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Captioned by Rivka Woonteiler

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DR. SAYEED: I am going to go ahead and start. Just so we can give everyone that is here, ample time to do their commenting.

Good afternoon, everybody. Thank you so much to everyone for joining us. I am going to call to order the Civic Engagement Commission public hearing, focused on proposed change methodology for poll site language assistance.

We are also live streaming this hearing for people to join us in other ways. Thank you so much for taking the time to be with us.

Also to the team who helped coordinate and members of language assistance advisory community and partners from eleven language communities, that have been helping us build awareness of access rights.

Just, before I start, I usually go over technical assistance information.

Please, everyone, mute yourself.

For commissioners, your audio is enabled. If you are not speaking, please mute yourself and when you are ready to speak, you can unmute. For commissioners, please do keep your video cameras on, if possible. To all other participants, this session is being recorded. We will enable audio during public period.

If you have not signed up yet, but would like to provide comment, you can sign up by typing your name into the chat to offer public comment. You can text your name to 917-587-9103. We do have live captioning here today.

If you are a member of the public, and you are not already on CEC e-mail list, I am going to drop the link in the chat for you to sign up and join the newsletter list.

I am going to take attendance.

When I call your name, please state if you are here.

(Taking attendance)

Thank you, everyone. My name is Dr. Sarah Sayeed. I am one of the 15 who make up the Civic Engagement Commission. I am also

the chair and Executive Director.

As I said earlier, the purpose of the hearing is to hear responses from the public to our proposed amendment to our methodology for poll site language assistance.

In 2020 the CEC commissioners held our first public hearing to help us create the initial methodology and we are now tasked with reviewing and updating the methodology at least every five years, beginning September of 2022. We are not required -- while we were required to hold a prior hearing for the creation of the methodology, we are not required by law to conduct a public hearing on proposed changes and revisions on methodology. However, we wanted to do that to promote public engagement regarding how we are allocating resources and to be transparent how those decisions are made and, to help have the public be involved in making these decisions and delivering the language assistance services.

So, what I am going to do is, do a quick overview of the language assistance program and how, you know, the basic overview of the methodology and, then, the proposed amendment and then turn to the comment period.

Each commenter will speak for up to 3 minutes. We will be

running a timer to help us stay on track. The commissioners may ask clarifying questions after all the commentators finish. We are going to take the comments one by one. And, if the commissioners -- we won't be making comments on the comments, we will just ask clarifying questions and I will ask the staff if they have any questions and then, once that commenting period is over, we will turn to the public meeting and have a discussion about the methodology and vote on the proposed change. So I think I need to share my screen now.

So today we are talking about the CEC poll site language assistance methodology. So, just as a reminder, our methodology was developed to ensure that we serve as many languages as possible, as many citizens of voting age who are limited English proficient, with the resources that we have.

In the first iteration of the methodology, we decided based on guidance by the charter, that we will serve the Local Law 30 Languages and the charter allows us to serve language communities whose concentration may be greater than the local law languages because communities are changing in the make up and size all the time, so we do have, in addition to the 10 languages, Italian and Yiddish in the mix of services that we provide.

And, also, as a reminder, the allocation of poll sites is based on the ranking of each language and how many -- what the percentage share is of the total citizens of voting age who are limited English proficient for the language.

We do use the American Community Survey Data, to make those ranking.

In addition, we rank each poll site for each language so that we are only going to sites that are the highest ranking for each language and the number of sites for each language is determined by the percentage share for that language.

The number of sites that we served -- CEC served 25 unique sites for early voting. For Election Day, we have 75 unique sites. Some of those sites also have more than one language.

And, as we all remember, CEC does not provide any services that are duplicative to the Board of Elections so we are not providing services in Queens. For chinese, we do not provide in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens. We do not provide Spanish anywhere in the city because that is the DOE's responsibility.

So this table (indication) tells you a bit more about the ranking for the languages.

Again, as a reminder, this data is reflecting only the geographies where we are providing services so it is shown in alpha order. It shows you the citizens of voting age, who are limited English proficient, the estimate of that population based on the American Community Survey. It also tells you how each language fairs in terms of the proportion -- how it compares to other languages -- how this number compares to other languages that are in the mix here. And then the brackets tell you the data for the American Community Survey for five-year period. So, for the brackets, that is data from 2015 to 2019. This is new data from 2016 to 2020.

