what would we do to up-zone on one block but down-zone on another block? Give us what that would look like; not just from the City Planning Commission's perspective, but what's the community perspective? And then work to try to align whether the community and City government can find common ground. So I think there's a huge potential here.

But the real potential is -- or the real 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

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

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

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

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

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focused in the Village? Think about how silly that is. We tried to create that integration throughout. We now have Caucasian people on Community Board 10, but we also have African Americans and Latino people in some of the Whitest areas of Manhattan, the Upper East Side and the Upper West Side. And you know what? The entire community is served better, because we got people to believe that there was buy-in and reform and a different approach.

Also I think in your study of this -- and I know we will continue to talk about offices -- I do think that we have really some great Borough Presidents. I've served with some amazing Borough Presidents and I think the more we can create a Citywide holistic view of Community Board empowerment, I think that also enhances the role of the Borough President and the Council members and the community, as well.

MR. PERALES: I'm going to have two commission members with brief questions, Dr. Clarke and Carl on my right. I think that will be it.

MS. CLARKE: I just -- my question concerns the uniformity of the City in terms of the

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

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creating diversity. 40 percent over eight years is a pretty good record, but we worked at it. Because diversity is something you have to work at every day. That was a key component of the Community Board process.

The other thing -- and again, I would ask you to wrestle with this -- is as Borough President, Council members recommend half of the Community Board appointments. Under the Charter, I believe, Mr. Chair, it's a recommendation that the Borough President can either take or not. And for the most part, my work with the Council member was, "you appoint your half; I'll appoint my half. But we all have to agree that the people who we appoint will come out of independent screening panel." So I said to them, "we should only appoint on our list."

And I have to tell you, in the beginning there were Council members who had their view of Community Board reform and what they wanted to do. And so I recollect that in year one and two it was a very bumpy journey. But I will tell you at the end of the day, we would sit and decide the Community Board appointments and every Council member in Manhattan, from Washington

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Heights to the Lower East Side, would sit with our screening panel recommendations and would look with me and say, yes, I need another architect. Yes, we need a public school teacher. Wait a minute, you mean, that person hasn't shown up to Community meetings all year? No. We were able to focus on the merit of the need of the neighborhoods and not the parochial view of who should be on the Community Board. It wasn't always perfect. And by the way, there were people who I personally wanted to see on the Community Boards -- I'm human too, right? And if they didn't make the list, they weren't going to be on a Community Board and we held to that in every single case.

MR. SCISSURA: Thank you. Good afternoon, Comptroller. Always good to see you. Two quick questions. First of all, $I$ think this is obviously very well thought out. It's something that when I worked with the Brooklyn Borough President, boy, did I try. But we weren't ready back then and maybe the time has come. But I have two questions about the independent "closed screening panel" and the process as to who appoints that in your way of doing it? And then

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION the second question is: What if the independent screening panel appointed the Community Board members and there was no Councilman or Councilperson and there's no Borough President and it was a true independent process? I'm curious to get your thoughts on that.

MR. STRINGER: In essence that's very well -- that's almost like a logical extension to be considered. I do think at the end of the day, the elected official should play a role, because that elected official does have a pulse of the community. And sometimes there's no one who thinks reform and Community Board reform -- no one believes Community Board reform is important more than I do. I really believe in it. But I felt that the Borough President and the Council member should continue to have that role. That if you left it only to an independent screening panel, it could runaway with the practicality of, you know what, you're the elected official. You're responsible. We hold you accountable. And if you create a system that theres no electoral accountability, you could have something that creates a whole new bureaucracy and you're at the end of the day, the only one

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accountable. You don't run for Community Board, right? So you don't have to land handle, you don't have to run for election. But elected officials have to be out in the communities. And if that panel is really not meeting the needs of the community, then electorally, you're going to explain that at a Community Board meeting and be held accountable from your constituents.

MR. SCISSURA: Who appoints --
MR. STRINGER: The Borough President.
MR. PERALES: I want to thank you,
Mr. Comptroller, for taking the time and providing your testimony. It's been very, very helpful.

MR. STRINGER: Thank you, everybody. It's great to be here. Thank you.

