

COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

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April 14, 2026
Start: 11:07 a.m.
Recess: 12:21 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - 8TH FLOOR - HEARING
ROOM 3

B E F O R E: Farah N. Louis, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Elsie Encarnación
Amanda Farías
Simcha Felder
Yusef Salaam
Justin E. Sanchez
Lynn C. Schulman
Shanel Thomas-Henry

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Alexa Avilés
Kamillah M. Hanks

A P P E A R A N C E S

Alejandro Wong, Sabrosura

Emanuele De Biase, founder and owner of Cantina
Sociale Bed-Stuy doing business as Cicchetti BK

Fayanne Betan, 46 Nelson Rezoning

Kevin Williams, GZE GeoEnvironmental

Ariel Akkad, 46 Nelson Rezoning

Amanda Iannotti, Sheldon Lobel PC

Jorge Fontan, Fontan Architecture

Charles Weinstock, Voices of Bay Ridge

Lea Vallone, Akerman LLP

Steven Sinacori, Akerman LLP

Charles Vallone, self

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone check for the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises recorded on April 14, 2026, located in Hearing Room 3 by Nazly Paytuvi.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to today's New York City Council Hearing for the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises.

If you would like to testify, you must fill out a witness slip with one of the Sergeant-at-Arms in the back of the room, even if you signed up already online. You may also submit testimony at testimony@council.nyc.gov.

At this time, please silence all electronic devices. Please silence all electronic devices.

And no one may approach the dais at any time.

Chair, we are ready to begin.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: [GAVEL] Good morning, and welcome to our meeting of the Subcommittee on Zoning and Franchises. I'm Council Member Farah Louis, Chair of the Subcommittee. This morning, I'm joined by Members of the Committee, Council Member

Farías, Schulman, Salaam, Sanchez, as well as Council Member Avilés and Majority Whip Hanks.

Today, we are holding five hearings and voting on three proposals. The hearings we'll hold concern Sabrosura's application for a sidewalk cafe in Council Member Farías' District; Cicchetti, Cicchetti? No, no, no, I was just trying to check. Cicchetti Brooklyn's application for a sidewalk cafe. Did I say it correctly? Cicchetti, Cicchetti, Cicchetti Brooklyn application for a sidewalk cafe in Council Member Mealy's District; St. Francis Prep rezoning for a commercial overlay in Council Member Lee's District; 9201 4th Avenue residential rezoning in Council Member Santosuosso's District; and 46 Nelson Street Rezoning 2 in Council Member Avilés District.

We will then vote on the following proposals, 37-59 Hamilton Avenue residential zoning in Council Member Hanks' District; and two sidewalk cafe applications by Sabrosura, okay, and Cicchetti. We will hold the vote after the two hearings on the sidewalk applications and then resume with the remaining two hearings.

And we are also joined online by Council Members Felder and Santosuosso.

All right. This meeting is being held in a hybrid format. Members of the public who wish to testify may testify in person or via Zoom. Members of the public wishing to testify remotely may register by visiting the New York City Council website at www.council.nyc.gov/landuse. To sign up or for those of you here in person, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms to prepare and submit a speaker card.

Members of the public may also view a live stream broadcast of this meeting at the Council's website. When you are called to testify before the Subcommittee, if you are joining us remotely, you will remain muted until recognized by myself to speak. When you are recognized, your microphone will be unmuted.

We will limit public testimony to two minutes per witness. If you have additional testimony that you would like to, that you like the Subcommittee to consider, or if you have written testimony that you would like to submit instead of appearing in person, please email it to

landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov. Written testimony may be submitted up to three days after the hearing is closed. Please indicate the LU number and project name in the subject line of your email.

We request that witnesses joining us remotely remain in the meeting until excused by the Chair as Council Members may have questions.

Lastly, for everyone attending today's meeting, this is a government proceeding and decorum must be observed at all times. Members of the public are asked not to speak during the meeting unless you are testifying.

The witness table is reserved for people who are called to testify, and no video recording or photography is allowed from the witness table. Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant-at-Arms for inclusion in the hearing record.

The first hearing we will hold concerns LU-49 related to the Sidewalk Cafe application by Sabrosura, which is an establishment located in the Union Port neighborhood of the Bronx in Council Member Farías' District. Applicant is seeking to

2 place 18 tables and 60 chairs along the sidewalk by
3 the restaurant. We will now hear from Council Member
4 Farías.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Good morning, and
6 thank you Chair Louis and Members of the Committee
7 and to the applicant of Sabrosura for being here
8 today.

9 We are here to consider the sidewalk
10 application for Sabrosura in Castle Hill in my
11 District. As part of my review, I utilized the
12 call-up process to take a closer look and more
13 deliberate look at this proposal. For me, this is
14 about more than just approving an application on
15 paper. It's about ensuring that what's proposed
16 actually works within the realities of the corridors
17 throughout my District. Castle Hill Avenue is an
18 active commercial strip with steady pedestrian
19 traffic, nearby intersections, and a mix of small
20 businesses and community uses. So, my review focused
21 on a few key factors, pedestrian flow and ADA
accessibility, emergency access, and how the cafe
footprint interacts with neighboring businesses and
the public right-of-way.

2 My office coordinated with the 43rd
3 Precinct, the local firehouse, and Castle Hill
4 Business Improvement District to ensure that there
5 was alignment across stakeholders. That level of
6 coordination is critical to making sure these setups
7 are safe, functional, and sustainable in the long
8 term. The sidewalk cafe program can be a valuable
9 tool for supporting small businesses and activating
10 our corridors, but only when it is implemented
11 thoughtfully and responsibly.

12 I'm looking forward to seeing their
13 application today thoroughly and excited because
14 Sabrosura is a key corridor partner.

15 Thank you for a moment to speak on behalf
16 of LU49.

17 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Council
18 Member.

19 I will now call the applicant panel for
20 this proposal, which consists of Alejandro Wong.

21 Counsel, please administer the
affirmation.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Good morning.
Could you please raise your right hand? State your
name for the record.

2 ALEJANDRO WONG: Alejandro Wong.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Do you swear to
4 tell the truth and nothing but the truth in your
5 testimony today and in response to Council Member
6 questions?

7 ALEJANDRO WONG: Yes.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you.

9 LISA CURTISS: Thank you. You may now
10 begin your testimony, which is limited to eight
11 minutes, and I will just ask you to please restate
12 your name and organization for the record.

13 ALEJANDRO WONG: My name is Alejandro
14 Wong. I represent Sabrosura Restaurant. We've been
15 with the sidewalk cafe since 2010, and we, you know,
16 like I said, we're part of community on the Bronx. We
17 try to help, and like I said, we are building also in
18 the neighborhood a different kind of food and
19 restaurant that we are in the community. Thanks.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

21 I now invite my Colleagues to ask
questions. Council Member Farías, do you have a
question?

COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Just a couple.

Can you just walk us through how the proposed layout maintains clear and accessible pedestrian pathways, particularly during the peak hours?