At quick glance, you can see that the greatest concentration of speakers belongs to the Russian language community, who are citizens of voting age and limited English proficient.

As a result of that, about 38 or 39 percent of our sites will go to Russian. Every language community is assigned a percentage share here.

This is a table for how we determine the ranking for the languages and how many sites each language will get.

This is an overview of utilization data by each language.

It tells you how many people we have served in each language

over the 5 cycles, since we have been providing services.

It includes the general 2020 election in November, all the way up until the August primary.

It combines early voting and Election Day services, so, again, you will see that, you know, obviously, Russian is the largest language community so it has the largest number of people who are served.

And, in the next couple of slides, we show you how that looks across for each cycle, by language.

So, what you can see here, overall, for all the languages -- actually most of the languages, you can see that the greatest number of people turning out is generally for the general election of November 2020 and 2021. However, for some language communities, it fluctuates.

In general, we know that many more people turn out for general elections than they do for primaries. This shows you that generally over time that there is -- if we look across elections, there is, you know, some language communities that are quite consistent. For example, haitian and creole. Others are increasing.

It really varies how people are utilizing our service by language and the nature of the election.

The Board of Elections provides CEC with a new list of poll sites. We determine where the poll sites are that had the highest concentration for each language and those are the poll sites that we serve.

A certain percentage of the poll sites will change from election to election -- anywhere between 20 to 40 percent perhaps.

For this cycle maybe it is fewer. At any rate, it is not always consistent. There is some reasons why these sites change. One is that sites may not be on the Board of Election site list itself. For example, if there is construction, that site might be taken off for a short time. There is also redistricting, so sites may be changing as a result. Because of these changes, we may get a new concentration around each site -- that itself could change. That is because people may be moving and so that site may be serving fewer people in a particular language community.

We have seen significant shifts around particular sites and that typically has been associated with the assignment of election districts, assigned to particular sites so that cycle to cycle there may be changes and some dramatic in terms of the concentration.

Once the concentration ranking changes, the site will become eligible to be added or removed from services, depending on how it

ranks with other sites.

What we are talking about today is the question of how we should be thinking of utilization.

To date, we have not looked at it as a criteria for making decisions about where to provide services. As we discussed, voting knowledge and behavior varies greatly by type of election.

People may not be comfortable using government services, so for those reasons we are careful and not looked at utilization.

However, we are now asking the public for feedback on whether we should consider utilization, over what time period should we give ourselves to evaluate utilization, and when applying the methodology, resultant changes in the concentration ranking for particular poll sites and if that site is being dropped from the list -- should we consider continuing service at that site because people are familiar with the service and when they show up, we would not be there if we completely are going by our methodology.

And, if the public thinks that we should do that -- if we should consider sites to remain on our list, even if applying the methodology is dropping them, how should we be making those decisions given that we have limited resources?

Should we borrow resources from the same language?

If there are sites that have good utilization, you know, should we try to keep those by borrowing from the same language community or should we borrow resources across language communities?

So, if a site from another language has zero utilization, should we consider reallocating resources from that site?

The other question is, should we consider dropping sites that have lower utilization? If we should, how do we define low and what should be the benchmark for good or high utilization?

These are all open questions that we welcome feedback on.

And, then, the language of the amendment to the methodology really focuses on the ability to review the utilization data. We are committing ourselves to report on utilization and we are saying that we can consider utilization data in preserving services or reallocating services from under-utilized sites.

If the application of the methodology results in a well-utilized site being dropped from the list of sites, we are saying that we can consider retaining the site based on available resources and it may -- we may consider, reallocating resources from another site, even within the same language or another language, if a particular has been served

over 3 cycles with zero or minimal utilization.

So the language is general, and it is just opening the opportunity to consider this question; that is what the commissioners will be discussing and voting on after we hear from the members of the public about these proposed changes.

So, I am going to move into the public hearing portion.

I am going to put into the chat the listed names that we have so far.

If you do not see your name on this list, and you would like to comment, please do put your name into the chat and/or call or text the number I have given you earlier which is 917-587-9013. Each person will have 3 minutes.

Aby, can you time folks?

ABY: Yes, I will time and keep track on my end.

DR. SAYEED: So the first person on the list is Mariya Markh.