MR. PERALES: With that, I'm going to move onto Rachel Bloom from the Citizens Union. MS. BLOOM: Hi. I will try and be brief; definitely within, my five minutes. Good afternoon, Chairman Perales, and distinguished members of the New York City Charter Revision Comission. It's nice to see you again today. I'm the Director of Public Policy and Programs for Citizens Union and I thank you for

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION inviting us here today and giving us the opportunity to publicly share our recommendations with you. Together our positions on Community Board reform seeks to strengthen Community Boards, providing them with additional resources, while also ensuring that there's a more rigorous selection process and open process for appointment of members. Most of what we will say is things that are things that you've heard earlier, but sometimes we'll give a bit of a different perspective.

We believe that a mechanism should be created that provides available pool of urban planners, independent of the Borough Presidents offices, that can be accessed by Community Boards. We now heard why this is critical to provide meaningful and important input on Land Use decisions and to develop 197A plans. We envision these urban planners to be connected to one or more boards, as needed. Thereby, 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

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new development or improvement of land located in the fir, while under Section 82 Chapter 4 of the City Charter. It could become problematic when the Borough President may disagree with the Community Board on a land development issue, which we have all seen happen. Given the role of ULURP and past instances in which Borough Presidents have sought to remove Community Board members who have not aligned their votes with that of the Borough President on Land Use proposals. It is essentially that the independence of the Community Boards and the urban planners that serve them, be maintained. We recommend reforming the process for selecting members to Community Boards. Community Boards are often plagued by vacancies or not any turnover. To professionalize and open the Boards to the communities they serve, we believe, much like we just heard in great detail, a formal standardized and transparent process should be created for filling Community Board positions, as was first done by Comptroller Stringer when he was Manhattan Borough President.

While there have been some more formalized procedures for filling vacancies among the

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

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Community Boards to carry out their Charter mandated responsibilities. So in that, Community Boards should be provided enough funding to be able to hire staff for Land Use and/or budgetary expertise.

And we recommend that the Community Boards is to be linked to that of the Borough Presidents office, which we also believe should have an independent budgeting. But I realize that that's 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.

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION I'm going to move to Tom Angotti as quickly as possible. Your prior presenter took a little but more time than he was supposed to.

MS. BLOOM: I was happy to give my time to the Comptroller.

MR. PERALES: Tom.
MR. ANGOTTI: Thank you. I'll also try to be as brief as possible, since I can double down on the next panel, which I sit on as well. My background is, aside from being a retired professor of urban planning for Hunter College and prior to that, Pratt and yes, CUNY. I worked for eight years in City government as a senior planner, so I see some things from the inside and continue to see them from the inside. And I do agree with Scott Stringer, that we don't need to tinker around the edges anymore. It's time to do a fundamental revision of the Charter to empower Community Boards. They were created almost 50 years ago and there's been no fundamental revision of the role of Community Boards since then and so much as changed in New York City. But one thing that hasn't changed is communities don't have a strong voice in planning for their 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

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at that time, the revisions were -- there was testimony for a revision by the Civil Rights Movement and with great support from environmental justice advocates who were fighting to control unwanted land uses in their neighborhoods, in their backyards.

But there's one philosophy that has continued all through this almost 50 years: That Community Boards are dysfunctional. And I hear this all the time from within City government, "oh, you want to give Community Boards more power? You want to give them money?" It comes from within City government and it comes from developers. It is actually good to have dysfunctional Community Boards, because you can then keep them dysfunctional. Now we've grown an awful lot and Community Boards have become much more proficient on their own. But what has resulted is the kind of inequalities across the board. I've been in the five boroughs. I've been in many Community Boards all over the five boroughs and some have excellent track records and have boards who are fully participant in the decisions that are made and are capable of confronting serious Land Use issues. But there

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION are many who are helpless. And it coincides with those neighborhoods where people are working two or three jobs. They can't go to Community Board meetings. It coincides with the fact that the most functional Community Boards have an excess of lawyers and architects who can volunteer to sit on Community Boards and provide that expertise that many of the Community Boards just don't have. So this requires a Citywide solution and a major responsibility on behalf of the City as a whole, to make sure that the original purpose of Community Boards --

MR. PERALES: Let me ask you something: Do you have some specific recommendations as to how we would accomplish what you're asking?

