

NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

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DOSS PUBLIC HEARING

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October 24, 2019

HELD AT: 125 Worth Street
 New York, NY 10013

DIGITALLY RECORDED PROCEEDING, TRANSCRIBED BY:
MARK YOSHIOKA, UBIQUS

1 MS. NATASHA GODBY: Okay, so it's 4:05 and we're
2 going to begin. Welcome and thank you for coming to this
3 public hearing regarding public burials. My name is
4 Natasha Godby, and I am the deputy commissioner at HRA's
5 emergency intervention services. First, I'd like our
6 interpreters to introduce themselves in case there is
7 anyone here who is in need of their services. So, as you
8 come up, just let everyone know what language you will be
9 interpreting and just --

10 FEMALE VOICE: (Inaudible)

11 MS. GODBY: I'm sorry. Can you just come to the
12 microphone and let us know? But I can go through -- so
13 far, we have Spanish, Polish, Urdu, Korean, Russian,
14 Mandarin, and ASL. So, each interpreter will say what
15 their language is.

16 FEMALE VOICE: Can we just use this microphone?

17 MS. GODBY: Yes, please.

18 MS. EKATERINA YUDINA: Yes, my name is Ekaterina
19 Yudina, the Russian interpreter.

20 LOUIS ST. JOHN: [French audio]

21 MS. MARY OLIVENCICI: Mary and Stephanie, ASL
22 interpreters.

23 MS. YINGLI HUANG: Hi, everyone. My name is
24 Yingli. I provide Mandarin interpretation. [Mandarin
25 audio]

1 MS. ALESSANDRA ZEKA: [Spanish audio]

2 MR. KAMRAN CHAUDHRY: Hi, my name is Kamran
3 Chaudhry, and I am interpreter for Urdu language so [Urdu
4 audio] thank you.

5 MR. ADAM JAGUSIAK: Hello, Adam Jagusiak, Polish
6 interpreter [Polish audio]

7 MS. SEYOUNG KIM: [Korean audio]

8 MS. GODBY: Okay, so just to recap, we have
9 Spanish, Polish, Urdu, Korean, Russian, Mandarin, ASL,
10 French. And also, if you haven't been able to see where
11 the restrooms are, if you go past the auditorium doors,
12 the men's room I believe is to the left, and the ladies'
13 room is about three rights, so you make the first right
14 then two more, okay? So again, my name is Natasha Godby,
15 and I am the deputy commissioner for emergency
16 intervention services at New York City's Human Resources
17 Administration, HRA, and we are here today to receive
18 testimony from the members of the public on public burials
19 in New York City. I am joined today by colleagues from a
20 number of other City agencies who will introduce
21 themselves.

22 MS. GRETCHEN VAN WYE: Hi, my name is Gretchen
23 Van Wye. I am the assistant commissioner for the Bureau
24 of Vital Statistics at the New York City Health
25 Department.

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1 MS. LATIA MITCHELL: Hi, good afternoon. My
2 name is Latia Mitchell. I am the director of legislative
3 affairs, and I represent the Department of Correction.

4 MS. DINA MANIOTIS: Good afternoon, everyone.
5 My name is Dina Maniotis. I am the executive deputy
6 commissioner for the chief medical examiner's office.

7 MR. NICHOLAS MOLINARI: Good afternoon. I'm
8 Nick Molinari. I'm chief of planning and neighborhood
9 development for New York City Parks Department.

10 MS. GODBY: The City of New York buries the
11 remains of more than 1,000 New York City residents at Hart
12 Island each year. Most are individuals who have a next of
13 kin who opted for a public burial, but some are
14 unidentified or do not have a next of kin. Available
15 burial space is limited, and in approximately eight to ten
16 years, Hart Island will reach its maximum capacity. Hart
17 Island is currently operated by the Department of
18 Correction, DOC. They maintain the island and manage
19 burials. The department also facilitates visits for those
20 who have a loved one buried on the island. Visits for
21 loved ones are afforded bimonthly, and the public is given
22 a monthly opportunity to visit the island regardless of
23 their connection to a decedent. A work detail comprised
24 of incarcerated individuals works on the island five days,
25 and due to their presence, the department must adhere to

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1 strict security protocols which limits the public's
2 ability to access the island. The city is seeking
3 alternatives regarding disposition of indigent and
4 unclaimed decedent remains. The New York City Department
5 of Social Services, of which the Human Resources
6 Administration is a part of, has issued a request for
7 information which will help begin to resolve how the City
8 will continue to carry out this critical and solemn role,
9 including through options such as burials at a different
10 location with the possibility of multiple new locations,
11 cremation, some other potential solution, or some
12 combination thereof. In addition to the information we
13 will get in response to the RFI, the request for
14 information, we welcome input from you, the public, on
15 public burials, and we appreciate your coming out today to
16 share your thoughts and your concerns and ideas. Okay, so
17 we have a couple of housekeeping items, and I think I
18 already talked about the restrooms outside. So, anyone
19 can speak. If you wish to speak and haven't signed up
20 already, please go outside and sign up at the signup table
21 in the front. Has everyone had an opportunity to sign in?
22 Okay. Ms. Nicole Doniger from HRA will call your name,
23 and you will have five minutes to speak. We will not be
24 responding to any comments or questions today at this
25 hearing, but we will be producing a report in January of

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1 2020 in which we will respond to comments as appropriate.
2 So, at this point, Ms. Doniger will call the first
3 person's name on the sign-in sheet and have people
4 testify.

5 MS. NICOLE DONIGER: I'm just going to start
6 with people who submitted testimony ahead of time. I'm
7 not sure they're here. Matthew Acer? Jacob Priley?
8 You're here.