MARIYA MARKH: Good afternoon. Thank you I represent the Russian-speaking community as part of CEC. The poll site interpreter program is something that is very important to me. I have been spreading the word about it over Russian language radio, social media and e-mail blasts. It is nice to see it grow from the small

program it was under the mayor's office, to what it is today.

As this program grows, obviously there has to be changes. I wanted to be very specific for my comments today and focus primarily on special and primary election utilization.

I believe that is one area that needs to be improved.

So, currently, CEC gathers data from the American Community Service to identify where voters need language access because voter registration forms don't ask about language proficiency or need. So the limitation for this data is that it does not distinguish a voter versus a non-voter, someone who is enrolled with a party or not enrolled or if they are eligible to enrolled in primaries. When this data is missing, it prevents CEC from ranking poll sites accurately for primary and special elections. Current methodology is not as flexible as we would want it to be and it does need to be changed, at least slightly.

For example, if there is a special election scheduled concurrently with the primary, CEC should be able to rank some special election sites higher than those with only primaries when the number of eligible voter is higher. Currently, there is no mechanism for the site moving up in ranking, based on different types of elections.

There is also concern with special elections that are standalone.

Sometimes, there is special elections that are only in part of the city. Earlier this year there was an election in the 60th assembly in Brooklyn. CEC was able to provide Russian translators at one of the regular sites. Unfortunately, there were no services at a separate site located in the same neighborhood.

Now, I have personally witnessed numerous Russian speakers going to vote that had to either bring family members or they may have requested my assistance at that site. Having the CEC provide this would be better and easier and make it more accessible.

Although that site was not ranked in the previous general election and did not receive those services, CEC should have some kind of mechanism.

ABY: We passed 3 minutes. Thank you for your input. Next up is Erum Hanif.

>>ERUM: Good afternoon and thank you to Sarah all the commissioners for being here and giving me an opportunity to testify today. My name is Erum Hanif. I represent Urdu-speaking New Yorkers. I am member of the inception, where it started, and I know how it works in terms of doing the outreach and increasing the efforts to reach out to limited English-proficient communities. I represent Urdu

speaking New Yorkers. Sarah hosted the Civic Engagement workshop and it was really appreciated by our community members.

I am also community advocate Pakistan Americans. Many of our seniors and older adults are English-limited voters. They need better outreach about Civic Engagement and voter education.

One of the reasons of low turnout is that many low-income and limited English voters are not fully aware of the special elections or candidates.

The LEPS team's availability of the election site is not known to many of them. They are not able to effectively utilize the services available to them during the election. I would like to suggest to increase outreach to get more people involved and to educate them about the importance of voting, getting their voices heard and simultaneously inform them of the support and services available to them during early voting or on election date.

In addition to that, I am not sure if the American Community Survey is itself available in these 11 languages in which the LEP is providing services to community members.

I would like to suggest to continue to provide the language assistance services in eligible 11 languages city-wide.

The number of the poll sites should be determined by the

number of the people living in the district rather than the number of voters who participated or received language assistance in the previous elections. We have noticed the turnout of the voters depends on so many factors; one is of information that elections are happening in particular districts or not, who are the candidates on the ballot and as well as many other factors. Sometimes we have a good number of turnouts from both sides and sometimes we have less. So, I think that the solution to that or one of the suggestions is to see how many voters live in that particular district and those who are limited-English proficient.

On the basis of that, the resource allocation should be taken into consideration. I will not take much time. I appreciate every one of you for the opportunity. And I look forward to continue to my work as a member of LEP.

ABY: Okay. Next we have Asher Ross.

ASHER: Thank you. I serve as Senior Strategist as New York Immigration Coalition Action. (Audio not clear).

We have 200 grassroots member organization in the United States, many of them represent the immigrant communities in New York City.

I just want to note that for today's hearing that my background is also -- as a data scientist, specializing in demographic patterns and voting behavior in the U.S. Previously, while working for the city, I helped to develop the methodology in -- I am familiar with this topic and have been following very closely.

The New York City Civic Engagement Commission have been great at allocating resources in this program and improving this program over time. I believe that the program has expanded language access for New York diverse communities and for immigrants who are not previously served. I would also like to note that non-citizen voting take effect, we can expect to help newly eligible voters participant in the election.

