



## **MINUTES FOR THE JUNE 20, 2024 HEARING OF THE NEW YORK CITY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

A duly noticed meeting of the New York City Charter Revision Commission 2024 was held in the FDNY Headquarters in Brooklyn, at 5:00 p.m. on June 20, 2024.

The Chair, Carlo Scissura, presided at the meeting. The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 5:13 p.m. Also present were the following members of the Commission:

- Ken Ngai
- Kyle Bragg
- Reverend Herbert Daughtry, Sr.
- Christopher B. Lynch<sup>1</sup>
- Stephanie McGraw
- Max Rose<sup>2</sup>
- Jackie Rowe-Adams<sup>3</sup>

Introductions of the commissioners present were made.

The Commission held a public forum during which it heard testimony from the public concerning any comments, proposals, and recommendations for possible revisions to the New York City Charter regarding public safety. Throughout the hearing, the Commissioners asked periodically for details and clarification on the testimony provided.

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<sup>1</sup> Attended by teleconference

<sup>2</sup> Attended by teleconference

<sup>3</sup> Attended by teleconference

- Antonio Reynoso, Borough President of Brooklyn, testified on the importance of citywide comprehensive planning in enhancing public safety. He proposed a future land use map that goes beyond zoning and considers multiple factors as a growth and retention strategy, because the current zoning map is insufficient to demonstrate how New York City can accommodate future growth. Antonio Reynoso also proposed establishing a new office to support community board operations in carrying out their Charter mandated duties. Chair Scissura inquired about the proposed structure of the new community board office and potential changes to the appointment process. Reynoso responded that the new office would function as a back office independent of the borough president’s office.
- Howard Singer, Deputy Chief of Staff at the New York City Department of Corrections (DOC), testified in support of including sunset clauses in all reporting bills to eliminate outdated reports. He also advocated for the use of gender-neutral language throughout the Charter, suggesting terms like “prisoner” and “inmate” be replaced. Mr. Singer further suggested adding a new section to the Charter provisions governing the DOC by requiring the City Council Speaker to seek input from DOC on any relevant legislation before they are introduced.
- Jason Shelly, Assistant Commissioner for External Affairs at the FDNY, in his testimony to the Commission expressed concern over resources being diverted to new reporting obligations at the expense of FDNY’s need to prioritize actual emergencies. Mr. Shelly also called for gender-neutral language within the FDNY section of the Charter. Chair Scissura asked if gender-neutral terms could be

implemented through legislation by the City Council as an alternative approach to amending the Charter by referendum<sup>4</sup>.

- Bob Barrows, Deputy Commissioner of Strategic Initiatives at the NYPD, testified on the necessity of increased public input on bills concerning public safety. He proposed (1) allowing more public input on bills that implicated public safety; (2) encouraging lawmakers to engage directly with the agency the proposed bill impacted, and (3) a greater investigation of the financial impact of such bills. Deputy Commissioner Barrows also highlighted the strain on resources due to extensive reporting obligations and suggested that only critical reports should be required.
- Carolina Chavez, First Deputy Director of the Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice (MOCJ), testified in support of greater public involvement in the legislative process for bills regarding public safety. She emphasized the need for increased agency input to enhance transparency, protect integrity, and build public trust. Chair Scissura asked if Council Members with legislative ideas should approach the Commissioner of the respective agency or if the Commissioner should approach the council members with new ideas. Jason Shelly, Assistant Commissioner for External Affairs at the FDNY, opined that the respective agency should be consulted before legislation is passed.
- Public Advocate Jumaane Williams testified in support of the City Council’s role in the advice and consent process and called for independent funding for the Commission on Public Information and Communication (COPIC). He proposed

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<sup>4</sup> New York City Council General Counsel Jason Otano, in attendance, noted that a Charter modification of this nature was within the City Council’s jurisdiction.

granting subpoena power to the Public Advocate and establishing charter mandated office to manage a multi-agency rapid response for school shootings. Each agency would have a dedicated contact to respond and engage with the community and schools after NYPD pulls back. He also expressed a need for a plan in place to determine and solve the causes of the school-shootings, with an ultimate future goal of gradually decreasing NYPD dependence and presence in schools. Public Advocate Jumanne Williams also proposed removing school public safety responsibilities from the NYPD. Commissioner Bragg agreed with Commissioner Rowe-Adams that increasing public safety is a collective effort but disagreed with removing policing infrastructure from schools.