9 MR. JACOB PRILEY: Good afternoon, everyone. My
10 name is Jacob Priley with State Senator Brad Hoylman's
11 district. I'm reading his testimony that has already been
12 submitted, but for the record. "Thank you for the
13 opportunity to testify before you today. I am State
14 Senator Brad Hoylman, and I represent the West Village,
15 the East Village, Stuyvesant Town, and Peter Cooper
16 Village, Chelsea, Hell's Kitchen, the Upper West Side, and
17 Midtown. I'm also the only openly gay state senator in
18 New York. Because of Hart Island's complex history with
19 the LGBTQ community and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the
20 1980s, my constituents and I have a strong interest in the
21 future of Hart Island, the outcomes of this request for
22 information to expand and redevelop the city's public
23 burial program. I would like to thank the Department of
24 Correction and the Department of Transportation for their
25 efforts and coordination that allowed my staff to visit

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1 Hart Island, home of the DOC-run public burial program
2 which has helped to inform this testimony. In 1985,
3 before transmission of HIV and AIDS was fully understood,
4 Hart Island began accepting bodies of LGBTQ New Yorkers
5 who had died from complications caused by AIDS. The
6 bodies were quarantined on the southern portion of the
7 island and buried in mass graves separate from the other
8 bodies, often in anonymity. A generation of LGBTQ New
9 Yorkers was lost, stigmatized in life and in death, but
10 not forgotten. Hart Island was often the only place these
11 bodies could go. Private burials were difficult to
12 arrange because many funeral homes refused to handle
13 corpses with HIV or AIDS. It is thought that Hart Island
14 is the final resting place for hundreds if not thousands
15 of individuals with AIDS, the largest burial site of its
16 kind in the country. It is important that this
17 opportunity to redevelop the City's public burial program
18 be used to make the site easily accessible for future
19 generations of LGBTQ people to understand and connect with
20 their community's history. For centuries, Hart Island has
21 served as a place for forgotten New Yorkers. In its
22 history at one time or another, the island has been home
23 to a Union Civil War prison camp, a psychiatric
24 institution, a tuberculosis sanitarium, a homeless
25 shelter, a boys' reformatory, and jail, a drug

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1 rehabilitation center, and of course, a potter's field for
2 the city's unclaimed dead. Today, the island continues to
3 accept 1,000 to 1,200 bodies a year, thousands of stories
4 of New Yorkers who couldn't afford a private grave or had
5 no obvious next of kin and no burial wishes. Our City and
6 State must always strive to do better when serving our
7 most vulnerable populations, and that responsibility
8 extends to the last dignity our government can be tasked
9 with. What should be a tranquil space for reflection and
10 remembrance, Hart Island has become a monument to a darker
11 time in New York City's history. Our current system of
12 burial on a far-flung island with dozens of dilapidated
13 buildings is frankly antiquated and distressing to see
14 such a practice still exists in our City. When my staff
15 went to visit Hart Island last week, gunfire from the New
16 York Police Department Rodman's Neck firing range could be
17 heard across the Long Island Sound even in front of the
18 World War II peace monument. The irony was not lost on
19 them. It took one of my staff members over two hours by
20 train and bus from Brooklyn to reach the dock. The island
21 is too inaccessible for many New Yorkers who want to visit
22 loved ones, and the infrequent hours of operation of the
23 ferry further create barriers for visitation. The use of
24 cheap labor by inmates incarcerated by Rikers Island
25 raises many serious question that must be addressed in the

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1 redevelopment of this program. It is also clear the
2 current program is not sustainable. At the current pace
3 of burial, Hart Island will be out of space in eight to
4 ten years. Any redevelopment of the public burial program
5 must include a solution that increases the active life of
6 the very limited space in our City. As was made clear in
7 the aftermath of Superstorm Sandy in 2012, Hart Island is
8 vulnerable to rising sea levels and even more severe
9 storms. A 2017 archaeological assessment for the Hart
10 Island Shoreline Stabilization Project, following damage
11 done by Superstorm Sandy, paints a delicate picture of the
12 island, human remains entangled in roots layered by
13 centuries of buildings with different uses and unsecured
14 eroding shorelines. Seven years later, work is just
15 beginning on this project. An island cemetery at risk of
16 damage from climate change related storms is not a long-
17 term solution to burying our dead with dignity. It was
18 once said, "Show me the manner in which a nation cares for
19 its dead, and I will measure with mathematical exactness
20 the tender mercies of its people and their respect for the
21 law of the land and their loyalty to high ideals." If we
22 are holding ourselves to the highest standard of mercy and
23 respect, then I believe our current program on Hart Island
24 has failed. We can and must do better for our most
25 vulnerable New Yorkers. I'm encouraged by this hearing,

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1 the initiation of the RFI, and I hope to continue this
2 conversation with you as New York City evaluates and
3 redevelops its public indigent burial program currently
4 run by the DOC. I would like to thank the New York City
5 Department of Social Services, DOC, Health and Hospitals,
6 Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Office of the
7 Chief Medical Examiner, and the Department of Parks and
8 Recreation for their participation today. If there are
9 any legislative steps you believe New York State should
10 take in tandem with City redevelopment of the burial
11 program, I would greatly welcome them. Please reach out
12 to my office with your suggestions. Thank you."

13 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

14 MS. DONIGER: We've been joined by Councilmember
15 Gjonaj. Oh, hi, would you like to speak or --?

16 MR. MARK GJONAJ: I'm here to represent District
17 13, and to listen and learn.

18 MS. DONIGER: Okay.

19 MR. GJONAJ: (Inaudible)

20 MS. DONIGER: Okay, thank you very much for
21 joining. Next, we have Kathleen Maher. I apologize ahead
22 of time if I mess up names. Mayer?

23 MS. KATHLEEN MAHER: Thank you. My name is
24 Kathleen Maher, and I support City Cemetery staying open.
25 I'm here to tell you my reasons why. For nearly two

1 decades, I surreptitiously eyed homeless people on the New
2 York City streets, hoping one of them was my missing twin
3 brother Kenny. In 1991, at 20 years old, Ken flew from
4 California to New York City. Although he suffered from a
5 mental illness, he was functional. He was a gentle and
6 free spirit who loved the ocean and bike riding in the
7 hills that surrounded our home. When he arrived in New
8 York City, he got a job in Queens, but shortly after, he
9 disappeared without a trace. In 2007, I finally learned
10 his fate. He died at St. Vincent Hospital from a trauma
11 to the head after a fall in a street in Tribeca, just two
12 streets away from here, 16 years before. Because he died
13 without ID, his body was buried on Hart Island as an
14 unknown. A week later, my brother Tom and I went to Hart
15 Island for a closure visit. We walked the island with a
16 thoughtful guide, and he pointed to an unmarked area where
17 Kenny was buried. It was not a place I would have chosen
18 as his final resting place, but it was surprisingly
19 peaceful. Before we left the island, I found a rock that
20 sits next to Kenny's photo at my home in Brooklyn. It was
21 meaningful to finally be close to him after so many years
22 and marked the beginning of a very important grieving
23 process. A month later, on the lake we grew up on in
24 California, 100 family and friends gathered to remember
25 and finally say goodbye to Kenny. It didn't matter that