The methodology, as originally designed, as a starting point and a guide, needs to be supplemented with qualitative info from the field. It is appropriate to integrate utilization data in the analysis with regular intervals. We should ensure enough data to assess the effectiveness.

For instance, if there has been zero utilization at a specific site, the CEC should be dropping the site from the list.

We also support additional outreach to raise awareness of the availability of the services.

I want to thank the commission for undertaking this important work and for allowing for public input and for having me at the hearing. Thank you, very much.

ABY: Thank you so much. Next up we have Debbie.

DEBBIE: Thank you for allowing me to speak this afternoon.

My name is Debbie Luis. I want to thank the public servants on this line, commissioners, the fellow elect community members and the community. As a community leader, I work with the public in many ways. I am a strong advocate for the haitian community.

I decided to work with LEP when I went through four election cycles and struggled to support the traffic of Creole speakers.

Language access is a major concern in the communities. The New York City Civic Engagement Commission has been providing this service to voters with limited English proficiency. We have seen 3500 New Yorkers voted in their language.

We know that with better advertisement that this will make a larger impact. I believe that there should be better advertisement around this so that folks can participate in this program.

As a community leader, it is important for me to advocate for the people and share their concerns. It is important for us to meet them where

they are and not to cut down the methodologies that are working and we need to increase the services. As I worked on several rounds of ballot initiatives and saw that RCB also was an issue, there became a greater divide with language access support in our community.

We have seen in the past three years, that our community -- specific those who speak Haitian Creole -- during the pandemic, before the pandemic, and even now -- that these people are underrepresented.

The research that has been presented shows us that folks that speak other languages continue to come back to utilize the city-sponsored initiatives.

When we look at the data, we know that it does not match up with the census data. This gives us an aggregate on the patient population.

The commission is now proposing a revision to the existing methodology.

In addition, I believe we should have community input and partnership for this work to be positioned to service the community as a whole.

Haitian Creole also needs to be a voting rights language.

As a growing population in New York City, we see that we are one of the largest Haitian populations outside of Haiti, itself.

Support is needed now more than ever. I am asking the commission

this afternoon to not just remember the Creole-speaking folks, but also recognizing that other folks that are need of services and data and improved methodologies.

I want to thank you all for your time. I will submit my testimony in writing. I know I have more to say, but thank you.

ABY: Thank you so much. Next up is Jackson.

JACKSON ROCKINGSTER: After Debbie presentation, there is not much to add other than to say that I agree with her assessment and contention. Do not curtail this service. It is actually much more needed and in demand than you would think. Our people have a history of shying away from government services because of the history that we have. Again, I would like to recognize Debbie and thank her for her testimony because it was well-said and I whole-heartedly agree.

ABY: Next we have Porez Lexama.

POREZ LUXAMA: Hello. I am the Executive Director I am the Executive Director of (inaudible term) center in East Flatbush. I am going to add to what Debbie and Jackson said. This is something that we experience every election, and we have to also say thank you to the initiative also, because ten or twenty years ago, we didn't have the program and it was worse. We have to build on it. I was aware, like,

you know, (inaudible). I really believe that it is not an excuse or reason to (inaudible). We have to see how it was done last year or the year prior. There was a lot of stress that effected our community. Talking about racial justice and inequity. I feel like our people, not only because of the languages, there is always going to be disadvantages. We have to look in the future, and to provide resources. Thank you for having me.

ABY: Thank you. Is she on the call? . No. Okay. For now, if Carolyn is not available to speak, we can move to the Asian American Federation. Is Lisha on the line? Lisha Luo Cai? No. Okay. We did also receive a public statement from Sarah Goff at Common Cause. I don't believe that she is on.

DR. SAYEED: I think that those folks are not here, my preference would be to hear first from the person who put their name in the chat and then we could have the staff read from the letters that we got that there is no representative here for. Is Shaila Sultana available?

Again, is Kawthar available? I think Shaila is muted.

If you are not able to comment, feel free to send a written statement, if that makes sense. Let's go to the organizations that

submitted. I don't know if anyone texted or called to sign up.

>> We can hear Shaila now.