MR. ANGOTTI: Yes. So one of the first things is to stop saying that Community Board votes are only advisory. That's a good way to put them down. Community Boards have to have -revise the ULURP process, so that the Community Board vote is equal to the vote of the Mayor.

Full-time planners -- by the way, it's already in the Charter. It was passed in 1989, but the Council to the City Planning Department made a ruling that they would fulfill their

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Charter obligation by assigning a City Planning Department planner to Community Boards who needed it. That is not the intention of the Charter Revision. Every Community Board needs to have a full-time planner on their staff. And that can be changed without changing the Charter or you can clarify it in the Charter.

No more conditional votes by the Community Boards. Because one of the ways you express your weakness is to say, "our vote is only advisory and community based, so we're going to vote yes or we're going to vote no but with conditions." And then they have no weight. So that's it.

I think finance -- budget. Also the budget process. Community Boards participate in a budget process, which is inadequate. There's one Borough-wide budget hearing every year and a number of other local budget hearings. Every Community Board should have participatory budgeting, but for a significance of the budget that affects those communities.

MR. SCISSURA: Any questions from the commissioners? Okay. Thank you very, very much. We appreciate you sitting here through this panel and look forward to hearing more information in

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 the coming weeks. Should we go right into the next panel? Okay. So our panel will be on Land Use in New York City. And I'm going to introduce, David Karnovsky, who's a partner at Fried Frank. David, thank you. And Mr. Karnovsky is going do give us a short overview on Land Use in New York City just so we have a context. Jessica Katz, Executive Director for the Citizen Housing Planning Council. Tom, you're not going too far. Moses Gates, Vice President, Housing \& Neighborhood Planning for the Regional Plan Association. Ron Shiffman, Professor Emeritus for Pratt Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment. Elena Conte, Director of Policy, Pratt Center for Community Development. And last, but not least, Adrien Weibgen, Staff Attorney, Equitable Neighborhoods Practice, Community Development Project, Urban Justice Center.I'm going to turn it over to our Executive Director now. And we're going to ask if you can really hit your points. I know many of you have given us testimony in writing, but given the time and nature of this afternoon, if you can give us
your points and then we'll follow-up with questions today or in the coming week or two.

So, Matt, would you like to take it from here?

MR. GEWOLB: Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. We don't have additional substantive comments except to reenforce our format, which is the five minute presentation for our panelist. I'll give you the one minute heads up. And then from the Commissioners, we'll ask clarifying questions for each panelist and then try to hold broader questions for the end of the panel, if we can.

MR. PERALES: I'm back. Let's begin in the order I've been given. We'll start with David Karnovsky .

MR. KARNOVSKY: Good afternoon. I'm David Karnovsky from the firm of Fried Frank. I'm not here representing the firm. I'm here to -- as an individual. I served as the General Counsel to the Department of City Planning for 10 years before joining the law firm. I was asked to provide an overview of the Land Use in New York City in ten minutes, which is impossible. Five 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. But 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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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." In other 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

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 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

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public review under mandated time periods that moves from the most local level to the regional level to the Citywide level. The underlying thesis of all of this was that a Land Use application, as it moves through the process, is shaped in ways that produce a better decision. That the local input at the early changes influences the other decision makers. That the projects changes and responds to comments and that the decision makers modify the project as it moves along all within this prescribed time clock.

Moving along to 1988, you have the abolition of the Board of Estimate and a whole lot of decisions that have to be made about how to deal with that in terms of ULURP. The first big question of course is, what's the role of the City Council? The Charter Commission at that time -- and I had the pleasure to attend all of their meetings as a young lawyer -- had to decide what jurisdiction they should have. Should it be the same as the Board of Estimate? And the big question was, are there some actions that shouldn't even go to the City Council? The legislative actions like zoning, of course. They

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

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION ensure the role of the Borough Presidents was communicated.