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1 16 years had passed. Later, the Medical Examiner's office
2 informed me that Kenny had been disinterred, and per my
3 request, a forensic anthropologist examined his remains
4 and discovered that half were missing. Even though they
5 attempted to retrieve the rest, part of Kenny remains on
6 the island. I will never forget sitting at the crematory
7 making physical contact with a plastic bag that contained
8 his remains. It was a somber but very necessary
9 confirmation. All of these difficult moments and the news
10 of his -- following the news of his death came with pain,
11 anger, and sadness, but they also provided welcome relief
12 from the agony of the years and years of not knowing if my
13 brother was alive or dead. These moments were possible
14 because of a system that is in place today. Although this
15 system is not without flaws, I hope others can continue to
16 benefit by keeping Hart Island open. Hart Island needs to
17 continue to serve New York City for the following reasons:
18 number one, when I worked as an oncology social worker, I
19 met many families whose only option was city burial. It
20 behooves us to provide a service that doesn't bankrupt
21 families when a loved one dies. It's an important
22 resource to financially vulnerable people. Two, Hart
23 Island needs to exist in the five boroughs. Moving it
24 outside New York City decreases a loved one's opportunity
25 to grieve. Cost and time to travel outside of the city

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1 adds strain to an impoverished family. Moving it beyond
2 the City also sends a callous message, the dead are
3 forgotten and do not matter. Number three, the option for
4 disinterment is vital for the grieving process, especially
5 delayed grief. Kenny's cremains are finally resting in
6 California with his name on a gravestone close to family
7 and his beloved mountains. Continuing disinterment sends
8 a message: grieving is very important and does matter.
9 I'm a psychotherapist who not surprisingly specializes in
10 grief. Every day I see the psychological and the
11 physiological damage when grieving is not possible. My
12 own grief was complicated and delayed, but it was able to
13 happen, and that made all the difference. I'd like to
14 thank Hart Island Project who took notice of our forgotten
15 loved ones and continue to pay tribute to them in The
16 Traveling Cloud Museum. I hope my testimony gives those
17 opposing Hart Island pause to think about the broader
18 context of what it means to close it. There are thousands
19 and thousands of stories just like mine. I urge every one
20 of you to consider how critical it is to a healthy
21 grieving process to be in close proximity of your loved
22 ones irrespective of your means. To eliminate it is a
23 ghastly mistake for our city and our society. To also
24 quote the last speaker, "Show me the manner in which a
25 nation cares for its dead, and I will measure with

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1 mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people,
2 their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty
3 to high ideals." Thank you.

4 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

5 MS. DONIGER: Thank you. Next, we have -- is
6 Ally Bohm [phonetic] here, Bohem [phonetic]? Okay. Ann
7 Sharrock? Just a reminder, if anyone hasn't had a chance
8 to sign in who would like to testify, please do so out in
9 the back.

10 MS. ANN SHARROCK: Okay. Yeah, I will do.
11 Yeah, is this okay? Can you hear all right? Yeah, so my
12 name's Ann Sharrock, and I'm speaking in favor of
13 maintaining burials on Hart Island. I'm a British
14 landscape architect, and I've come to the US for this
15 presentation as I've a particular interest in cemeteries,
16 especially in Hart Island. Since completing my bachelor
17 of landscape architecture ten years ago, I've specialized
18 in developing natural burial sites and have prepared
19 cemetery strategies for Hounslow, that's in London, and
20 Bristol City as well as concept and detailed designs all
21 over the UK. I've also undertaken a number of feasibility
22 studies, which is something that New York would have to do
23 in order to find an alternative location, and I've done
24 this for cemeteries and crematoria in the UK, a process
25 which is maybe more challenging bearing in mind the

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1 difference in land availability between the US and the UK,
2 so it's hard in the UK. I've written a number of articles
3 and given papers at national and international conferences
4 on urban natural burial and have been interviewed on the
5 BBC local and national radio, and I'm currently
6 commissioned to design the Woodland Trust's flagship
7 natural burial site near Buckingham, about 60 miles north
8 of London. I read an article in the UK national press in
9 2015 about the burial processes on Hart Island, and since
10 then, I've visited New York twice at my own expense to
11 work with the Hart Island Project and present burial and
12 landscape strategies to Borough and City officials that
13 would facilitate sustainable dignified burials as well as
14 create an interesting, dynamic biodiversity. There are
15 between 1,000 and 1,200 burials per annum on Hart Island,
16 and that's approximately 19 to 23 burials per week, and
17 this is extraordinary and large scale by any standards.
18 The shortage of burial space within all major cities of
19 the world is a problem. From South Bristol Cemetery, UK,
20 to Green-Wood, New York, space is being culled from old
21 paths and roads. Nearly every cemetery in New York City
22 suffers from the problem of decreasing space for a number
23 of dead that will continue to rise. The UK's Guardian in
24 2018 published an article entitled "The Gentrification of
25 Death." It cited the cost of a single grave plot in

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1 Green-Wood Cemetery starting at \$19,000. Devin Kelly
2 concluded his article in The Guardian in July 2018, in
3 which he said, "When burial space does finally, inevitably
4 run out, the bodies of New Yorkers who are marginalized,
5 poor, and disenfranchised, or even simply not rich -- will
6 be the ones spending eternity somewhere other than the
7 city in which they lived. There will be no room for them.
8 It will be a kind of gentrification of the dead." New
9 York City doesn't have this problem. It has Hart Island.
10 For over 150 years, Hart Island has served the City of New
11 York as a vital component in its burial system. We now
12 have the opportunity to maintain this service and provide
13 it within the context of a diverse ecological and cultural
14 context that can be enjoyed by all for many years to come.
15 It offers sustainable natural burials for New York City
16 and is the only natural burial facility for the entire
17 city of over eight million residents. Natural burial
18 sites are havens for wildlife. They're not manicured.
19 There are no grand tombs symbolizing wealth and status.
20 They're a shared landscape for burial, trees, plants, and
21 wildlife that resonate with a wider set of beliefs,
22 benefitting nature and the community. Hart Island offers
23 the citizens of New York City sustainable burials and the
24 opportunity to create a flagship natural burial site in a
25 unique, distinctive landscape that is loaded with a