SHAILA: Hello, Salaam Alekim. Good afternoon. I am a community health worker and so I work with the community and talk with the people. In these issues, I don't have much experience, but some of the issues when I talk to seniors in other centers. They feel some shakiness because of the language barrier. LEP of resources and organizations. Sometimes seniors are living alone. They are able to go themselves. This morning, some of my seniors requested to fill out the form for early voting. We need transportation services also. I know that this election commission has made language assistance like language assistance and assigning interpreters. So this is my point of view to share with you. Thank you and thank you for your presentation.

ABY: Thank you so much. I think that is everybody unless somebody wants to sign up. So if no one else is going to be speaking, if we share the comments from people who e-mailed us, but were not here today, I think that we can turn to the public meeting portion of this gathering.

So, what we will do now is -- actually, before we do that,

commissioners, do you have any clarifying or other questions for those who offered comments?

AMY: I was wondering what the Creole community is seeing on the ground specifically that is -- that they are coming to the commission to keep our services. Is there something where they are understanding that we are cutting out services or are they asking for services to be brought to their community that we have not provided?

POREZ: Thank you. Yes, there are statistics that are shared, you know. What is the reason? You used to have 11 sites -- the question is about what happened and why didn't it increase? The work doing in our community and then we know the numbers should be increased because there is more people -- especially in the last administration, former president. Again, the question is about do you guys put money -- we need to go to the churches. This is where the old folks are. And what you have done to increase the number. We are doing our part to make sure that they can participate. We are going to continue to advocate to have more sites. I think what you have is good a program. We are here with you. We want to hand-to-hand to advocate with you to the mayor or whoever. I think we should expand the program. Also, we should have the program for

the Civic Engagement to go prior to allow people -- because we experience it. A lot of people are not voting. They don't have the support. So, to increase the numbers, we are advocating for that.

Thank you Mr. Luxama.

ABBY: Mark put a question in the chat . That certain of the speakers were objecting total language in the proposed amendment on utilization that empowers the CEC to consider reallocating resources based on lack of utilization of translation services at particular site.

DR. SAYEED: Do people who offered comment have opinion on that; how long to look at utilization, what period to look at utilization, knowing also that sites may fall off the list for other reasons, having nothing to do with us, if redistricting happens for other reasons.

We may not even be able to compare across times.

Assuming that a site are in the mix for a very long period of time and showing low utilization, what is that period of time we should look for? Does anybody have any opinion on that, from the commentators that testified?

ASHER: I think it would be appropriate to observe the course of a state, local and presidential -- one cycle of election. Looking at it based on a full cycle of four years. That gives an opportunity and the

DOE an opportunity to keep that open through one full cycle.

You want to go and make sure you include a presidential and a city election. That would be one recommendation.

DR. SAYEED: Debby, did you have a comment?

DEBBIE: Can you repeat the question? I had internet issues and needed to refresh.

SARAH SAYEED: So the question was: If you wanted to think about utilization, Commissioner Diller was asking whether we should think about utilization over a longer period of time.

When we are assessing whether we think that utilization is high or low, should we consider, for example, four years, like Asher said, to look at how a particular site is doing over different types of elections -- whether it is state, city, or federal. Did you have an opinion on that? The duration of time on that?

DEBBIE: Absolutely. I believe that we need to look at these numbers over a larger and longer course of time. My issue now is that we look at data from one or two elections; two years or one years. We do know that some poll sites change, like someone just mentioned. Sometimes people get upset because they don't understand what is happening. They are told to come vote and they don't understand in

their language and get upset. I have experienced that two-times this year so far.

Yes, we need to look long term and I think four years is including the years that we currently had -- that is an okay amount of time to give a larger picture as to a program that should be permanent, as to the methodology that needs to be increased and the resources put into nonprofit organization that can actually the individuals that are coming through the door, to be a part of the civic process.

We need to figure out what it looks like. Like one person said before, you know, that some folks are just scared or they feel uneasy when they walk into spaces we we say we can help them.

At this point in time, everybody thinks that there is a cost associated with everything. Two, three times later, you may see a turn of people accepting the support.

NATALIE DEVITO: (Audio not clear)

DR. SAYEED: I think we need to move into the public meeting portion of this gathering so we can deliberate on and vote on a proposed amendment. So, just last call if you do not have any questions, we will then turn to the public meeting so that means that members of the public, who are present, you will be in observer mode

from this point onward.