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

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION parties, like the Department of City Planning, for larger areas. Then you have categories of actions that are commonly applied for by private parties -- developers, owners -- like special permits, when someone is trying to modify the regulations that apply for a particular building that they'd like to develop, whether it's the height, the height and setback, the use. Those are predominantly the private applications. And then you have applications, which are by nature, City-driven like site selections. Those are applications made by City agencies in the case of a site selection, which is a vow to establish a new City facility, whether it be a new Sanitation garage or a new waste water treatment plant. Those are obviously applications for capital projects made by City agencies. And so ULURP is kind of a montage of those different types of applications.

I think you understand -- and I'm not going to go in detail of how the process works and how it marches through the sequence -- but basically you understand that there's 60 days with the board, 30 days with the Borough President, 60 days at the Planning Commission and 50 to 65 days

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at the City Council.
One of the questions of course is, well, 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 the Council can override the Mayors decision. Veto, like in the case of local legislation. But the Mayor's veto is not a line item veto and so it's rarely used. Let's just assume City Planning proposes a big rezoning like East Midtown. The City Planning Commission approves it, the City Council approves it, the but it adds modifications that the Mayor doesn't like. If the Mayor vetoes, he's vetoing the entire project. He can't single out the modification. That's the way it works. And as a result, the veto is extremely rare. And as a practical matter, Council is the last say.

So in conclusion, this is a very intricate process. It's guided by a set of objectives that were identified in 1975. They were reenforced by changes made by the Fritz Schwarz Commission in the '80s and that continue in place today. And those objectives in role remain as important today as they were back then.

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No process is perfect and ULURP is by no means perfect. And no process guarantees a particular result either. But I think overall that it has stood the test of time. I would suggest that major changes and adjust to ULURP should not be made without a huge amount of study, a very significant investigation, so that we can ensure that some of the values that were vetted in in 1975 and used today are maintained and that we don't lose them. Thank you.

MR. PERALES: Thank you. That's been very, very instructive for those of us on the Commission who are not planners.

I'm going to ask that you all go through your presentation. We took too long in the last panel. So it's five minutes for each and then the Commission can get at you. Is that fair? With that, Jessica Katz. MS. KATZ: Hi, how are you? Thank you. I want to thank the members of Charter Revision Commission and for this important discussion and for asking me to speak here today. My name is Jessica Katz. I'm the Executive Director of the Citizens Housing and Planning Council, CHPC. Founded in 1937, we began our mission as a civic

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 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

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complicated ever changing City.
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

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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

NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION of affordable housing, returning City owned land to productive use and neighborhood revitalization, among others. Fourth, the Department of City Planning must have the resources, so they can better process Land Use actions and provide more robust technical assistance to Community Boards. Fifth, we must create a process that gives voice to the voiceless. Currently the only people who don't have a vote in the ULURP process, are those who may someday live in the new housing proposed. For an example that is near and dear to my heart, there are 60,000 homeless people in New York City and they do not have for the most attend Community Board meetings. And yet, it's both our legal and moral responsibility to ensure that their needs are met.

And to wrap-up, I just want to say, the ULURP process as it currently stands is long, it's technical and it's messy. Communities complain their voices are not heard. Developers complain that their needs are not being met. The pre-ULURP process is used for productive negotiations and as a stall tactic. In the course of your public hearings, you will hear

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complaints that the process is too rigid and at once too open-ended. That there's too much community input as well as not enough. So where I started my testimony today with all the reasons why ULURP reform is needed, there will be no perfect solution that satisfies everyone. And it just may be that like any god negotiation, we know we've succeeded when all parties walk away unhappy with the result. It may be that the ULURP process for all its faults is simply a reflection of how difficult these Land Use choices are and that the controversy is not a reflection of a broken process at all, but of a productive push and pull among stakeholders.

Thank you, again for inviting me to continue to be part of the discussion and I'm happy to answer any questions.