ALEJANDRO WONG: During the peak hours? Like I said, our restaurant is in the corner, and like the DOT, the Department of Transportation, they approved already the layout on the restaurant, like I said, being the sidewalk cafe in 2010, and we have never had any complaint regarding the sidewalk cafe with us.

COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Great. And then I did speak with the local precinct and the local firehouse who said you've been great partners, which we appreciate.

In the event of any emergency or if you've seen any in the past with the restaurant, has the setup allowed for clear and immediate access for FTNY and other first responders?

ALEJANDRO WONG: Yes. We are.

COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Okay. And then just one last question on maintaining cleanliness. For trash management and upkeep of the cafe and the extended outdoor sidewalk cafe, what protocols do you

2 currently have in place with the new policies that we
3 set forward in the city?

4 ALEJANDRO WONG: Yes. Like I said,
5 remember, Councilman, that we are also with the BID,
6 the new Castle Hill BID, you know, they have their
7 own cleaning sanitation, like, by the BID, and they
8 always clean the sidewalk cafe and all the
9 neighborhood over there.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Okay. Great.

11 Thank you so much, Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Council
13 Member.

14 You're now excused. Thank you so much,
15 Mr. Wong.

16 We've also been joined by Council Member
17 Thomas-Henry.

18 You're now excused.

19 ALEJANDRO WONG: All right. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for coming.
21 Counsel, are there any members of the
public who wish to testify remotely or in person
regarding this proposal?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: No, Chair.

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: If no member of the
3 public signed up to testify, oh, sorry. For members
4 of the public... sorry, please stand at ease.

5 Sorry. If there are no members of the
6 public who wish to testify regarding this application
7 remotely, please press the raise hand button now. If
8 you are in person, please identify yourself to one of
9 the Sergeant-at-Arms.

10 All right. There are no members of the
11 public who wish to testify regarding LU49 regarding
12 Sabrosura's application for a sidewalk cafe. The
13 public hearing is now closed, and items are now laid
14 over.

15 I will now open the second hearing which
16 concerns LU50 related to the sidewalk cafe related to
17 Cicchietti, which is an establishment located in
18 Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn in Council Member Mealy's
19 District. Applicant is seeking to place three tables
20 and six chairs along the sidewalk by the restaurant.

21 Is Council Member Mealy?

All right. We now call on Council Member
Mealy with remarks.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you, Madam
Chair.

Thank you. What is happening in our communities, things are opening up and thank God that I saw it and made an opportunity to meet the owner and that's what all elected officials should do before anything open up in their neighborhood. So, I was honored he came to our office, looking forward to serving with you and I'm glad that the process is right. And to all store owners or anyone opening up a business, find out who your elected officials, your City Council, Senator, Assembly, Congress, U.S. State Senator, find out who they are. Talk to them. So, I'm so glad that he gave me the opportunity to go visit his restaurant soon and I know the food is going to be good, right? And not only did he open up in the neighborhood, he has open space for the community to come in and have meetings, bring their children so I thank you for that community service. Servitude, everyone does not have it and just by you opening up and realizing that it is about the community also and to let your space be for the community, I thank you and I approve this sidewalk cafe. It'll make it much better for the community on the sidewalk. About six seats. So, I'm going to... he has to save four seats

2 for me and my friends. So, thank you so much and,
3 Chair, I approve this 100 percent and thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Council
5 Member Mealy.

6 I will now call the applicant panel for
7 this proposal which consists of Emanuele De Blase.
8 Oh, that's beautiful.

9 All right, Counsel, please administer the
10 affirmation.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Could you please
12 raise your right hand and state your name for the
13 record?

14 EMANUELE DE BIASE: Emmanuel De Biase.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Do you swear to
16 tell the truth and nothing but the truth in your
17 testimony this morning?

18 EMANUELE DE BIASE: Yes, I do.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. You may now
21 begin your testimony, which is limited to eight
minutes, and I will just ask you to please restate
your name and business for the record.

EMANUELE DE BIASE: Good morning, Chair
and Members of the Committee. My name is Emanuele De

Biase. I'm the founder and owner of Cicchetti, oh sorry, Cantina Sociale Bed-Stuy doing business as Cicchetti BK at 185 Howard Avenue in Ocean Hill, Brooklyn.

Cicchetti is a Venetian inspired wine bar and restaurant. We opened on March 8th of this year. Our focus is on affordability, community, and cultural programming. We host two jazz events every night, and we are developing a queer night for the neighborhood. We are deeply embedded in the Howard Avenue corridor. We have active partnership with three of the nine establishments on the avenue and we are committed to building that community further as I've discussed with Council Member Mealy. We're going to work with Council Member Mealy to strengthen Howard Avenue. The sidewalk cafe will allow us to serve our community better outdoors, extend our programming into the street, and contribute to the activation of the corridor. One thing that is very dear to me is the fact that I think that a sidewalk cafe really brings the establishment onto the street and so it makes it more accessible. In a neighborhood that is already going a lot of change, I think that it's important to keep the doors open. As Council

Member Mealy has mentioned also, we're open 5 to midnight but the space is open from 2 to 5 p.m. free of charge for meetings of the block associations. We've had already a clothing drive last Saturday, and we're going to have a mahjong tournament this Sunday because that's the spirit of the space to really keep it open. I pay rent for 24 hours, and it's a shame to only use it for seven hours a day.

Thank you and I'm happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. I don't have any questions, but I invite my Colleagues to ask questions.

Council Member Mealy. All right. You have a question?

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Just one.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: The mahjong. Explain it, please.

EMANUELE DE BIASE: It would be nice if I knew a little more. I know that a group of mothers has reached out. I advertised this on Instagram, and a group of mothers reached out to have a tournament. It's going to be this Sunday in case anyone wants to

2 join 2 to 5 p.m., and then next week there's going to
3 be an event for children's art that again a
4 non-profit is having in our space.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: That's it.

6 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Awesome.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you, Chair.

8 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: No problem.

9 This applicant panel is now excused.
10 Thank you so much for being here.

11 Counsel, are there any members of the
12 public who wish to testify remotely or in person
13 regarding this proposal?

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: No, Chair.

15 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: If there are any
16 members of the public who wish to testify regarding
17 this application remotely, please press the raise
18 hand button now or, if you're in person, please
19 identify yourself to one of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

20 Being there are no members of the public
21 who wish to testify regarding LU50 relating to the
Cicchetti application for a sidewalk café, the public
hearing is now closed and these items are now laid
over.

We will now proceed with the three votes. The first two votes concern the application for sidewalk cafes by Sabrosura and Cicchetti, which we just heard. Both Council Members Farías and Mealy support these applications as filed.

The third vote concerns LUs 45 and 46 regarding 37-59 Hamilton Avenue rezoning proposal and Council Member Hanks' District. Applicant is seeking to develop a mixed-use residential development with approximately 369 apartments on the north shore of Staten Island in St. George. It is anticipated approximately 111 of the apartments would be permanently affordable. The proposal involves two actions. The first is a zoning map amendment to change the existing residential R6 district to a residential R7-3 with a C2-4 commercial overlay. The second application is a zoning tax amendment to map a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area.