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1 cultural significance and accessible both physically and
2 economically to New York's citizens, including those low-
3 income families which are unable to afford the cost of
4 transport and burial or cremation to out-of-city
5 cemeteries. The nearest natural burial hybrid cemetery is
6 in Sleepy Hollow in Westchester County. Even if City
7 burials were feasible in Westchester County, they would be
8 inaccessible to many New Yorkers who do not own cars and
9 cannot afford transportation outside of the five boroughs.
10 Hart Island is accessible to all communities for the cost
11 of \$2.75. The land still available on Hart Island
12 supports the City's demand without the need to find
13 additional burial space. Whilst cremation and other newer
14 processes such as composting offer less land-intensive
15 options, for legal reasons, these are not options for
16 those who choose a city burial or those who are unclaimed
17 or unidentified. The significance and importance of
18 cemeteries for New York City residents extends beyond the
19 proper disposal of the dead and embraces citizen choice,
20 cultural, historical, and environmental issues. By my
21 reckoning, the total new burial space available, which if
22 you demolish the buildings is 17.7 acres, and this works
23 out at 96,960 total new burials, which gives you an 80-
24 years capacity. Now, I have to say that this number of
25 graves doesn't take account of new pedestrian and

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1 vehicular paths that it would need to avoid tracking over
2 existing graves, and it doesn't take into account some of
3 the woodland that would need to be retained. And also,
4 the footprints of your buildings, their historic value --
5 and you could make a feature of those, and this may result
6 in loss of some burial space, but you will carry forward
7 the history of the island -- and the areas that are
8 available for burial are indicated on the plan. Hart
9 Island offers New York City 80 years' new burial capacity
10 without recycling existing graves. In addition, it could
11 provide sustainable burial without the need to 'lift and
12 deepen,' which is something we've put in forward in
13 London, or remove existing remains, if a system of
14 recycling these new graves was planned. Government
15 planning policies and decisions strive to maximize choice
16 for its residents, enhance the community infrastructure
17 providing for their needs locally and make effective use
18 of land. The continuation of burials on Hart Island
19 fulfills those objectives. Burials have taken place on
20 Hart Island since the Civil War, and there's a resonance
21 between the people buried there and the history of the
22 United States of America. Hart Island offers a large-
23 scale burial facility on land already owned by New York
24 City and long used for this purpose and has the capacity
25 to continue to remain as New York City's potter field in

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1 perpetuity. The Department of Buildings determined that
2 the buildings are unstable and should be demolished. If
3 these buildings are removed, the resulting new burial
4 space warrants keeping the cemetery open another 80 years
5 without the need to recycle older plots. State law
6 prohibits burials in rubble or ruins, but the footprints
7 of the building could be used to shape new plots and
8 landscape elements so that the history of the island is
9 carried forward into design for City Cemetery. Under New
10 York State sepulcher law, immediate relatives may ask for
11 the bodies of their loved ones to be returned. This legal
12 requirement means that the City has to be able to locate
13 unclaimed remains. The current practice of burying
14 everybody in common graves means that the graves are
15 opened around 85 times per year. This practice means that
16 the trees can't be planted which help to stabilize the
17 soil and prevent erosion. So, an alternative process for
18 bodies where the families have not consented to a city
19 burial is to place them in a structured vault for this
20 purpose so that they may be easily returned to the family,
21 and the potential locations are indicated on the plan.
22 Death and memorialization relate to all cultures, classes,
23 and ages, and whilst we memorialize death differently, we
24 all need space and an opportunity to remember. Hart
25 Island presents those opportunities which should be

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1 embraced with burial and landscape strategies that create
2 dynamic woodlands, glades, and meadows offering visitors a
3 distinctive experience with quiet places of contemplation
4 and escape from the urban flow. Thank you.

5 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

6 MS. DONIGER: Thank you. Edwina Frances Martin,
7 public administrator? Amy Koplow? Next, we have Dan
8 Cassin.

9 MS. AMY KOPLOW: No, I'm here.

10 MS. DONIGER: Oh, Amy, I apologize.

11 MS. KOPLOW: Thank you very much for this
12 opportunity to present information to the panel. I'm the
13 executive director of the Hebrew Free Burial Association.
14 The association was founded in 1888, and it was organized
15 to provide traditional, respectful Jewish funerals and
16 burials to the indigent in our faith community. Since our
17 founding 131 years ago, HFBA has continually owned and
18 operated cemeteries in New York City. We have buried over
19 65,000 people. We are the largest Jewish indigent funeral
20 service provider outside of Israel. Our active cemetery
21 on Staten Island, Mount Richmond, is accessible by public
22 transportation. There's a direct bus route to our
23 cemetery which is located at 420 Clark Avenue, it's the
24 Staten Island 74 bus, from the St. George Staten Island
25 Ferry Terminal. Our cemetery is open to visitors Sunday

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1 through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3:45 p.m., 9 to 1 on Friday.
2 We are closed only on the Jewish Sabbath and on Jewish
3 holidays. HFBA partners with a not-for-profit funeral
4 home, Capital Funeral Service of New York. Working with
5 Capital, we provide all the necessary funeral and burial
6 services, including, but not limited to transportation,
7 filings, funeral preparation, coffins, grave, and grave
8 opening. We provide nearly 400 graveside funerals and
9 burials each year. We have the capacity to provide up to
10 1,000. Our burials are conducted six days a week, Sunday
11 through Friday. Everybody gets their own grave. We also
12 provide disinterment services as needed. Our graves in
13 Mount Richmond Cemetery cost \$1,500, and the grave opening
14 and closing charge is \$650. We also can provide grave
15 markers. As we do at present, we will work with the City
16 to identify those indigent and unclaimed of the Jewish
17 faith. Jews bury their dead in consecrated Jewish
18 cemeteries, not in nonsectarian cemeteries. Traditional
19 Jewish burials are in essence green burials, as we do not
20 embalm or cremate. Both practices are against Jewish
21 funeral beliefs. We dress our dead in cotton shrouds and
22 bury them in plain pine coffins that contain no metal.
23 HFBA is willing and morally and ethically obligated to
24 take care of all Jewish indigents so that each can receive
25 the dignity that is mandated by our religion for the dead.

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1 Thank you.