MR. PERALES: Well, we'll have questions after we've heard from everybody. Tom, we're going to go to you next. MR. ANGOTTI: I think one big problem is not the ULURP process or the length of the ULURP process itself. I'm not suggesting lengthening it or shortening it. It goes through necessary steps. The problem is pre-ULURP. All of those discussions that go on, side discussions, agreements that get made behind closed doors are part of the undemocratic process that precedes ULURP. And it's followed by a series of public hearings at the Community Board level, at the Borough President level, at the City Planning Commission level, at the City Council level, which are more theater, than true democracy. Why? Because we're stuck in a method for participation that is bankrupt. I've attended many of these and have heard people upset because they have to wait eight hours, ten hours to give a three minute presentation to a panel that's absent. There's only a stenographer and there's one or two people on the panel that happen to be there with their eyes open. This is broken. We need true democratic participation and dialogue between the people who are going to make those decisions and -- and perhaps we need to have public advocates or perhaps the public advocates office getting involved in structuring a truly democratic process.

The other thing that's broken is the environmental review process. It occurs mostly before a ULURP application is certified and goes

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through ULURP. It's done in a very highly technical language that most people don't understand, including many elected officials, who have to take the vote. And in the meantime, the environment suffers because the real environmental issues that we need to be addressed when you have massive development, go through a process of environmental review that is only geared toward disclosing potential negative impacts and not necessarily mitigating them and not necessarily changing the way the City does business, so that future Land Use actions don't have negative environmental impacts. So environmental reviews have a disclosure process. It does not require anybody to do anything. And there's no follow-up. Even when there's a promise of a mitigation, there's no follow-up ten years down the line, to see if that school was built.

So there have been several proposals for changing this pre-ULURP process. Community benefit agreements, memorandums for understanding written coming out of the Mayors office or other offices in City government. But they don't -they disappear very quickly. The Williamsburg

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rezoning in 2005 was followed by a memorandum of understanding of about 30 pages coming from the Mayor's office, that nobody can seem to find today. There's nothing in it that requires the City absolutely to provide the financing components that were promised in that memorandum of understanding.

MR. GEWOLD: You have one minute remaining.
MR. ANGOTTI: So my recommendations are basically sunshine for the pre-ULURP process. Make it out in the open, public and don't let it be negotiating behind closed doors, because then people get to the ULURP process and say all the deals have been made. We can't change anything. The applicants are reluctant to make any significant changes, because it might set them back and they might have to do another environmental review and start all over again. Change participation. Make it a truly democratic participatory engagement, so that people can engage with the issues at hand. Community Boards again need the financing provisions to have the professional help and also to be able to provide information to the citizens and the people who participate in the ULURP process.

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I do think Community Boards need to be elected and more representative and again, that's very uneven. There are many Community Boards, particularly in the new immigrant communities, that are multi-laboral and conduct all of their business in one language, English.

Training, paid for by the City, of Community Board members in the areas that they are engaged with. And I do think the Community Boards are old and mature enough now that their votes could be equal to the Mayor's votes. "Not in my backyard" exclusionary thinking is not only a thinking that resides in neighborhoods; it resides in government as well. It takes a different form. So lets attack new-deism wherever it may occur and let communities have a real stake in the ULURP process.

Just in the last year, I've attended many Community Board hearings, Land Use community hearings, where hundreds of people -- as a result of rezoning that's very popular. Hundreds of people turnout to demonstrate and loudly and disrupt and close down the meetings. That's a symptom of a lack of power. It's not power. And finally, I have one other detail I think

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that should be reconsidered, are the fair share requirements that were in the 1989 Charter Revision and are extremely unique. This is that every community should get no more than its fair share of burdensome land uses by City facilities.

MR. PERALES: Your time is up. We'll get a chance to ask you some follow up questions. Thank you very, very much.

Our next name on the list is Moses Gates
MR. GATES: Thank you and I do apologize. I have a 4:00 meeting downtown and I have to leave after this. My name is Moses Gates. I'm the Vice President for Housing and Neighborhood Planning and the Regional Planning Association. And we work not just in New York City, but in the kind Tri-State area, Connecticut, Hudson Valley, Long Island and Northern New Jersey.

And the first thing I kind of want to acknowledge is that compared to many other municipalities, ULURP is more transparent, more community involved and more predictable for developers than many, many other Land Use processes in the region. I think we need to start by kind of acknowledging the parts that are good as well as the parts that need improvement.