We've just been joined by Council Member Encarnación.

Council Member Hanks supports the application. We recognize Council Member Majority Whip Hanks for a statement now.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER HANKS: Good morning, and
3 thank you, Chair.

4 It's a new day in the north shore of
5 Staten Island, and we have a responsibility to build
6 for the future. That means being intentional about
7 the kind of development we approve and making sure
8 that it creates real opportunity for people who call
9 Staten Island home. Because this is not about one
10 building, it's about the future of this borough and
11 where our children are going to live. It's about
12 whether young people are able to grow up in the
13 neighborhood that they that they were born in and
14 remain on Staten Island. For too long, we've watched
15 too many young people, working families get priced
16 out or pushed out to look elsewhere for opportunity.
17 Meanwhile, places like Bayonne and Hoboken are
18 basically cleaning our clock. They are building, they
19 are attracting investment, they are giving people
20 options, and Staten Island has to be part of that
21 conversation as well. But we have to do it in a way
that works for our communities and for the people who
are already here. This is why this project matters.
We are not only talking about workforce ability but
we are talking about workforce homeownership. That is

a major difference, and this is one of the most important outcomes of this process. My office has pushed directly for the inclusion of affordable homeownership component because Staten Island families deserve more than just an opportunity to rent. They deserve an opportunity to own, to build, to build equity, and to put down long-term roots in a community in which they love. This proposal begins to begins to create a pathway for the middle-income families right here in St. George. It includes permanently affordable housing, public accessible open space, 7,000 square feet of community facility space, and that community facility space is important because it creates opportunity to bring real programming services especially in the areas of youth development, arts, education and STEM. The applicant is also committed to 100,000 investment in a local organization distributed over four years, and that kind of sustained support matters because development should not just change the physical landscape, it should strengthen the neighborhood around it. Because this cannot be the last project, we must always demand more. It has to be the first of many developments where we insist on affordability, on

homeownership, on community space, and on real investment of the people who are already here. This is how we build stronger communities. This is how we build the north shore of Staten Island and we retain families.

With that, I ask my Colleagues to approve 37-59 Hamilton rezoning, Land Use items 45 and 46. I approve this 100 percent and I want to thank Megha (phonetic), Deidre Carson (phonetic), Michael Zoltan (phonetic) and Lauren George and my Staff.

Thank you so much, Chair.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Do any Council Members have any questions at this time?

All right. I will now call for a vote to approve LUs 45 and 46 relating to the 37-59 Hamilton Avenue rezoning proposal; LU 49 related to the application for a sidewalk cafe by Sabosura; and LU 50 related to the application for sidewalk cafe by Cicchetti.

Counsel, please call the roll.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Chair Louis.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Aye on all.
Congratulations.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Farías.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Permission to
3 explain my vote?

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You may.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Thank you, Chair
6 Louis and Members of the Subcommittee.

7 Today, we actually have the privilege of
8 voting to approve the sidewalk application for
9 Sabrasura in Castle Hill. My office worked closely as
10 I mentioned with key local stakeholders including our
11 community board, the 43rd precinct, FDNY, and the BID
12 to make sure there was full coordination and clarity
13 across agencies in the business community. Through
14 this process, we were able to confirm that the
15 proposal met the necessary standards and did not
16 raise any operational or safety concerns allowing us
17 to move forward with confidence. In District 18, the
18 sidewalk cafe program has to work for everyone. It
19 must be functional, fair, and effective, supporting
20 small businesses while also respecting the needs of
21 residents, pedestrians and the partners to help
maintain and activate our commercial corridors. So, I
want to thank the applicant, Alejandro Wong, for
working with my office to make sure that this moved
smoothly. He was responsive throughout the entire

1 COMMITTEE ON ZONING AND FRANCHISES

23

2 process, and that kind of cooperation is what makes a
3 major difference in getting these applications done
4 the correct way. I'm confident this application is
5 ready to move forward and, as you know already, we
6 all love Sabosura. So, I wish you continued success
7 in District 18, and I urge my Colleagues to vote yes
8 for the sidewalk application.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Council Member
10 Schulman.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Aye on all.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Council Member
13 Salaam.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAAM: I vote aye on all.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Council Member
16 Felder.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Council Member
19 Encarnación.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ENCARNACIÓN: Aye on all.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you.

Council Member Sanchez.

COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: Permission
to explain my vote.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You may.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER JUSTIN SANCHEZ: Maybe this
3 time. Okay.

4 I just want to take a moment of personal
5 privilege as someone from the Bronx growing up going
6 to Sabrosura, I have so many great memories going
7 there with my dad, with my uncles, and I'm so excited
8 to continue going back to visit Council Member
9 Farías' District right next door to mine and
10 continuing to make even more memories now with this
11 outdoor cafe. So, I proudly vote aye on all.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Council Member
13 Thomas-Henry.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: Aye on all.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: By a vote of
16 eight in the affirmative, none in opposition, and no
17 abstentions, these three applications are approved
18 without modification and referred to the Land Use
19 Committee.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

21 We will now resume the public hearings,
and I will open the third... stand at ease.

I will now open the fifth and final
public hearing. Stand at ease.

I will now open the third final public hearing on Pre-Considered LUs regarding the 46 Nelson Street mixed-use rezoning proposal in Red Hook Brooklyn in Council Member Avilés' District. The proposal involves a zoning map and a zoning text amendment. Application is seeking to build a mixed-use residential building with approximately 108 apartments. Mandatory Inclusionary Housing would be mapped as part of this application so approximately 27 of the apartments would be permanently affordable depending on the affordability options selected.

For anyone wishing to testify regarding the proposal remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse.

For anyone here in person, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms to come to submit a speaker card. If you would prefer to submit written testimony, you can always do so by emailing it to landuse.testimony@council.nyc.gov.

I will now recognize Council Member Avilés for remarks.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you, Chair.

Good morning, everyone. I am Council Member Alexa Avilés, proudly representing District 38, which encompasses the project area for 46 Nelson Street rezoning application. This application is requesting, as you've heard the Chair note, a zoning map amendment to rezone the project area from an M1-1 district to an M1-2A/R7A and R6A (MX5) mixed-use district, as well as a text amendment to map MIH. These actions would facilitate the development of a seven-story mixed-use residential commercial building. This project can bring much needed housing and commercial space to the Red Hook neighborhood. As we have discussed, Red Hook lacks many basic amenities, among them affordable commercial space and commercial retail space in general for neighborhood needs, like laundromats and pharmacies and spaces for community services. This project would provide an opportunity to meet some of that, and I look forward to discussing this more with you today, as well as hearing more from the applicant team.

So, thank you to my Colleagues on the Subcommittee and the members of the public, if any have come out today, but certainly we have engaged members from the community on the project as well.

2 So, thank you, Chair.

3 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Council
4 Member.

5 I will now call the applicant panel for
6 this proposal, which consists of Ariel Akkad, Victor
7 Ferretti, and Kevin Williams, and FAYANNE BETAN.