- Council Member Lincoln Restler testified on the short timeframe of the Charter Revision Commission and proposed either narrowing the Commission's scope or extending the timeline to the 2025 ballot. Council Member Restler testified in support of ranked-choice voting and suggested establishing an independent office to investigate sexual harassment claims within the City. Council Member Restler also called for a two-year lobbying ban on elected officials and agency heads after leaving office and supported adding more mayoral appointments to the advice and consent of the City Council.
- Patrick Hendry, President of the NYPD Police Benevolent Association, testified in support of increased public input and mandating public hearings in each borough on legislation affecting public safety. He called for strengthening due process for officers especially in processes before the Civilian Complaint Review Board (CCRB).

- Jim Brosi, President of the Uniformed Fire Officers Association, emphasized the need for more stakeholder input on public safety legislation. He raised concerns about the burden of paperwork and reporting requirements on resources and called for zoning provisions to address NYPD and FDNY needs in providing emergency services.
- Benny Boscio, President of the Correction Officers' Benevolent Association, in his testimony, expressed concerns about excessive blame placed on corrections officers. He advocated for more agency input before passing new legislation affecting corrections and suggested creating a dedicated panel of correction policy experts and field personnel for regular briefings with Council Members. Mr. Boscio opposed the ban on punitive segregation, citing safety concerns, and opposed unrestrained prisoner transport.
- Andrew Quinn, General Counsel for the Sergeants Benevolent Association NYPD, testified in support of mandating public and agency input before passing legislation concerning public safety and departmental policies. He raised concerns about hiring and retaining experienced officers, blaming City Council legislation for damaging morale through legislation such as the "How Many Stops Act" and the Diaphragm Compression Bill.
- Robert Camacho, Chair of Community Board 4, testified in support of holding city agencies more accountable and called for increased community input. He emphasized the need to support the NYPD in performing their duties.

- Hailey Nolasco, Director of Government Relations for the Center for Justice Innovation, testified on the input from community boards and non-profits in the legislative process for public safety bills, including.
- Hailey Gorenberg, testified in support of a charter mandate to preserve and expand urban green space, expressing concerns about paving for a sports complex in Mount Prospect Park.
- Paulette Healy, testified in support of creating a commission for people with disabilities, stating the current offices lacked the resources to accommodate the needs of disabled individuals. She cited concerns about the absence of NYPD training to identify people with disabilities.
- Dr. Kim Best, 79<sup>th</sup> Precinct Community Council President, testified in support of the need for more community input to ensure transparency and understanding of neighborhood-specific needs.
- Minister Sherrani Perri, in her testimony, called for more jobs, afterschool, and summer programs to enhance public safety, stating that economics can solve community issues. Commissioner Bragg agreed with creating more opportunities for younger individuals to help keep them off the streets and out of trouble.
- John Riccotone, First Vice President of the Community Education Council District 20 of Brooklyn, testified in support of more public input on public safety bills.<sup>5</sup> He called for more public safety legislation by the City Council and criticized the COVID-19 vaccine mandate as unlawful and a cause for departures of needed police officers. He further criticized bail reform, stating that it caused violent felons

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<sup>5</sup> Testified remotely

to be released from prison and proposed mandating a ride-along for each elected official. Lastly, Riccatone was against removing metal detectors from schools and voiced strong support for the NYPD.