MICHAEL NUSSBAUM: In terms of utilization, we focused on primary election. Where is the focus to make sure that there is proper utilization and coverage for the special elections that occur all the time in New York, when an assembly or elected official leaves office -- and it may not be within the demographics that we normally cover -- but how flexible are we to allocate resources for the use of our people to be there for language support for every special elections that occurs in New York?

SARAH SAYEED: Thank you for that question. Because of resource constraints, some time ago -- the commissioners discussed how to allocate resources for specials, and I think it would be very difficult, given resources constraints to cover every single special.

What we had discussed and decided upon was to at least, at this point, try to cover specials where we know that our language communities reside and we have been providing them services in past elections so that if they will have a sense of continuity for the special in poll sites and districts where we provided in the last general. That is how we figured out how to address the question of specials. That part of the methodology may be something that we may want to think about

more and potentially discuss revising, but that is where things stands right now: We are only covering specials, when we have served that site in the past for for a particular language.

MICHAEL: Many of these are primaries, though, not just specials. I am just saying, I would hate to leave that judgment out where the advantage is basically to a political party or one particular group and the minority group living in the community doesn't get the services that we can provide. We can revisit that another time.

SARAH: Thank you, Mike. Anyone else? Let's, move, then, into the public meeting portion.

I want to make sure that we still have a quorum. It looks like we do. So the first item on the agenda is to review and vote on the minutes from the last meeting and then we can go ahead into the discussion on the proposed amendment.

On the minutes for the last meeting, everyone was sent those over e-mail. Are there any additions or corrections to the meeting that we presented from July 26th?

AMY: Mark has made a move to approve as presented and I can second that.

SARAH: Thank you. All in favor, please say "I."

SARAH: The minutes are approved. Thank you for that.

Let's turn to the discussion on the amendment. What do commissioners think on the amendment?

How do you want to move forward?

Is it helpful to share my screen again on the language of the amendment?

>>AMY: I think that would be helpful. Let's go back to the slide with the census data.

SARAH SAYEED: This table is updating the data that we have from the American Community Survey. We are using five-year data. Every year, the five year period is changing.

So, in the initial public hearing, when we posted the resolution and the data was 2015 to 2019. What this table is showing is that there is new data that covers the period from 2016 to 2020.

It shows there is a shift. When there is an increase or drop for language communities, it will obviously effect the percentage share. So, for example, for Arabic, the population increased slightly, so the percentage share increased slightly from 7.2 to 7.5. The same for Bengali, chinese and French. However, when we get to Italian and Haitian Creole and Korean, and Polish, we are seeing slight drops in

the citizens of voting age who are limited English proficient.

What that means is that, again, the percentage share for the language communities, will also drop. This has nothing to do with the proposed amendment.

It is just: What is the data showing and how does that impact percentage share?

For these languages, if we were to apply, you know, this methodology, as we have it, Haitian Creole, would, indeed, drop one site. Italian would drop one site. Actually, according to rounding principles, it would just be 8.

I wanted to clarify why that is happening, for the commissioners. Let us go to to the slide with utilization information. Before, in the past, we didn't have any language in the resolution that allows us to review utilization, and we are saying that we will also report on the utilization on an annual basis. The charter asks us to include the data in the annual report. It is something that we have to do.

So, I guess the next part of the amendment is really what we want to consider; that we shall consider utilization data in preserving services and reallocating resources. I think we need to decide whether we want to do that at all. If we do, what are the

circumstances when we would do that?

Let's also use the chat instead, because my view is that I cannot see everyone on the screen. If you would like to make a comment, please put your name in the chat. Amy, I see first.

AMY: Based on the testimony we heard today. Now that we are looking at not just the demographics of population of voting age, as a prerequisite, we are also looking at utilization.

SARAH SAYEED: This amendment would allow us to consider retaining the site based on available resources. It would allow us to consider reallocating resources from another poll site; either within the same language or from another language, when that particular site has been served over three election cycles with zero or minimal utilization. We wouldn't take from another site. It would specifically be in the case where over three election cycles it is zero or very very low, then we may borrow from that.

We are free to say that it doesn't need to be three election cycles. It could be another number. That is also something that we can amend. I am not noting that in the chat, closed captioning is available at another link. If you do need it, please click on the link.

Commissioners? Mark?