8 Counsel, please administer the
9 affirmation.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Good morning.
11 Could you please all raise your right hand and state
12 your name for the record?

13 FAYANNE BETAN: FAYANNE BETAN.

14 VICTOR FILLETTI: Victor Filletti.

15 KEVIN WILLIAMS: Kevin Williams.

16 ARIEL AKKAD: Ariel Akkad.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you.

18 Do you swear to tell the truth and
19 nothing but the truth in your testimony this morning
20 and in response to Council Member questions?

21 FAYANNE BETAN: Yes, I do.

VICTOR FILLETTI: I do.

KEVIN WILLIAMS: I do.

ARIEL AKKAD: Yes.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You may now begin your
3 testimony, which is eight minutes, and I will just
4 ask you all to please restate your name and
organization for the record.

5 You may begin.

6 FAYANNE BETAN: Good morning, Chair,
7 Members of the Subcommittee, Council Member Avilés.
8 I'm Fayanne Betan from Sheldon Lobel PC. We're here
9 today to discuss the 46 Nelson Street rezoning. Is it
possible to get on this? All right. Next slide,
10 please. I don't want to say that.

11 So, just to go back a little bit about
12 the project. So, the applicant is seeking the
13 following land use actions. As mentioned before,
14 zoning map amendments to change an existing M-1-1
15 zoning district to an M1-2A/R7A mixed zoning district
16 and an M1/2A R6A mixed zoning district. And we're
17 also seeking a text amendment for Appendix F to map
18 MIH options... thank you MIH options one and two
co-terminus with the project area. Next slide,
please.

19 This is just a brief description of the
20 proposal. We're looking at an eight-story plus cellar
21 building, approximately 5.01 FAR, which is 100,000

square feet of mixed residential, commercial uses, and community facility uses. The building height is 85 feet, providing 36 parking spaces, including six EV space spaces, which was important to the Community Board. The building will provide approximately 104 dwelling units, including a mix of studios, one bedrooms, two bedrooms, and three bedrooms. And throughout the process, we've modified the unit mix to provide more family-sized units. And we'll be providing approximately 26 affordable units pursuant to MIH Option 1. Next slide, please.

Here we have a zoning map showing the site. It's currently located within the M1-1 zoning district. The M1-1 district has remained since 1961 and has not produced much development due to the fact that it has a low FAR and a high parking requirement. So, next slide, please.

So, as you can see here, we're proposing the MX district with the M1/2A, R7A zoning district along Hicks and Nelson, and then the R6A zoning district mid-block along Nelson Street. Next slide, please.

Okay. Here we see the area map, and this tells the story well. As you can see, our block is a

little unique with a mixture of both manufacturing, industrial, and residential uses, non-conforming residential uses. So, the proposed MX district would actually bring these uses into compliance and still allow existing manufacturing businesses to continue in operation. So, as I mentioned, we have the R7A along Hicks and Nelson, and then we have the R6A mid-block. Next slide, please.

Here's a zoning change map, and then we could page through some of the photographs. You could just go through some of those slides, please. Thank you. Just see photographs of the site. Next slide. Next slide, please. Next slide. We could go to the plans.

Okay. Actually the rendering on the next slide, please.

So, after meetings, and especially with the Council Member regarding some feedback on the urban design, we tried to set back the building a little bit more to be less imposing and more contextual in the area. To accommodate the slimmer profile, we redistributed some of the bulk on the upper floors and added one story, but that is set back. However, it actually increased our unit count,

which would also mean additional affordable units.

And we could just page through the plans.

Here we have a ground floor rendering, and then some zoning calculations. As you could see here, we now set back more on the sixth, seventh floors, and then an eighth floor is set back even farther. And we could just go through the floor plans. The cellar has the parking and the mechanical units.

And then we have... can we go back to the first floor, please? We have commercial uses, community facility uses, and the residential lobby, including, after we spoke with the Community Board, a proposed local artist gallery in the residential lobby. We also have the ramp to the parking. And then typical floor plans, residential units above. Once again, showing the setback on the sixth and seventh floors, and the setback further on the eighth floor.

And then we could just end on... two more, please. This just shows the floodplain, the flood elevations. And here we go.

And the applicant team here is here to answer questions.

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you. I have a
3 few questions about the proposal.

4 First question, the proposed development
5 would be located at the end of a block that consists
6 primarily of warehouses and manufacturing uses along
7 Huntington Street. I see that the proposed mixed-use
8 district would retain an M1 designation. Do you plan
9 on including light manufacturing space as part of
10 this development?

11 FAYANNE BETAN: So, currently we still
12 haven't found a tenant for the ground floor yet.
13 We're looking actually at commercial and community
14 facility. This block is actually located right across
15 from a school so we're trying to look at uses that
16 won't impact the school as much, but the ownership is
17 still open to looking at tenants.

18 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you for that
19 response.

20 As mentioned, this development site is
21 along a manufacturing block. So, what measures are
you proposing to ensure pedestrian safety, especially
for the school?

KEVIN WILLIAMS: I can address that. Kevin
Williams, GZA GeoEnvironmental. We prepared an

environmental assessment statement for the project.

So, anytime a project is redeveloped and the zone changed, you have to do a builder's pavement plan.

So, the one thing you can see from the photos, the

street is actually heavily tree lined so the

sidewalks would have to be improved. The adjacent

roadway, including crosswalks, thermoplastic

striping, or highly visible crosswalks would have to

be enhanced. The entire roadbed that fronts the

rezoning area and redevelopment would have to be

done. So, you're going to get substantially improved

sidewalk, replanted street trees where necessary, and

enhanced crosswalks adjacent to the site.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

And this proposed development is also

just a block away from the highway. What design

features are you including to ensure the residents of

this proposed building have clean indoor air and are

not affected by the noise of the traffic neighboring

manufacturing uses?

VICTOR FILLETTI: Victor Filletti, project

architect. So, we would be using soundproof windows

in excess of what is required by code. All of the

mechanical equipment will be sound blocked. It'll

have special air intake to allow fresh air from outside deflecting the sound that would be brought in from the highway. Again, above and beyond what's required by code.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

I will now recognize Council Member Avilés for questions.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. Thank you so much.

I know we've talked about this. One thing in particular that is important is, you know, the commercial space, particularly it being both appropriate for the area and what is filling a need. So, I was curious if you could talk to us about what methods you will use to make sure to tenant the commercial space is filled with a needed and appropriate usage and would you be open... would you commit to ongoing community engagement to make sure that we find the best tenants?

FAYANNE BETAN: Of course, we will commit to working with your office and finding tenants. We also had reviewed, you know, after conversations with your office, we also reviewed some of the district needs, especially regarding Red Hook in general and

for the need for local retail, maybe healthy food stores or affordable food stores. I know you mentioned the laundromat, also community facility use as an affordable urgent care as well. And I could just, Ariel, the applicant has started to reach out to some brokers to understand some of the commercial tenants, especially in this space.