- Amaury Dujardin, Policy Manager at Citizens Union, testified on the timeline of the CRC, and suggested working past the deadline or not making any major changes to the Charter.<sup>6</sup> He stated that the appointment of the Police Commissioner should be subject to the advice and consent of the City Council. He opposed the proposal for lengthy public review on public safety regulations.
- Natasha Duncan, in her testimony, expressed concerns on the Commission's timeline and process.<sup>7</sup> She called for increased police accountability.
- Yiatin Chu testified in support of the repeal of the "How Many Stops Act", stating only the Mayor and Police Commissioner should have the authority to dictate public safety laws.<sup>8</sup> She also proposed eliminating the Public Advocate's office, emphasized the need for more school safety agents, and called for ending New York City's sanctuary city status.
- Amit Pratap Shah, Member of Community Board 6, testified in support of increasing public input on public safety regulations to enhance transparency.<sup>9</sup> He further suggested extending the public testimony time to allow the public to fully express their concerns.

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<sup>6</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>7</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>8</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>9</sup> Testified remotely

- Jean Han testified in support of putting up referendum the reinstatement of a masking requirement in public gatherings.<sup>10</sup> She opposed New York City’s sanctuary city status and criticized the “How Many Stops Act” as ineffective and detrimental to public safety. Lastly, Han proposed eliminating the Public Advocate’s office.
- Samy Feliz, in his testimony, expressed concerns on the Commission’s timeline and process.<sup>11</sup> He voiced support for the “How Many Stops Act” and stated that there needed to be more transparency and accountability in the NYPD.
- Maria Danzilo testified in support of recommending specific qualifications and term limits for community board members.<sup>12</sup> She also stated Council Members with conflicts of interest should not be able to write legislation.
- Donghui Zang, testified in support of the repeal of the “How Many Stops Act” and New York City’s sanctuary city status.<sup>13</sup> He voiced support for the NYPD and stated that they needed to dedicate resources to actual emergencies and not paperwork.
- Mona Davids, Founder and President of the New York Charter Parents Association and the New York City Parents Union, testified in support of funding the NYPD and called for the repeal of the “How Many Stops Act”.<sup>14</sup> She further opposed advice and consent, stating only the Mayor and the Police Commissioner should dictate police policy.

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<sup>10</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>11</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>12</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>13</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>14</sup> Testified remotely



- Minister Irene Estrade testified on the importance of supporting the NYPD and stated that only the Mayor and Police Commissioner should write police policy with no input from the City Council.<sup>15</sup> She supported removing the Public Advocate’s office and increased accountability for community board leaders.
- Christopher Leon Johnson proposed eliminating the Public Advocate’s office, repealing the “How Many Stops Act” through a November 2025 ballot initiative, and repealing New York City’s sanctuary city status. He also testified on the need for increased safety measures for corrections officers and proposed repealing the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement (HALT) Act.
- Raul Rivera, in his testimony, criticized the lack of transparency in the City Council and called for more public input on bills affecting the public. He called for increased police funding and proposed eliminating the Public Advocate’s office.
- Franscico Marte, Founder and President of the Bodega and Small Business Association, testified on the need for transparency in drafting legislation and on the need to have consequences for small crimes or theft for deterrence purposes. He opposed defunding the police.
- Vishnu Mahado testified about his concerns regarding the over-65 Medicaid law and the use of irrevocable trusts in Medicaid planning.<sup>16</sup>
- Limor Neshar testified in support of restoring the masking ban for gatherings of 50 people or more.<sup>17</sup> She opposed New York City’s sanctuary city status.

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<sup>15</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>16</sup> Testified remotely

<sup>17</sup> Testified remotely

- Quiann Simpkins testified in support for the NYPD and testified on the need to keep school safety agents a part of the NYPD, stating the office has been successful in increasing school safety.<sup>18</sup> She further stated that politicians need to implement housing and community changes and called for the removal of the Public Advocate’s office. Lastly, she recommended bail reform.

After hearing from all those members of the public in attendance who wished to speak, the Chair closed the public hearing portion of the meeting. A motion was made by Chair Scissura to adjourn. The motion was thereafter adopted unanimously by all Commission members present.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hamza Suhail  
New York City Charter Revision Commission

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<sup>18</sup> Testified remotely