2 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

3 MS. DONIGER: Dan Cassin?

4 MR. DAN CASSIN: Good afternoon, and thank you,
5 the panel members, for the opportunity to speak before
6 you. My name is Dan Cassin. I'm with Merendino Cemetery
7 Care, and I am speaking on behalf -- in favor of keeping
8 Hart Island open. We've been working and caring for
9 sacred spaces for over 30 years. We currently maintain
10 over 2,500 acres of cemetery grounds in 17 states and
11 handle about 1 out of every 600 burials. We are proud
12 sponsors of the GI Apprenticeship Program, helping train
13 our nation's veterans for job skills training on their
14 return to civilian life. We have conducted burial
15 training at Arlington National Cemetery as well as worked
16 with clients throughout our regions on sustainability and
17 burial practices, management, operational procedures at
18 their cemeteries. We have experience in building and
19 developing cemeteries. I'm here today in part, moved by
20 the efforts of Melinda Hunt and the Hart Island Project,
21 but also as a cemetery professional. I am deeply saddened
22 by the way Hart Island has been portrayed in the media in
23 the past as the land of the lost souls and the lack of
24 respect in which we have cared for our people and their
25 families who are buried on Hart Island. New York City is

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1 the home of over eight million people, and every one of
2 these people and their families deserve the respect and
3 dignity to be laid to rest in a well-cared-for final
4 resting place regardless of their socioeconomic class. I
5 believe Hart Island can be just that, a beautiful and
6 dignified resting place for anyone who chooses to be
7 buried there as well as a model city cemetery for the
8 United States and perhaps the world. Hart Island should
9 be not just the final destination for those who are buried
10 there, but also a destination place for those who wish to
11 visit their loved ones and those in the community who wish
12 to take in a peaceful, tranquil park-like setting Hart
13 Island has the potential to offer. To be a destination in
14 which the City could be proud of, the City would have to
15 make some changes from the current operational model.
16 However, these changes are not insurmountable, and they're
17 not financially unreasonable. In fact, with proper
18 guidance and direction, Hart Island could be self-
19 sustaining environmentally and perhaps financially, a
20 sacred place which can be and should be preserved for
21 generations to come, and maintaining their legacy. With
22 the implementation of a proper master plan and land
23 management plan, Hart Island can continue to operate as a
24 beautiful, peaceful, natural burial space that could be
25 visited by anyone for generations to come. Thank you.

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1 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

2 MS. DONIGER: So, we have Gino -- I'm sorry; you
3 scribbled your last name.

4 MR. GINO MERENDINO: I'll just take
5 responsibility for it then. No worries. So as the nice
6 lady said, my name is Gino Merendino. Good afternoon.
7 Eighty years ago, my relatives immigrated from Italy
8 settled in Canarsie, Brooklyn. When they passed away,
9 they received a dignified burial in a marked grave in
10 Canarsie Cemetery, a City-run cemetery. Over 40 years
11 ago, when my mother came to the USA, she gave birth to
12 twins, one a stillborn, the other lived for one hour.
13 They are buried somewhere in a private New Jersey cemetery
14 in an unmarked grave. So, what happens to Hart Island is
15 very important to me, and I thank you for the privilege to
16 be part of the discussion of its future. As a co-founder
17 and chief gardener of Merendino Cemetery Care -- Dan and I
18 work together -- I can tell you I am 100% optimistic that
19 Hart Island can be a dignified burial ground that
20 everybody here can be proud of. Twenty years ago, I
21 became an active member of the International Cemetery,
22 Cremation, and Funeral Association, best known as ICCFA, a
23 group of over 7,000 funeral and cemetery professionals. I
24 am now responsible for the curriculum for the land college
25 as Dean of the Land College. We share proven best

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1 practices in safety, customer service, and sustainability.
2 So as Hart Island transitions, it will not have to
3 reinvent the wheel. We have many training resources
4 available for the City. One of the best practices Hart
5 Island can adopt is in staffing. As the co-chair of the
6 ICCFA Veteran Committee and trustee of the Educational
7 Foundation, I know that we are recruiting, training, and
8 placing veterans in cemeteries. Transitioning veterans
9 bring a certain reverence and honor and can-do attitude to
10 cemetery management. My personal feeling about keeping
11 Hart Island open for future burials is it should stay
12 open. I do a lot of work with Catholic cemeteries in New
13 York. I work in the Diocese of Buffalo, the Diocese of
14 Albany, the Diocese of Syracuse, the Diocese here in New
15 York, and they are incredibly generous with affordable and
16 free burial space. If somebody's poor and they're
17 Catholic, they get a free burial space if they need one.
18 However, I can imagine that not everybody would feel it
19 appropriate to be buried in a Catholic burial ground.
20 Hart Island can be a dignified alternative. Finally, when
21 you think of sacred space, some of us think of the 9/11
22 Memorial, the Vatican, or Arlington National Cemetery, but
23 if you ask a couple who have lost a child, they will tell
24 you the space that is most sacred to them is where their
25 baby is buried. Hart Island is that space to thousands of

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1 New Yorkers. My hope is that as Hart Island transitions
2 with technology, like digitalized memorialization or
3 native plant landscaping, it will become a beacon of
4 sustainability, a shining example of New York City's
5 benevolence to the poor and guardians of the environment
6 as well as good stewards of public funding. Thank you.

7 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

8 MS. DONIGER: Next we have Brittney Thomas.

9 MS. BRITTNEY THOMAS: Hi, my name is Brittney
10 Thomas. I'm the manager of preservation and research at
11 the Historic Districts Council, or HDC, which is the
12 citywide advocate for New York's historic neighborhoods
13 and buildings. In 2017, our organization selected The
14 Hart Island project for our Six to Celebrate Program,
15 which annually identifies six historic New York City
16 neighborhoods or sites that merit preservation as
17 priorities for HDC's advocacy and consultation. HDC chose
18 to work with The Hart Island Project because of their
19 efforts in making the island's burial records accessible
20 and transparent to the public and for their vision of
21 making Hart Island a publicly accessible place. HDC
22 testified to the New York City Council in December 2016 in
23 support of public access to the island. As this
24 initiative moves closer to a real possibility, we testify
25 today in support of preserving the public burial process

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1 on Hart Island, which has functioned as a vital part of
2 New York City for 150 years. Public burials on Hart
3 Island began in April 1869 when the Department of
4 Charities and Correction (later the Department of
5 Correction or "DOC," which split off from the Department
6 of Public Charities in 1895), purchased Hart Island from
7 the family of Edward Hunter to become a new municipal
8 burial facility called City Cemetery. Since then, well
9 over a million people were buried in communal graves with
10 weekly interments still managed by the DOC. Over its 150-
11 year municipal history, the island is historically
12 significant as a cultural site tied to a Civil War-era
13 burial system still in use today. In 1931, the City began
14 recycling graves, which is legal after a body has
15 decomposed to skeletal remains. Due to these practices,
16 City Cemetery is large enough to accommodate New York
17 City's burial needs indefinitely, making it an important
18 municipal resource. Hart Island can indeed manage the
19 capacity of infinite burials as long as this system of
20 green burials -- or recycled graves continues, eliminating
21 the need to find new space. Precedents of transforming
22 cemeteries into recreational hubs include Woodlawn and
23 Green-Wood, which are both active burial grounds. These
24 organizations hold public programming in the cemeteries,
25 allowing the public to engage and explore, and thereby

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1 transforming these spaces into beloved and well-used
2 spaces with a strong connection to local history. In
3 2017, Green-Wood reported hosting 280,000 visitors. With
4 so much history, green space, and extant physical
5 structures, the same transformation could take place on
6 Hart Island. Green burials and a publicly accessible
7 destination can and should coexist. We urge the
8 representatives of the City agencies involved in Hart
9 Island's next life to preserve a burial system that has
10 worked well for a century and a half and can creatively
11 evolve to accommodate the public. Thank you.