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In our experience, the symptom of kind of the conflict, the theme of the conflict throughout most of ULURP process that can stop good things from happening and also not give communities the power over unneeded or unwanted uses, is a sense that there's no ability to proactively community plan. That unless you're able to put forth a positive vision that has some oomph behind it and some ability to be recognized, that the only option you're left with is an option of obstruction or an option of essentially trying to go through the process and make the best of what might be perceived as a bad deal. And I think the Charter Commission has a really interesting opportunity to kind of revisit that and make things a lot more predictable for the development community as well as a lot better for other communities that are going through this.

I would say that the biggest thing in terms of Community Board Reform and we've kind of discussed that, there are many, many tools and processes. One I want to point out is a civic engagement tool that was actually developed by the government of Madrid, called Console, which

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is kind of an open-source software tool. When I was a tour guide routinely working till around 11:00 at night, I was not able to attend any Community Board meetings and I actually really wanted to at that point in my life. If you work nights, if $I$ can't get childcare, if you are otherwise kind of have life obstacles, you are to a large extent kind of shutout of the community process, even though we've advanced to the point where there are other tools, other than going to a weekly evening meeting every alternative Tuesday, to kind of give our influence and have communities give thoughts as to the Land Use process and we're long overdue to embrace those.

The other thing that we can do as an able community is to kind of proactively plan for their neighborhoods, which is again, starting to happen a little bit in a very interesting way. The ULURP process is essentially a disclosure process in decision making. It's more or less a tri parte negotiation process between the relevant City Council person, the administration and whoever is proposing the project. And if you're proposing the project, you kind of have a seat at the table. And what communities are

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starting to learn is that if they propose a project, it might not come out the other side as they are envisioning, but they're able to drive the discussion and they both have a seat at the table. Because in the ULURP process, anyone is able to propose a rezone. If it is legal and meets all the requirements, you're able to put it in and legally City planning needs to move forward with it. What is happening and what we're seeing is that communities are doing this, but only communities that have the financial resources and social capital to be able to do it. For instance, the rezoning process on the Upper East Side, that was done essentially to try to knock some height off of a proposed tower. That was able to be done because of the finances and social capital of the community on the Upper East Side that --

MR. GEWOLB: One minute remaining.
MS. GATES: An office of community based planning that would be able to both give resources and assist communities in developing kind of a proactive framework, would be very interesting. Not necessarily a rezoning framework, because I don't think that addresses

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

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fair share process that also acknowledges a community's need to meet housing obligations and meet the affordable housing obligations in kind of a growing and increasingly expensive City as well as new community amenities and infrastructure obligations.

MR. PERALES: Thank you very much, Mr. Gates and I hope you make your meeting. MR. GATES: I will give it my best shot. MR. PERALES: Ron Shiffman.

MR. SHIFFMAN: Thank you very much and thank you for inviting me, commissioners and dear colleagues. I'm Ron Shiffman. I'm Director Emeritus for the Pratt Center for Community Development, which I founded in 1964. I also was Chair of the Planning Department of Pratt for a number of years and a Professor Emeritus there. I served on the City Planning Commission between 1990 and 1996.

I want to step back a little bit, because I think a lot of the decisions to be made have to be made within a framework. The year I graduated from high school, then developed an architectural school, bus segregation in the United States was being vigorously challenged and eventually ended.

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

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 a purely a marketing terms and not based on a set unique scale alternatives for a shared vision of our City. A City of social, economic and cultural diversity. A City of inclusion and opportunity. We ignore the phrase of the definition, legal use of, which can and should include factors such as social, economic integration and other values that can result in engaging their planning process to achieve constitutionally numerical rights and selectively desired outcomes. Instead, we engage in Land Use decisions predicated on policies to attract the creative class, middle income families and to maximize the return of the ordinance speculation. When we do this, we're telling more impoverished, low income residents, new immigrants and people of color that they are to yield their seats to those of higher income and to those that generate more wealth for a select few. 53 years after Montgomery, we use the same principal of racial segregation in a sophisticated way to sort out and segregate our society; not in buses, but in our neighborhoods. We are all victims of that policy. We all pay for the resulting disparities. This City needsNYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
to stop the Land Use policy driven by development and instead adopt a policy based on principles of inclusion and opportunity coupled and driven by community based planning. Planning must precede land use and associated action. Planning properly undertaken would include social, economic, environmental, education and transportation factors at the outset. It should be comprehensive and integrated; not separating our needs into Cylos, but weaving together a strategy that leads to qualitative and viable places. Planning needs to be people centered; not driven by speculative, narrow economic returns. Specifically, I would like to refer you to the testimony of Paula Segal, that outlines some steps that need to be taken and that should be an integral part of any proposed Charter charge. I would also suggest that you read and re-read the very important title, "The Inclusive City: Strategies to Achieve More Equitable and Predictable Land Use in New York City," and meet with members of that working group that produced that report. In large part their recommendations are an outlook of the experience and the deliberation of two dozen of New York City's