ARIEL AKKAD: Yes.

FAYANNE BETAN: And we could continue working with your office on that.

ARIEL AKKAD: Yes. So, yes. I worked with a few of our local brokers. We also were landlord in the area other than this building, so we care about, you know, who goes into the space. They didn't give me any direct, you know, immediate interest on who's immediately interested, but they did say that something supplemental to the school would help, would probably work there in addition to, you know, affordable grocery type of store or urgent care.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Great. We certainly look forward to ongoing conversations about it.

ARIEL AKKAD: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: As community space in general actually is quite in high demand, affordable community space where there can be community meetings, because there is quite actually very little of that in the community, and we have a lot of great non-profits. So, we'll continue to have that conversation. Thank you.

ARIEL AKKAD: Absolutely.

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: In terms of, yeah, I guess I was curious about the, if you wouldn't mind describing the rationale in proposing to rezone the area to mixed-use district without proposing any manufacturing or industrial use on the site itself.

FAYANNE BETAN: So, the lot is currently improved with industrial. I know it's a large warehouse, minimum employment opportunities, and I know as the applicant just mentioned, he has other sites within the district as well that may be able to accommodate these uses. We just thought that due to the mixed-use nature of the site and having the Red Hook Houses is also to the south and residential on the block, that we would provide a mixed-use zoning district that would provide flexibility in the types of uses, especially not just our site, but the other

sites within the rezoning area. Well, we're open to looking for light manufacturing uses as well. We're still looking at...

COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you.

I mean, I also wanted to respond to an earlier comment around the sidewalks. I mean, this street is very narrow in width. I'm not sure, and the Nelson Street itself is actually quite narrow for being an industrial block. Although as you pointed out, a significant portion of the block is in fact residential. Are you suggesting besides like better cement? What other treatment are you suggesting there? I just feel like you're very constrained with what you can do.

KEVIN WILLIAMS: We are constrained. Is that working? Yeah. It is constrained. So, it's basically state of good repair. So, the width is not going to change. Unfortunately, there's not really enough width for like rain gardens, but as you can see, it is heavily street tree lined, you know, so which is one thing is that there are currently catch basins, you know, there's currently that barrier, sort of visual barrier, between the street activity and the building. You know, but basically the

2 builder's pavement plan just requires you to improve
3 and maintain or to replace a disrupted sidewalk or,
4 you know, whenever you do a new building or a change
5 in use. And probably the narrowness of the roadway is
6 probably a blessing here given the transition to
7 residential. You know, wider streets, faster speeds,
8 you know, turning lanes that would accommodate larger
9 trucks and vehicles. So, you know, I think that
10 transition might be better because it keeps the speed
11 slower on the width, but it basically is a state of
12 good repair enhancement.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: No further
14 questions. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Council
16 Member.

17 Do any Members of the Committee have
18 questions?

19 Counsel, are there any members of the
20 public who wish to testify remotely or in person
21 regarding this proposal?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: No.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Oh, this panel is now
excused. Thank you for being here.

If there are any members of the public who wish to testify regarding this proposal remotely, please press the raise hand button now or, if you are in person, please identify yourself to one of the Sergeant-at-Arms. This is the last call.

Being there are no members of the public who wish to testify regarding LUs numbers 38, 39, and 40 relating to the 20 Berry Street (sic) industrial rezoning proposal, the public hearing is now closed and the items are laid over.

I now open the fourth public hearing on pre-considered LUs regarding the 9201 4th Avenue mixed use rezoning proposal in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, in Council Member Santosuosso's District. The proposal involves a zoning map and zoning text amendment. Applicant is seeking to build a mixed-use residential building with approximately 96 apartments. Mandatory Inclusionary Housing would be mapped as part of this application so approximately 24 of the apartments will be permanently affordable depending on the affordability option selected.

For anyone wishing to testify regarding this proposal remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the

Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with us in person, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms to submit a speaker card.

If you would prefer to submit written testimony, you can always do so by emailing it to landusetestimony@council.nyc.gov.

We have Council Member Santosuosso is with us online, and we will read her statement on her behalf.

Thank you, Chair, and good morning, everyone. I am Council Member Kayla Santosuosso, and I am here today to discuss the 9201 4th Avenue rezoning application. The proposed project would produce an 11-story mixed-use building providing 96 residential units, of which 24 would be provided at affordable rate through the Mandatory Inclusionary Housing program. This proposal can provide much needed housing to Bay Ridge including units at affordable rates while also providing public benefits such as commercial space replacing an empty blighted structure with life and activity. While I'm supportive of this proposal and bringing more housing to this part of Bay Ridge going forward, the area really needs a comprehensive community-led plan. By

stepping back and looking at the bigger picture, we can shape the future of this neighborhood intentionally and ensure that new development is paired with public investments rather than allowing individual applications to determine our future. I look forward to hearing more today from the applicants, my Colleagues, and my constituents as we advance the public process to ensure outcomes that meet the needs of my constituents. Thank you to all for being here today and participating in the public process.

I will now call the applicant panel for this proposal which consists of Amanda, George, and Kevin. I don't want to mess up anybody's last name.

Counsel, please administer the affirmation.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Could you please raise your right hand and state your name for the record, your full name?

AMANDA IANOTTI: Amanda Iannotti.

KEVIN WILLIAMS: Kevin Williams.

JORGE FONTAN: Jorge Fontan.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you. Do you swear to tell the truth and nothing but the truth

2 in your testimony this morning and in your response
3 to Council Member questions?

4 AMANDA IANOTTI: I do.

5 KEVIN WILLIAMS: I do.

6 JORGE FONTAN: I do.

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You may now begin your
9 testimony, which is limited to eight minutes.

10 I will ask that you please restate your
11 full name and organization for the record. You may
12 begin.

13 AMANDA IANOTTI: Amanda Iannotti on behalf
14 of Sheldon Lobel PC.

15 Good morning, Chair Louis, Members of the
16 Subcommittee. We're here today to present the 9201
17 4th Avenue rezoning application. Next slide please.

18 Here's the project summary. We propose
19 two actions. First, a zoning map amendment to rezone
20 Brooklyn block 6108 lot 22 from a C8/2 zoning
21 district to a C4/4D zoning district. The proposed
zoning map amendment will facilitate the construction
of a new 11-story plus cellar and subcellar mixed-use
commercial and residential building with a total
floor area of approximately 129,000 square feet,

that's a 7.2 FAR, and approximately 97 dwelling units. The second action we are seeking is a zoning text amendment to amend zoning resolution appendix F to designate a Mandatory Inclusionary Housing area coterminous with the project area with Options 1 and 2. The proposed zoning text amendment will facilitate the development of approximately 24 affordable housing units pursuant to MIH Option 1. Next slide please.