12 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

13 MS. DONIGER: Brittney Thomas? Oh no, you just
14 went. Eileen Joseph?

15 MS. ELAINE JOSEPH: Good afternoon, and thank
16 you for allowing me to speak. I do not have a prepared
17 statement, but I'm speaking from my heart. My name is
18 Elaine Joseph, and I am a registered nurse and a retired
19 naval officer of 23 years. So why am I here? I am also
20 the mother of a baby who was buried on Hart Island. In
21 1978, January of 1978, when New York had a terrible
22 snowstorm, I delivered a baby girl days before the
23 snowstorm. Days later, it was determined that she had a
24 severe heart disorder, and she was transferred to another
25 hospital which will remain nameless. They needed to

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1 operate on her. They needed to get the surgeon from New
2 Jersey. We were having a snowstorm. I left the hospital
3 early enough to get back to my Brooklyn home. I called a
4 news station who picked up the surgeon in a helicopter,
5 brought him to the hospital. They performed surgery on
6 her, and hours later, she passed away. She was five days
7 old. At that moment, I was pretty much in shock. I was
8 fairly young at the time also, in my early twenties, and I
9 didn't really know what to do. Although I was a nurse, I
10 worked in a hospital, I just didn't know what to do about
11 my own situation. So, I started calling the morgue.
12 There was no staff there. I called every day. It took me
13 five, seven, maybe eight days before I reached someone who
14 told me that, "Oh, what are you talking about? You don't
15 have to do anything. You signed the papers." I'm like,
16 "What papers?" They said, "You signed papers that the
17 City will take care of it." "Take care of it? What are
18 you talking about?" They said, "You signed so that the
19 City buried -- she's buried already. The City took care
20 of it." From that moment on, I started researching how I
21 can find out where my daughter is buried so I can get her
22 disinterred and bury her on my own. I had the means.
23 That wasn't the problem. Five months after that, my
24 husband died in an accident, in a drowning accident, and I
25 was pregnant with my next child. So, I was kind of busy.

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1 I also adopted two older children of my current husband.
2 I was kind of busy, so I just did my own research. We
3 didn't have the internet at the time, so I looked in the
4 phone books. I'm looking up City Cemetery. I went to the
5 archives building. I contacted the Medical Examiner's
6 office. The girl was lost. My daughter was lost in the
7 system. It took me 30 years before I saw a news article
8 on television talking about The Hart Island Project. I
9 scribbled the name down. This was already 2009. I
10 contacted Melinda Hunt of The Hart Island Project, and she
11 researched and said, "Well, we don't have the records from
12 that time." And it turns out the records for 1,000 babies
13 born between 1977 and 1981 were lost. My daughter's
14 records apparently was there. But we guesstimate where
15 her grave would be as per the previous babies being buried
16 and the current babies, and we just guesstimated a
17 location. So, starting in 2009, I started visiting Hart
18 Island when we were not yet allowed to go to the grave
19 site. In March of 2014, after a group of mothers had a
20 lawsuit with NY Civil Liberties Union, we were able to
21 visit the grave site. I was the first person to walk to a
22 grave site on Hart Island, and I was just in shock. I
23 just saw a big open area, and I just know my daughter's
24 there somewhere with 999 of her best little friends. So,
25 from there on in, I have been visiting frequently and

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1 regularly, as often as I can. I do not like the fact that
2 I have to sign up a year in advance to find a day that's
3 convenient for me, and if it's not convenient, I have to
4 tell them how sorry I am that I'm not able to visit and
5 take my name off the list and give it to the next person,
6 but I do feel Hart Island needs to continue to remain open
7 so that families who have people buried there can get
8 there. If not, people who can't afford -- I fortunately,
9 I'm good. I got a car. I can get there. But there are
10 people who can't, who can't go out of state, who can't go
11 upstate. They need to be able to go to Hart Island and
12 visit forever. As long as I live -- I'm a senior citizen
13 now, but I have vowed that for as long as I live -- I will
14 continue to fight for Hart Island. Thank you.

15 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

16 MS. DONIGER: Next we have Nick Mullinen
17 [phonetic]. No? No Nick? Next, we have Rabbi Regina
18 Sandler-Phillips.

19 RABBI REGINA SANDLER-PHILLIPS: Thank you. Good
20 afternoon. I am Rabbi Regina Sandler-Phillips, executive
21 director of WAYS OF PEACE Community Resources. I've
22 worked as an advocate over the past 20 years to reclaim
23 sustainable, egalitarian burial practices as quiet acts of
24 justice and kindness. You've already heard from Amy
25 Koplow of Hebrew Free Burial about how these issues relate

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1 specifically to Jewish burial. I'm here because the same
2 time-honored ethical principles that call for sustainable
3 egalitarian, participatory Jewish burial, which we call
4 "for the honor of the poor" -- also call for cooperative
5 mobilization of resources in our cities of diversity, so
6 that neighbors of all backgrounds can be buried with
7 honor, "for these are ways of peace." I was privileged to
8 visit Hart Island with family members in September 2017 --
9 thank you, Elaine -- and also gave testimony at the New
10 York City Council hearings this past May. I want to
11 express my gratitude again for the anonymous prison
12 inmates who built monuments on Hart Island to honor those
13 they buried; for the loving courage and tenacity of family
14 members, friends, and community activists; and for the
15 stewardship and accompaniment of supportive municipal
16 representatives through decades of challenge and change.
17 The Department of Social Services is soliciting input at
18 this hearing on a range of issues related to public
19 burial. Like others here, I'm in a position to offer
20 insights and resources for several of them, but I want to
21 focus for the time being not on the content of all the
22 rich input that we've already heard, but on the process.
23 It's clear to me that we cannot do full justice to any of
24 these issues within the time constraints of two and a half
25 hours today. This is why I intended primarily to express