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political organizations dedicated to the healthy, vitality and qualitative growth and development in the City. Indeed there are many communities in New York City, especially environmental justice communities, many of whom have been engaged with the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance and engaged in their own inclusive proactive comprehensive command for a long time with neither assistance for support from the City.

MR. GEWOLB: One minute.
MR. SHIFFMAN: -- the impact the planning for inclusive and just City. Today is June 19th. A day, Freedom Day, that commemorates the announcement in Texas of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation ending slavery throughout the former confederacy issued two years before that. Unfortunately, the legacy of slavery and the Jim Crow Laws that followed have not all been eliminated. Indeed, many of them continued in a sophisticated way and are perpetrated by too many in our profession in the way that we develop our Land Use and zoning policies and in the development that basically won. This Commission has the opportunity and indeed the obligation to

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

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neighborhoods. Sure we need a predictable timetable. Sure we need more affordable housing. But our affordable housing strategies are such that they're creating greater displacement in the communities while it's bringing in more affordable housing for a different income group. The people on the local level are not stupid. They know what's happening when the area is changing. They know what's happening when their schools are overcrowded and they don't see a new school in the pipeline. We've got to reinstitute the 197A planning process, which is a community initiated planning process that has teeth. That engages the community and the developers and others in predictable forms that can take place today. But unless we think about the words and at processes and the framework of justice, then we're going to be failing on this Charter Revision.

MR. PERALES: Thank you. We appreciate your comments.

Elena.
MS. CONTE: Thank you. Good afternoon later in the afternoon. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak and listen. Again I'm with

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begin with the Pratt Center Development. I'm a spring chicken compared to Ron and Tom. I have about 15 years of experience in this and what I didn't say last time was that I really appreciate the openness of this Commission to really interrogate us, even though it wasn't an official formal charge. I think it's a really critical time in the City to be considering this. Things are at a fever pitch in terms of the development battles in the City and the consideration of what's happening on a neighborhood level.

The overarching point that $I$ want to make is that planning is more than Land Use. Right? It properly considers the systems and structures into which Land Use sticks. Right? It's about the social, environmental and economical change and land use is not just planning. Right? And so I think we're asking the wrong questions about Land Use procedures about government, stakeholders, developers and communities is that too much is being lumped onto the process unfairly. Right? Communities feel as though the structural issues that are related to employment and right to stay, access to quality education, environmental health and quality, all of these

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MR. GEWOLB: One minute.
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. Like 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

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

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addressed by the Commission.
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

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and tell me what it is?
MR. KARNOVSKY: Sure. Okay. The pre-ULURP process is fundamentally about two things from an applicant's standpoint, whether it's a City applicant or private applicant and then I'll talk a bit about the interaction with stakeholders during that same period. It's about preparing the application and preparing the environmental review. Getting everything in order to the point where it's ready for public review.

MR. PERALES: There are no time limits for this?