Here's a snapshot of the proposed building at 9201 4th Avenue. It's 11 stories plus cellar and subcellar mixed-use, a total floor area of approximately 129,222 square feet, 7.2 FAR. There's approximately 18,500 square feet of ground floor and mezzanine commercial use as well as approximately 110,000 square feet of residential use above. There's a base height of eight stories and 86 feet, multiple setbacks along all three street frontages, 10-foot setback at the 8th and 10th floors along 4th Avenue, 10-foot setback at the 6th, 7th, and 8th floors along 5th Avenue, and a 15-foot setback at the 8th floor along 92nd Street. The total height is 130 feet. We're proposing 52 parking spots in the cellar and subcellar. They are voluntary. The existing building

will be demolished, but the cellar and subcellar will be maintained, and parking will be in those levels. The total number of units is approximately 97 with generously sized family units, no studios, 19 one-bedrooms, 62 two-bedrooms, and 16 three-bedrooms. Approximately 24 affordable units pursuant to MIH Option 1. Next slide, please.

The zoning map shows the site within the existing C-8-2 zoning district which does not permit residential use and primarily caters to auto-related uses. It's also within the Special Bay Ridge zoning district. Next slide, please.

The tax map shows the project area and development site. It's an approximately 18,000 square foot trapezoidal lot bounded by 92nd Street to the north, a 60-foot narrow street, 5th Avenue to the east, a 75-foot wide street, and 4th Avenue to the west, a 100-foot wide street. Next slide, please.

The next slide is the land use map which really shows the rationale for the rezoning to the proposed C4/4D zoning district and the appropriateness of increased residential and commercial density here. The site has three street frontages as noted from the tax map, two of them wide

streets. It's an existing mixed-use community with commercial corridors on 4th and 5th Avenues and adjacent existing R7A, R6A, and R6B zoning districts. It's close to transit with the Bay Ridge 59th Street subway station located on the subject block and access to the R subway line which runs along 4th Avenue. Next slide, please.

The next couple slides show photos of the existing building. It's an existing seven-story building. Next slide.

It is a vacant and deteriorating building. The new mixed-use building with ground floor commercial use will help to activate the streetscape and reinforce the commercial character of 4th and 5th Avenues. Next slide, please. Next slide please.

Here we have the plans and I'll introduce project architect Jorge Fontan to go through the design.

JORGE FONTAN: Thank you. Jorge Fontan, Fontan Architecture.

We can just flip through the slides pretty quickly to the renderings. Amanda covered most of the details, but it's an 11-story building, 97

units with 24 affordable. You can keep going. There's a 3D rendering towards the end. On the ground floor we have a commercial with a mezzanine. We have a floor of amenity space and apartments. As Amanda said, 19 one-bedroom, 62 two-bedrooms, 16 three-bedrooms with 24 affordable units. Keep going and just flip through to the 3D renderings at the end. Keep going, and I just want to point out when we get to the... one more. There we go.

So, we added additional setbacks beyond what is required by zoning. So, the building is set in. The base height matches the height of the existing building so that the building is less intrusive on the site and it has three-side frontage on the street and two corners so the building doesn't have to be as massive as otherwise might have been necessary. So, the goal was to make a building that fit in with the community and the Community Board was very supportive of this project.

AMANDA IANOTTI: Yes. So, on January 20th, Brooklyn Community Board 10 voted to approve the application 24-2. On February 24th, the Brooklyn Borough President also issued a recommendation to approve the application. Most recently on April 1st,

the City Planning Commission also voted to approve the application.

In conclusion, this proposed rezoning would allow for additional residential development in close proximity to transit within an existing mixed-use community and will bring much-needed residential development including affordable housing to Brooklyn Community District 10, which has produced only eight affordable housing units and approximately 500 market rate units during 2014 to 2024.

That concludes our presentation. We're happy to answer any questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

I have a couple of questions about this proposal. Would the proposed zoning allow you to build a taller building than you are proposing and, if yes, can you describe why you selected this zoning district?

JORGE FONTAN: Yes. So, the building could be taller by one or two stories. We do not need to go taller because we have three frontages so we have plenty of walls for window to get light and air into the building. So, typically on a tall building, you get more windows by going up. Because we have two

2 corners, it's just not necessary architecturally and
3 going taller is actually much more expensive
4 construction.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

5 What types of commercial tenants are
6 envisioned for the proposed commercial space, and
7 have any discussions begun with prospective tenants?

8 AMANDA IANOTTI: So, the applicant is
9 looking into that currently. There's interest to have
10 a food store but there's no specific tenant in mind.
11 He's also open to if there's not a single tenant
12 identified, breaking it up into smaller retail if
13 possible, but the applicant is still exploring that.

12 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Perfect.

13 I have some questions by Council Member
14 Santosuosso. The first question, even though you are
15 not proposing building to the maximum height allowed
16 under a C4-4D zoning district, can you confirm that
17 the proposal maximizes the available FAR?

17 AMANDA IANOTTI: It does.

18 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay.

19 Can you commit today as well as provide
20 in writing to construct the building as proposed at
21 11 stories tall? And she's actually online. It's just

2 because we don't have quorum that you don't hear from
3 her. But can you commit today?

4 AMANDA IANOTTI: Yes. The applicant I
5 believe can commit to that. We will discuss with him
6 after this hearing and confirm in writing to the
7 Council Member.

8 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay.

9 Being this is a significant demolition,
10 what plans are in place and how can you ensure the
11 demolition will be safe and not destructive to her
12 neighbors?

13 JORGE FONTAN: So, it's not going to be a
14 full demolition. We're going to maintain the
15 foundation, which greatly decreases the amount of
16 shoring needed at the street. So, the structure above
17 the foundation that will be demolished will be taken
18 down methodically by hand. It will be like a slow
19 demolition process, but keeping the foundation makes
20 it a much safer demolition process.

21 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: All right.

As mentioned in my opening statement, I'm
interested in pursuing a broader planning study and
community-led vision for the surrounding C8 Triangle
area. As a local property owner and developer, would

2 you be interested in supporting and engaging in this
3 process if it moves forward?

4 AMANDA IANOTTI: We will confirm with the
5 applicant after this hearing and confirm back to the
6 Council Member. But he is a local developer. He lives
7 in the community and he, too, shares the same
8 visions.

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay.

10 Lastly, can you speak more about the unit
11 mix? She noticed a large number of twos and three
12 bedrooms. Can you talk more about the unit mix?

13 JORGE FONTAN: Yeah. The property owner
14 specifically said he wanted to focus on family-sized
15 units, that that was appropriate for this site so we
16 favored larger units. In fact, we have apartments up
17 to 1,200 square feet for the three bedrooms. And that
18 was just the direction provided by the developer for
19 the project.

20 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: And what's the square
21 feet for the three bedrooms?

JORGE FONTAN: The three bedrooms are
between 1,000 and 1,200. And then the two bedrooms
are...

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You said it's 1,200?

2 JORGE FONTAN: Yeah. They're not all the
3 same size. So, between 1,000 and 1,200 for the three
4 bedrooms.

5 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: And what about the one
6 bedrooms?

7 JORGE FONTAN: The one bedrooms are like
8 600 to 800 and the twos are 800 to 1,000.

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Got it.