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1 my support for Intro. 1580, originally introduced by
2 Council member Deborah L. Rose as "A Local Law in relation
3 to the creation of a task force on public burial and
4 related issues" -- with the representation of City
5 agencies as well as nonprofit leaders, family members, and
6 community activists. In its original language, "This bill
7 would establish a task force to study the laws, rules,
8 regulations, policies, and procedures related to public
9 burial, to recommend changes to these programs and to
10 consider the feasibility of alternative programs. The
11 task force would convene for one year and then submit a
12 report with recommendations to the Mayor and the Council."
13 However, in preparing my testimony, I was startled to
14 discover that this crucial initiative seems to have been
15 quietly replaced last month with Intro. 1580-A, which now
16 says, "A Local Law in relation to a public hearing on
17 public burial and related issues." In its current
18 language, "This bill would require a public hearing on
19 public burial to allow the public the opportunity to
20 discuss the laws, rules, regulations, policies, and
21 procedures related to public burial, to recommend changes
22 to these programs and to consider the feasibility of
23 alternative programs. Following the hearing, the
24 Department of Social Services would submit a report with
25 recommendations to the Mayor and the Council." I hope that

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1 today's one-time hearing has not actually been substituted
2 for ongoing inter-agency input and coordination -- since
3 that would be a serious step backward in the process. At
4 the New York City Council hearings in May, Speaker Corey
5 Johnson declared that progress on public burial must be
6 built from the grass roots. Yet at that same time, the
7 voices of those most impacted at the grass roots, some of
8 whom we've heard today -- family members, community
9 activists, and nonprofit leaders with demonstrated
10 experience in providing for indigent burial -- were not
11 heard for nearly four hours, after most elected and
12 appointed officials had already left the room. Even the
13 Department of Corrections officer with the most extensive
14 experience on the ground at Hart Island -- very beloved, I
15 think, by everyone here who knows him -- was not asked to
16 testify, but only passed discreet notes to his superiors
17 to correct their statements as necessary. The most
18 integrated solutions to the challenges of Hart Island and
19 public burial point toward the most equitable and
20 sustainable choices facing all of us at death. But we
21 cannot make real progress toward any of these solutions by
22 trying to force decades of nuanced, collective experience
23 and wisdom into a couple of high-profile top-down public
24 hearings. The nitty gritty of real progress always takes
25 place between such events. It has taken too many years of

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1 dedicated advocacy - and even lawsuits -- to get us to
2 this crucial transition point. Please, let's not waste
3 this historical opportunity. If we are serious about
4 making change, we need the coordination, oversight,
5 transparency, and accountability of ongoing inter-agency
6 efforts. I hope that plans for a task force or similar
7 coordinating body will be reaffirmed in good faith -- so
8 that we can avoid reinventing and spinning our wheels and
9 instead join forces in the real work of progress on public
10 burial. Progress can only be made when it is understood
11 that the honor of the dead is not an isolated funeral
12 product -- or municipal event-- but rather, a continual
13 process of learning and building community across all the
14 lines that too often divide us. Thank you for your
15 consideration and time.

16 MS. GODBY: Thank you. It is now 5:00, and we
17 are going to take a five-minute break, five- to ten-minute
18 break. If anyone needs to use the restroom, please do so,
19 and if you haven't had an opportunity to sign in, if you'd
20 like to testify, please stop by the table at the front to
21 sign in.

22 [OFF THE RECORD, 5:00 PM]

23 [ON THE RECORD, 5:09 PM]

24 MS. DONIGER: If people could take their seats
25 if they're going to stay.

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1 MS. GODBY: Okay, thank you, everyone. We're
2 going to reopen the hearing. One of our colleagues from
3 H&H is here, and she will introduce herself. You want to
4 come on down? Come on down. Thank you.

5 FEMALE VOICE: (Inaudible)

6 MS. GODBY: Yes, yes, yes, just close by.

7 MS. BRIDGETTE ROBERTS: Good evening, everyone.
8 My name is Bridgette Roberts, and I look forward to
9 hearing your testimony.

10 MS. DONIGER: Bridgette Roberts from Health and
11 Hospitals.

12 MS. ROBERTS: Yes, and I -- oh yeah, it's
13 Bridgette Roberts from New York City Health and Hospitals
14 on behalf of Dr. Mitchell Katz, who's our CEO.

15 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

16 MS. DONIGER: Thank you. So, we have six more
17 people signed up to give testimony. Other people might
18 come in. Just letting everyone know where we are. So, if
19 you can try to keep, to your best, to five minutes, we
20 haven't been cutting people off, just to be respectful of
21 everyone's time. Next, we have Melinda Hunt from The Hart
22 Island Project.

23 MS. MELINDA HUNT: Thank you so much for
24 arranging this hearing and to all the agencies who are
25 here. My name's Melinda Hunt. I am the founding director

1 of The Hart Island Project, a public charity, whose
2 mission is to increase transparency and access to public
3 burials on Hart Island. I bring 28 years of experience
4 documenting the burial process on Hart Island and working
5 with volunteers, families, and friends of the buried.
6 When I first visited Hart Island in 1991, correctional
7 officers informed me that they could only disinter recent
8 burials, ten years or less. In 2005, I attended a
9 homicide trial in New Jersey for a young woman who had
10 been buried for 20 years. From skeletal remains alone,
11 prosecutors were able to prove homicide. It was extremely
12 important for the family of that deceased young woman to
13 learn what had happened to her 24 years after her
14 disappearance. Being able to retrieve bodies and return
15 them to families is an important service that we'll want
16 to preserve. This raises the question of how long the
17 grave should remain intact before reuse. Up until 1977,
18 when a fire destroyed burial ledgers stored on Hart
19 Island, reuse of burial sites after 25 years was the
20 practice. The reason over a million bodies have been
21 continuously interred on Hart Island for 150 years is that
22 graves on public land can be recycled once a body is fully
23 decomposed to skeletal remains. Because there is enough
24 land on Hart Island to bury all unclaimed and unidentified
25 bodies for at least 25 years, New York City has never run