MR. KARNOVSKY: Well there were no time limits for a long period of time and there were lots of complaints and the Department of City Planning, towards the end of the Bloomberg administration, promulgated some rules that were designed to systemize this whole process and create not absolute timelines but cycles of review within the department to try to ensure timely response by the department through submissions by applicants. So for example, if you prepare a draft application or a draft environmental review document, you submit it to the department. The department comments on it,
sends it back to you within a period of time. You go through a period of processes to the point where the department says this is complete and ready for review. So there's no absolute timeline. No one can say it takes only this number of months. But there is a sequence that's followed and it's standardized now and the intention of the department is to create some order in this process that didn't exist before. And I think it's been relatively successful. The overall timeline is long, but there is more certainty about how you do it, what steps you have to go through, who you have to talk to and all of that sort of thing. I think what was discussed by others here has more to do with what's going on between an applicant -- between a private applicant perhaps but also the department which goes on an area wide rezoning during that time period in terms of interaction with the community with the local electives the Community Board and so forth and so on. That interaction takes place, which refers to dissatisfaction about some aspects of it. But I'll tell you from the point of view of private applicants, those do not engage in that kind of consultation are

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making a huge mistake and they do it, because they're never advised or they ignore those parties, because you can't go into the ULURP process and expect to come out with any form of success if you haven't touched base and had those discussions. Now, the transparency of that process is something that Professor Angotti has talked about and written about and those are some potential questions ans issues. But it takes place because applicants want to improve their proposals and better assure that they will get support when the process is actually launched. So that does take place, whether it be a Community Board or the Council member or the Borough President. The Department of City Planning obviously does the same thing in its own ways. So that's that whole chunk of time.

MR. PERALES: That helps. Other Commissioners have questions?

MS. SEECHARRAN: So I was also interested in the pre-ULURP process and I wonder, Professor Angotti, if you could share with us some very concrete recommendations for increasing transparency? And I also wonder if any of the panelists could comment on the Office of

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

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

MR. PERALES: Tell us, Ron --
MR. ANGOTTI: I say making that a

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requirement and making it a hard requirement in the Charter and also clarifying the language on having a professional City planner.

MR. SHIFFMAN: First of all, I'll give you a quick point that I submitted in my written testimony but amended to it a set recommendations that I would like you to review and I think they make sense, so I'll have to simply them in someway so they can be put on a ballot. I agree very much with the fact that we need some form of community based planning in the City of New York. However. We have to be careful. Once we mandate it, a 197A plan that becomes actual law, it also has to go through an environmental review process and it needs the resources by which to get that through the process. So we might wind up with having that as a law but there is no resources to pay for the environmental impact statement if it doesn't come through. And I think it's really important to do that. The other thing is we really have to get to the root of the environmental impact analysis. What we do is now the reason there's so much constant complaining is that because all of the environmental considerations are done once a developer or the

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

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So what they did is they brought in a whole barrage of attorneys and the only person who had any background in planning was myself and many of the Community Board members. I think it was 1 against 100. And I think it really is important that we revisit how we do the environmental impact analysis. That is that would be the framework, so it's predictable, rather than responding to each individual developer that comes along.

MS. CLARKE: My question is going to go directly to Mr. Shiffman, because I know him my whole life in Brooklyn. And I just wanted you to explain not only Myrtle Avenue in Brooklyn and how that became alive as well Community Board 9 in Brooklyn, Rogers Avenue, and what kind of input you had? If you were going to put something on the ballot in a statement to make sure that community fully participates, what would it be?

MR. SHIFFMAN: Well, if I knew exactly what you're talking about -- I think it boils down to the fact --

MS. CLARKE: On Pratt and Lou Bryant as well as Horace Williams worked with you.

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

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

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places. We have to think about how we invest in the people who live in this City who immigrated to this City who are here, rather than trying to attract the new creative class of the City. We need policies that invest in our City, rather than others. And that's what the people of each of those opportunities that you referred to worked on that and that's how they educated us. MR. PERALES: I think that's the right point to close this session. My thanks to all of you. Its been very instructive. As you can tell, we're trying to learn as much as we can, so that at the end of the day, we can put something before the voters in November. And we're very, very pleased by your presentation. Thank you all very much.
(Whereupon, at 4:21 P.M., the above matter concluded.)

C E R T I F I C ATE

STATE OF NEW YORK
COUNTY OF RICHMOND
: SS.:
)

I, JAMIE WILLIS, a Notary Public for and within the State of New York, do hereby certify:

That the above is a correct transcription of my stenographic notes.

I further certify that $I$ am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or by marriage and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 19th day of June 2018.


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