10 I think that's all the questions for the
11 Council Member.

12 Do any of my Colleagues have questions
13 for this panel?

14 Seeing none, this panel is now excused.
15 Thank you for being here today.

16 Counsel, are there any members of the
17 public who wish to testify remotely or in person
18 regarding this proposal?

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Yes, Chair. So,
20 we have Council Member Santosuosso online. Council
21 Member, if you wish to make a statement, you can do
so now. And we also have one person signed up online.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Council Member, you
may begin.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Thank you,
3 Chair, and my apologies that I can't be there in
4 person today. I'm currently holding a two-week-old
5 newborn.

6 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Council Member, is
7 there any way you can increase your volume?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Yes. Can you
9 hear me now?

10 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Yes.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER SANTOSUOSSO: Okay. So,
12 thank you, Chair, and thank you for the
13 representatives of the project for appearing today.
14 My apologies that I can't be there in person. I'm
15 holding a two-week-old newborn, who you may hear from
16 in the background. But I just wanted to make sure I
17 was able to state that I'm grateful that the
18 developer has engaged my office in the process of
19 this proposal. This is, in fact, my old block that I
20 used to own a business on and that I used to live on,
21 and so I personally experienced kind of the blight of
the existing building post-COVID, which was an
entirely commercial building that no longer had a use
when things were shut down. And so I'm happy to see a
rejuvenated proposal that will bring more foot

1 traffic and much-needed affordable housing to our
2 District. And I'm particularly grateful that the
3 developer agrees that we need more two bedrooms and
4 family-sized units in Bay Ridge and we do not need
5 many more studios and one bedrooms. So, I look
6 forward to continuing to work with the developer. I
7 appreciate the time that they've given me thus far in
8 engaging.

9 And I just want to underscore what I
10 wrote in my written remarks, which is that we really
11 do need a larger community-driven plan for this area
12 to make sure that we're getting public investments
13 and that new development makes sense and gets us what
14 we need for people to enjoy the area as opposed to
15 just one-off projects kind of determining our future.
16 So, I look forward to pursuing that together in the
17 future.

18 Thank you again, Chair. Thank you to the
19 representatives of the project. I look forward to
20 engaging further.

21 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: We're now going to
turn to members of the public who wish to testify
remotely or in person regarding this proposal.

2 For members of the public who wish to
3 testify, please note that witnesses will generally be
4 called in panels of three.

5 If you are a member of the public signed
6 up to testify, please stand by when you hear your
7 name being called. Prepare to speak when I indicate
8 that you may begin.

9 Please also note that once all panelists
10 in your group have completed their testimony, if
11 remotely, you will be removed from the meeting as a
12 group, and the next group of speakers will be
13 introduced. Once removed, participants may continue
14 to view the live stream broadcast of this hearing on
15 the Council website.

16 Members of the public will be given two
17 minutes to speak. Please do not begin until the
18 Sergeant-at-Arms has started the clock.

19 The individuals who signed up to testify
20 should unmute. We're going to hear now from Charles
21 Weinstock.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

CHARLES WEINSTOCK: My name is Charles
Weinstock. I'm an attorney, and I represent a
community group...

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Charles.

3 CHARLES WEINSTOCK: Yes?

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Can you increase your
volume for us, please?

5 CHARLES WEINSTOCK: How's that?

6 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Perfect.

7 CHARLES WEINSTOCK: Okay. I'll start over
if I may. My name is Charles Weinstock. I'm an
8 attorney, and I represent a community group called
9 Voices of Bay Ridge. The group consists of residents
10 and business owners near the site, and I'm here to
11 state their strong opposition to one element of the
owner's plan.

12 I should start by saying what the group
13 doesn't oppose. It doesn't oppose the conversion of
14 the site from C8 to C4/4D, nor does it oppose
15 redrawing the MIH map. What it opposes is the owner's
16 apparent current plan to put a national grocery store
on the first floor of the building. The neighborhood
17 is littered now with grocery stores, six in the
18 immediate vicinity, and there are plans to bring on
19 two more and perhaps three. One is the proposed
Century Marketplace at 86th Street, also between 4th
20 and 5th. The other is the proposed Superfresh, again
21

between 4th and 5th at 87th Street. In addition, members of our group informed me that there may be plans to build yet another on the Staples site, which is only one block away from the site here. To my knowledge, there's been no market need analysis, nor a study of the cumulative impacts of adding three or four new supermarkets to the neighborhood. To separately consider these plans would be to miss the real threat to the community, to borrow a term from CEQR, it's segmentation. Such a concentration of large-scale grocery stores promises oversaturation, increased truck traffic, curbside loading, the frequent coming and going of customers, made worse by the reduced accessory parking of C4/4D. The plan would further apply pressure on existing small businesses, which contribute importantly to Bay Ridge's neighborhood character. And as Local 338's strong opposition makes clear, the plan threatens workers at existing markets.

The traffic issue is particularly significant because the site is on 92nd Street, a main access point to the Verrazano.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

2 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you so much,
3 Charles.

4 CHARLES WEINSTOCK: I haven't been able to
5 get to my actual proposal.

6 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You can always email
7 that at landnewstestimony@council.nyc.gov.

8 CHARLES WEINSTOCK: Okay.

9 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Charles.
10 Thank you.

11 If there are any members of the public
12 who wish to testify regarding this proposal remotely,
13 please press the raise hand button now, or, if you
14 are in person, please identify yourself to one of the
15 Sergeant-at-Arms, and we will wait 30 seconds.

16 Being there are no members of the public
17 who wish to testify regarding pre-considered LUs
18 relating to 9201 4th Avenue mixed-use rezoning
19 proposal, the public hearing is now closed and items
20 are now laid over.

21 I will now open the fifth public hearing
on Pre-Considered LUs regarding the St. Francis Prep
request for a commercial overlay. The school is
located in Fresh Meadows, Queens in Councilman Lee's
District. St. Francis Prep seeks to map a C1-2

commercial overlay to legalize an existing illuminated sign at the entrance of the school.

For anyone wishing to testify regarding this proposal remotely, if you have not already done so, you must register online by visiting the Council's website at council.nyc.gov/landuse. For anyone with us in person, please see one of the Sergeant-at-Arms to submit a speaker card. If you would prefer to submit written testimony, you can always do so by emailing it to landnewstestimony@council.nyc.gov.

Council Member Lee is not here, so we will move forward.

I will now call the applicant panel for this proposal, which consists of Lisa Schaefer (phonetic) and Sal Faschetti (phonetic).

LEA VALLONE: These are members of the applicant team that are providing testimony in support.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Oh, Lea Vallone?

LEA VALLONE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay, and Steven...

STEVEN SINACORI: Sinacori.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Got it.

2 Counsel, please administer the
3 affirmation.

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Good morning.
5 Can you please raise your right hand and state your
6 name for the record?

7 LEA VALLONE: Lea Vallone.

8 STEVEN SINACORI: Steven Sinacori.

9 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you.

10 Do you swear to tell the truth and
11 nothing but the truth in your testimony today and in
12 response to Council Member questions?