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1 out of burial space and will never run out of burial
2 space. I believe it is important to return remains to
3 families for up to 25 years but not indefinitely. The
4 City must be able to recycle the grave sites so that we
5 have enough land to continue burials indefinitely. In
6 1992, I began working on a book about Hart Island with
7 cooperation from the Department of Correction. At that
8 time, DOC informed me that there was eight to ten years
9 left of burial space on Hart Island. This was the peak of
10 the AIDS epidemic when there were three times as many
11 burials on Hart Island as there are today. Even if the
12 City does not immediately resume recycling grave sites
13 older than 25 years, there is still enough land available
14 for burials for several decades. Landscape architect Ann
15 Sharrock projects that there is 80 years left of new
16 burial space at the current rate of 1,000 to 1,200 burials
17 per year. In 2015, the Department of Buildings and the
18 Parks Department produced a report which I attached to
19 this report, and there are copies at the back,
20 recommending demolition of all but two of the buildings.
21 Removal of the buildings listed in this report would
22 provide an estimated 17 acres of new burial space.
23 Because the burial process is extremely efficient and
24 important to families requesting disinterments, I urge the
25 City not to close Hart Island. New York City began using

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1 common plots with 150 bodies laid out in a grid in 1872.
2 This burial process was invented during the American Civil
3 War to inter Union soldiers within their regiments on
4 battlefields such that they could later be removed and
5 reinterred in national cemeteries or in private
6 cemeteries. New York City adopted this burial process
7 because sepulcher rights require the City to disinter and
8 return remains to families and because New York State
9 prohibits cremation of unclaimed or unidentified human
10 remains. I'm advocating for keeping Hart Island open as
11 an active cemetery because the burial process on Hart
12 Island offers a sustainable ecological alternative to
13 private cremation which uses large amounts of fossil fuels
14 and releases toxins such as mercury into the air. Hart
15 Island is the largest and oldest natural burial facility
16 in the nation. None of the private cemeteries in New York
17 City offer natural burials. Private cemeteries cannot
18 recycle titled graves sold to families long ago. By
19 comparison, New York City has long recycled graves, and
20 there is no shortage of new space as well as recyclable
21 burial space on Hart Island. Although --

22 MS. GODBY: -- you've reached five minutes.
23 Sorry.

24 MS. HUNT: I've got four paragraphs.

25 MS. GODBY: Go ahead. Go ahead.

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1 MS. HUNT: Although not perfect, Hart Island has
2 improved over the last decade. Got to get to the good
3 part, right? You have to get credit. Graves are now
4 marked using GPS. Ledgers are transcribed into a digital
5 database. Work to mitigate erosion has begun. Debris has
6 been removed. Graveside visitation has been established.
7 I have accompanied families to grave sites going back to
8 1994. It truly helps families to reconcile the death of a
9 loved one by visiting a grave. If the City Cemetery
10 closes on Hart Island, my fear is that the graves of
11 people whose families are low income will once again
12 become remote and inaccessible. I cannot over-emphasize
13 how important it is to communities to feel that their
14 members are treated respectfully in death. People readily
15 believe that their dead are discarded if they can't easily
16 and affordably visit grave sites and gain access to
17 information. Removing or redacting burial information
18 makes people feel that their loved one disappeared. I
19 have never once had a family member complain about their
20 loved one being listed online. I've never had a mother
21 complain about her name being used in a burial ledger.
22 The mother of an infant that was stillborn or lived for
23 five minutes wants to know exactly where her child is
24 buried. She has the right to know. She has the right to
25 name her child or not name her child. Every woman must be

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1 offered burial assistance as well as the right to decline
2 burial assistance and agree to a City burial without
3 feeling that her decision is shameful. For this reason,
4 Hart Island burials should never be referred to as
5 indigent burials. Hart Island belongs to past and future
6 generations of New Yorkers. This historic system of
7 burials offers an ecological advantage. There is no good
8 reason to end burials on Hart Island because New York City
9 is not running out of burial space. The best way forward
10 is for the City to remove derelict buildings and develop a
11 master plan that includes recycling graves after 25 years
12 to 50 years of burial. Most importantly, the master plan
13 must not be hidden. New York City's burial process must
14 be fully transparent. Thank you.

15 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

16 MS. DONIGER: Jacob Priley? Jacob? No?
17 Matthew Cruz?

18 MR. MATTHEW CRUZ: Good afternoon, panel. My
19 name is Matthew Cruz. I'm district manager of Community
20 Board 10. I'm here to convey to the panel by no means is
21 anyone in our district -- we happen to have Hart Island,
22 and we're happy. We're proud of it. We understand the
23 significance, the historic ramifications of Hart Island.
24 We're looking to, of course, improve and do better by the
25 people whose loved ones are there, and with that respect,

1 we understand that the current modes of transportation are
2 by no means adequate. There is a law in the City Council
3 that is, should it pass next week or in a couple weeks,
4 would designate some sort of study, a transportation
5 study, for Hart Island. We're just asking that the panel
6 and, of course, many of you, keep us included in the study
7 at Community Board 10. We can convey our opinions, our
8 suggestions. By no means -- we all understand that the
9 current level of ferry service is adequate, so much so
10 that Community Board 10 was rejected when we tried to
11 visit Hart Island a few weeks ago -- so I encourage anyone
12 to help us, or we can get there and take a look for
13 ourselves as stewards of our district, but by no means do
14 we think that what is there now in terms of ferry service
15 is adequate, so any transportation study or accessibility
16 study should include us, and I'm happy to leave my card
17 anywhere I can so we can all be a part of the
18 conversation. Thank you.

19 MS. GODBY: Thank you.

20 MS. DONIGER: Peter Diavo [phonetic]? Divio
21 [phonetic]? Peter? Not here? Okay, Bridgette Roberti,
22 Robertly? Oh, you're here. You signed up on the wrong
23 sheet, okay. So that is all I have for people who signed
24 in. Did anyone who didn't get to sign in or anyone wanted
25 to speak? Going once. Okay.

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1 MS. GODBY: Okay.

2 MS. DONIGER: That's everyone.

3 MS. GODBY: Alright. I believe that we will
4 still be here until 6:30, giving the public an opportunity
5 to come in and testify. Yes, until then, if anyone else
6 wants to speak a second time, it is fine. Okay, so we'll
7 adjourn for now. We will still be here until 6:30, but if
8 you like to speak amongst yourselves, go right ahead.

9 (PROCEEDING PAUSED)


10 MS. GODBY: The public hearing is now concluded.

11 (PROCEEDING CONCLUDED)

12

13 C E R T I F I C A T E

14 I, Mark Yoshioka, certify that the foregoing transcript of
15 proceedings in the New York City Department of Social
16 Services, DOSS Public Hearing was prepared using the required
17 transcription equipment and is a true and accurate record of
18 the proceedings.

19 Signature: 

20 Date: October 28, 2019

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Ubiquis

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