MARK: Can you hear me now? I found my voice, as it were. So here is the thing: I read this as a very well-crafted proposal because if I am reading it correctly, it says that we shall consider a variety of things, but nowhere in there does it require us to make a change. It says we are expanding or codifying the things that we look at when we make decisions about the allocation of scarce resources. As long as I am correct in that broad reading of it, I think that this gives us plenty of opportunities, but no constraints so that the hypotheticals that have been advanced through the public testimony that we heard, which I found very compelling, are in effect already accommodated in the language that is before us.

And, conversely -- a lot of the -- I interpreted a lot of the testimony to say: Don't take it away from us.

It also empowers us to preserve, as well as to reallocate. And, so, other than whether we want to tinker with the number of election cycles before we reallocate, I think that the language as presented in the way in which I read it, is appropriately broad and achieves the purposes that the testimony sought to accommodate. My only concern about the suggestion that we define how many election cycles and, in fact, what an election cycle is; whether it is the primary or the general

for the same office, or whether it is as presented today; local, state, federal. That is certainly something one can argue. Now we are getting prescriptive again. In a universe with scarce resources and if heaven forbid there is a recession next year and the budget has to be cut, I wouldn't want to tie our hands. I will shut up now. That is what I have to offer. I support the resolution for the proposed language as it is written because I think it accomplishes all those purposes. Thank you.

DR. SAYEED: I just want to clarify with you, Mark; when you were saying about being cautious about being prescriptive, are you okay with the language for three election cycles?

MARK: I am okay with it for now. That might be something that we look at with experience. I would not want to tie our hands in this relatively early stage of this work by saying, in effect, that we cannot make a changes on resource allocation until, effectively, it sounds like 2025. If we were to adopt the idea that you have to go through a full cycle -- cycle means federal, state, and local. I am not sure exactly how that plays out. It could be 2025 or 2026 before we can make a change. It may not be efficient. It may be, it may not be.

It is prescriptive that it will prevent us from making resource

reallocation before then.

DR. SAYEED: I think you are right that we need to define what we mean by cycle. When we are using the word cycle, we are generally using it to mean election. Right? Either a primary or general. So, if we are saying three, that would be a general, primary and a general; so it is like two generals and a primary. I don't know if you want to define cycle in another way.

AMY BREEDLOVE: That is for a point of clarification. We have been in a unique cycle this time, where we had two primaries. We had the general and then we had the June primary and then the August primary. Would that would be considered three cycles? Just for clarification.

MARK DILLER: It shouldn't be because the primary are for different offices. You didn't have two primaries for each office. It was bifurcated.

AMY: Mark, your point is that it is one primary held on two separate dates so it is considered one cycle.

MARK: So the board that handles elections -- the Campaign Finance Board, define a cycle as the four years that lead up to a general election and it includes the primary.

For them, the primary for city counsel member and the general election, that is one election cycle and it happens to happen every four years. The same thing for mayor and controller and blah blah. As I understand it, it is just the primary in general. It happens in one year and repeats every four, except next year. With the asterisk.

SARAH SAYEED: Should we be considering three elections; which means general primary or three cycles, as defined by the campaign finance board. It would be three 4-year periods; three general elections essentially, which is like 12 years,

MARK DILLER: I would consider an election cycle to be the general election and the primary associated with it and/or special election that is associated with that office. You define it by the office and not by the interval in between.

I think that makes the most sense, because in some races and some parts of our city, the primary is the election that brings people out. In some cases, it is the general that brings people out. Our experience is that special elections brings next to nobody out.

That is how I would define it; that pairing of the preliminary and the final votes.

NATALIE: We can agree on the current

language -- (inaudible)

MARK DILLER: That works for me.

NATALIE: We don't have to bypass this moment right now, we can agree on this item, move forward and then the next (inaudible term) define the cycle.

>> I would say put the movement forward, Natalie.

>> I agree.

>> By the way, if we define it as a pairing of a primary in general, we will get to that in November. This methodology will not go into effect until after November anyway. Really, the changes, if we vote on this, would impact the June primary. It sounds to me like mostly people are in agreement in moving forward with resolution or this amendment.

>> In the absence of any hands, I am prepared to call to question.

NATALIE: We are making an agreement on what clarifies as a cycle.

DR. SAYEED: We can amend the language now, and just specify that served over election cycles, defined as primary general.

MARK: The proposal is to add the words "to be defined" and

then we could have a subsequent amendment to define what that means.