13 LEA VALLONE: Yes.

14 STEVEN SINACORI: Yes.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: You may now begin your
17 testimony, which is limited to eight minutes. I will
18 ask you just to please restate your full name and
19 your organization for the record. You may begin.

20 LEA VALLONE: Sure. Good morning, Chair
21 Louis and Members of the Subcommittee. I'm Lea
Vallone with Akerman on behalf of the applicant here,
St. Francis Preparatory, which I will refer to as SFP
throughout this, and I'm also joined by my colleague

Steven Sinacori. SFP is seeking a zoning map amendment. Next slide, please.

SFP is the largest private Catholic secondary school in the United States with approximately 2,500 students. The rest of the slide here lists its registrations and achievements. Next slide, please.

This is the aerial view of the site, which it shows located in Fresh Meadows, and the only thing nearby is Blue Bay Diner, which a lot of students use to eat, and please note that there's no residential housing near the school. Next slide, please.

The sign in question here is double-sided and non-flashing. Students walk past the sign to enter the school, and those who are dropped off are usually dropped off on this road depicted in the picture on the right. Next slide, please.

This is the zoning change map. It shows the zoning change to a C1-2 overlay added to the existing zoning district. These C1-2 overlays are overlays mapped in residential districts to serve local needs, and as stated before, the overlay would cover an area that's been occupied by non-residential

uses for over 60 years. This is a historically non-residential site. According to the Department of Building Records, the school building was constructed in the early 1960s, and the site has continuously housed Catholic high schools. Next slide, please.

We also want to emphasize that there is a C1-2 overlay that already exists on Francis Lewis Boulevard, immediately north to the project area, and the proposed development is that there is no construction of a building or other structure in proposed with this action. The proposed action will legalize an existing illuminated non-flashing double accessory sign, which is currently not allowed in R4 districts, and to be clear, accessory signs in R4 districts are allowed, but not for educational facilities. The existing signage is situated along Francis Lewis Boulevard within a corner lot portion of the rezoning area, and just to reiterate the point that there will be no construction of the building, this community facility building at four stories already has a maximum floor area ratio of about 2.0, which is what is permitted under the existing R4 zoning. Next slide, please.

This just shows the existing signage, which is located within the property line and on the corner. In C1-2 districts, they are permitted with certain regulations, so this just shows that the existing signage is within the current regulations that are allowed with the C1-2 overlay. Next slide, please.

And these are just some pictures of the illuminated sign, and the picture on the right is a real photo which shows what it currently looks like. Next slide, please.

So, Community Board 8 recommended approval on January 7th. Next slide, please.

And the Queens Borough Hearing President was on January 29th, and the approval recommendation was issued February 3rd. Next slide, please.

So just to recap, the sign is a necessary and modern tool that allows SFP to communicate information to the students, parents in the community. I'm actually an SFP alumni, and while I was a student previous to the sign installation, my brother Charles Vallone, who's a recent graduate and I believe testifying today, has informed me how useful and beneficial the sign is to the vast student

body. We've also heard from members of the surrounding community, and the only reason we're before you today is because SFP has received a Department of Buildings violation for the sign installation, where it became aware of this oversight by a hired architect. SFP is here trying to correct this so that they don't have to remove something that has become a pillar of the school and community. Thank you.

That concludes our presentation, and we're happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you.

I just have a couple of questions for you regarding this request. How long did you say the sign has been there for?

LEA VALLONE: So, it was installed in 2022. Shortly after, they received the DOB violation.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Okay. What prompted this application?

LEA VALLONE: The DOB violation, which informed the school that they were in non-compliance with the zoning.

CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Got it.

2 This panel is now excused. Thank you for
3 being here.

4 I now invite my Colleagues to ask
5 questions. Council Member Thomas-Henry?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER THOMAS-HENRY: No. I was
7 just going to give a comment. As a Queens girl, I
8 didn't go to Prep, but I went to Christ the King, and
9 I can attest that St. Francis Prep has been a staple
10 for education in the Queens community. Popular
11 school, Council Member. That was a popular school,
12 Christ the King.

13 Counsel, are there any members of the
14 public who wish to testify remotely or in person
15 regarding this proposal?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL VIDAL: Yes, Chair.
17 There is one member of the public who has signed up
18 online.

19 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: That's Charles
20 Vallone?

21 For members of the public here to
testify, please note that witnesses will generally be
called in panels of three.

If you are a member of the public signed
up to testify, please stand by when you hear your

2 name being called and prepare to speak when I
3 indicate that you may begin.

4 Please also note that once all panelists
5 in your group have completed their testimony, if
6 remotely, you will be removed from the meeting as a
7 group, and the next group of speakers will be
8 introduced. Once removed, participants may continue
9 to view the live stream broadcast of this hearing on
10 the Council website.

11 Members of the public will be given two
12 minutes to speak. Please do not begin until the
13 Sergeant-at-Arms has started the clock.

14 The following individuals who signed up
15 to testify should now come to the witness table. And
16 we now call on Charles Vallone, who is online.

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Starting time.

18 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Hey, Charles. you may
19 begin.

20 CHARLES VALLONE: Awesome. My name is
21 Charles Vallone. I'm a graduate of SFP of the class
of 2025, and I was sitting student body president
during my senior year. My most important title at the
moment, however, is Lea's younger brother. So, Lea,
you're doing great.

I personally have plenty experience with the sign outside of Prep. First off, it's an incredible way not only to inform the families of Prep of the daily events that they or their children can partake in, but also informs the community. The Prep has always done a great job of keeping the community involved in everything they do when it comes to holiday events, large sporting events, or even outreach programs to nearby businesses or schools. They never forget who surrounds them, truly. As a student, it reminds you of the time when you're running to school. You could be a little late, and it is incredibly important, let me tell you. Most importantly, I've been at the Prep after dark for soccer practice or one of my other duties or activities at school a countless number of times before the sign went up and after. The sign illuminates the bus stops and surrounding walkway, which makes them feel infinitely safer and secure. There is not much lighting in that specific area, or any for that matter, so this sign has completely changed the confidence of anyone, student or not, which may have been waiting for the bus stop or a parent to come pick them up. And safety is what it's

2 all about after all. So, thank you guys for your
3 time. Just wanted to add that.

4 CHAIRPERSON LOUIS: Thank you, Charles.

5 If there are any members of the public
6 who wish to testify regarding this proposal remotely,
7 please press the raise hand button now and, if you
8 are in person, please identify yourself to one of the
9 Sergeant-at-Arms. This is the last call.

10 Being there are no members of the public
11 who wish to testify regarding the Pre-Considered LU
12 relating to the St. Francis Prep commercial overlay
13 proposal, the public hearing is now closed and items
14 are now laid over.

15 That concludes today's business.

16 I would like to thank the members of the
17 public, my Colleagues, Subcommittee Counsel, Land Use
18 and Council Staff, and the Sergeant-at-Arms for
19 participating in today's meeting.

20 This meeting is hereby adjourned. [GAVEL]
21

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date August 14, 2026