DR. SAYEED: So in the next meeting or something. It sounds like you can get approval on that right now.

DONNA: I am in agreement with everything except including that language. I feel like if we leave it now, we are going to have to deal with it at a later date and so if we are saying that election cycle or primary and one general, I think we need to be specific. Not that we want to throw this further down the road. We have been battling with this quite some time. I think that we need to be really clear in defining what we mean and what we want, even though it is going to go next year -- the June primary, we will still have to see it again. Adding language that says "to be defined" is just kicking the can down the road and having to pick it up again.

>> Is election defined by the finance board?

>> That is possible. You know, we know what they are talking about. Their definition is fine. I think we need to be really clear about this.

>>AMY: I would be in support of saying "to be defined" at this point, and getting more information.

>>DONNA: I agree with you and I understand that it is an evolving process -- basically, writing what you just said would be fine. If it says election cycles and then it has a caveat or open bracket that says "to be defined", the language doesn't make sense. I feel like if you want to say that, you need to say that and change the language accordingly.

>>MARK: May I jump in? Donna, would you be more comfortable if we would leave it as is?

The current language says: Three election cycles. We can always come back and redefine what that means. So, if your objection -- and I understand it -- is not wanting to create an ambiguity, then we can leave the language as it is, vote it up or down right now and if we are so led or if circumstances, as Amy posits them, lead us to want to reconsider, we can do so at a future time. We would simply follow the language that already exists both in this resolution and other parts of the methodology. We are only looking at one paragraphs now, but this language repeats, if I recall. Maybe that is the solution.

>> Donna: I think that is the solution. Thank you.

>>Natalie: I am okay with that. I do want to verbally stress on record right now that it is important that we do revisit this. By making a

commitment to make it a priority to redefine what a cycle is. So, I love the solution Mark. I am prepared to vote on this, with that going forward.

DR. SAYEED: I think we can make a commitment to come back on the next public meeting and talk about that issue. That will be in time for whatever we are doing for June. That works for me.

>> Mark: In that case, I call to question.

DR. SAYEED: All in favor?

This will move forward as is, with the continued understanding that we will continue to define the cycle language. It does appear in other parts of the methodology resolution. I don't think that we were clear. I love these discussions. It is so -- you are all so insightful. I appreciate you all and everyone on the call for the comments and for helping us think through this is. Super helpful.

We do need to vote on submitting the annual report. We sent that around to you, so, I don't know that we necessarily have time to go give you a full presentation of what is in it. Perhaps, if it is okay with you all, we can add the presentation of the annual report and just for kind of public presentation, into the meeting as well and move to vote to submit it. Because, I ask for an extension so that we can all vote on it

before we submit it to the mayor....

>> Move to approve the annual report as is.

>> Second, with appreciation with all the work that it represents.

>> All in favor? This report is approved for submission. I want to thank all the staff for all the hard work that went into it; gathering all the information and writing the section as well. Thank you for that.

Before we adjourn, I want to announce that the commission is holding (inaudible term) generation sessions beginning October 28th. As you may recall, we have been holding idea generations sessions in partner with a partnership with community partners who we funded. Just to share the -- I wanted to do a quick share screen to show you on the participate site. You will see, when you click on this, you get to all the different parts of this process and the events -- the number of events that have been happening all around the city. It is really exciting and this shows you future events.

It includes ones that are happening today as we meet. So, in addition to the idea generation sessions that have been happening with community partners, CEC is also holding borough idea generation sessions, inviting the borough to join us. The first one will be in Manhattan. We are going to be holding it at the New York Public

Library for the Performing Arts. We will have, after the idea generation session, the People's Bus there. The session will include opportunities to learn how the city budget works as well as needs of the borough. We are working on that. We would love for you to join us and share the information with people in your boroughs. I will be sending you that as well. I am going to drop into the chat the registration link for people who have as well.

The next meeting for the commissioners will be on November 29th, at 11:00 a.m. Are there any other announcements or additional issues from the commissioners?

DR. SAYEED: Thank you so much. We will wait for your compilation. That is really great. Okay. Wonderful. So, if there is no additional issues, can I hear a motion to adjourn the meeting?

Motion to adjourn has been seconded. All in favor?

Any opposed?

I call this meeting to adjourn. Thank you so much. See you again in November.