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BROOKLYN BRIDGE PARK'S COMMITTEE ON
ALTERNATIVES TO HOUSING PUBLIC HEARING

March 31, 2011

6:00 p.m.

HELD AT ST. FRANCIS COLLEGE

80 Remsen Street

Brooklyn, New York

Founders Hall

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A P P E A R A N C E S:

PETER DAVIDSON, Member, Board of Directors

JOHN RASKIN, Member, Board of Directors

PATRICK O'SULLIVAN, for SETH PINSKY,
City Economic Development

ROBERT STEEL, Chairman

REGINA MYER, President,
Brooklyn Bridge Park

KEI HAYASHI, BAY AREA ECONOMICS

MATTHEW WAMBUA, HGT

PAUL NELSON, Brooklyn Bridge Park

DAVID LOWIN, Brooklyn Bridge Park

1 OPENING REMARKS

2 MR. STEEL: Good afternoon
3 everyone. If people could take their
4 seats, we will get started. As it
5 seems we are a couple of minutes past
6 6:00, which is our convening time.
7 And to be respectful to those that
8 are on time, we will begin in just a
9 minute or two. If people could find
10 their seat that would be terrific.

11 This is Brooklyn Bridge Park's
12 Committee on Alternatives to Housing
13 public housing hearing on the draft
14 for the funding of Brooklyn Bridge
15 Park's Operations. My name is
16 Bob Steel. I am the Deputy Mayor for
17 Economic Development for New York
18 City and Chair of the Brooklyn Bridge
19 Park Corporation Board of Directors.

20 I would like to invite now my
21 fellow colleagues on the dais, who
22 include a few members of the
23 committee on alternatives to housing
24 and of the full board to introduce
25 themselves that are here tonight,

1 OPENING REMARKS

2 starting at my right.

3 MR. DAVIDSON: Peter Davidson,
4 member of the Board of Directors.

5 MR. RASKIN: I am John Raskin;
6 I am State Senator Squadron's Chief
7 of Staff and a member of the board
8 and the committee on alternatives to
9 housing.

10 MR. O'SULLIVAN: I am
11 Patrick O'Sullivan with the New York
12 City Economic Development
13 Corporation.

14 MS. MYER: Regina Myer,
15 Brooklyn Bridge Park.

16 MR. WAMBUA: I am Matthew
17 Wambua, member of the board with HGT.

18 MR. NELSON: I am Paul Nelson,
19 Assemblywoman Joan Millman's Chief of
20 Staff and a member of the board.

21 MR. LOWIN: David Lowin, staff
22 of Brooklyn Bridge Park.

23 MS. HAYASHI: I am sorry. I am
24 Kei Hayashi, I am with the
25 consultant, Bay Area Economics.

1 OPENING REMARKS

2 hearings, BAE prepared a draft report
3 which was released on February 22nd
4 of this year. We're now currently in
5 a 60-day public comment period on the
6 report that was presented on the
7 22nd of February. And that period
8 ends on April 25th.

9 The Committee on Alternatives
10 to Housing will be meeting on Friday,
11 April 14, at 2:00 p.m., to discuss
12 the draft report.

13 Thirty days following the close
14 of the public comment period, BAE
15 will submit a final report to the
16 Committee on Alternatives to Housing.
17 The Committee on Alternatives to
18 Housing will then vote to either
19 accept or reject the report as
20 presented in its final form.

21 If it accepts the report this
22 constitutes a recommendation to the
23 full board to adopt the report. The
24 full board then can accept, partially
25 accept, or reject the recommendation.

1 OPENING REMARKS

2 Economics will be accepting written
3 testimony and perspective until
4 Monday, April 25th of this year.
5 Spoken and written statements are
6 weighed equally.

7 In closing, let me please
8 thank, on behalf of all of us,
9 St. Francis College for hosting our
10 proceedings this evening and for
11 their other hospitality in the past.
12 In particular, thanks to Robert Oliva
13 and his team.

14 Thank you so much for attending
15 tonight. We look forward to the
16 hearing and let me now turn it over
17 to Kei.

18 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you,
19 Chairman Steel. Good evening ladies
20 and gentlemen. My name is
21 Kei Hayashi. Can you all hear me? I
22 am the representative from Bay Area
23 Economics, or BAE. BAE was selected
24 by the Brooklyn Bridge Park Committee
25 on Alternatives to Housing to prepare

1 OPENING REMARKS

2 a study of alternatives to housing
3 for the funding of Brooklyn Bridge
4 Park Operation.

5 I have been asked by the
6 committee members to serve as the
7 independent hearing officer for
8 tonight's public hearing, which is
9 being held pursuant to the
10 March 8, 2010 Memorandum of
11 Understanding. Copies of the
12 memorandum are available outside on
13 the table.

14 The purpose of this hearing is
15 to allow the public input regarding
16 the draft report describing nine
17 potential alternative sources that
18 are projected to meet the established
19 evaluation parameters. This draft
20 report entitled Study of Alternatives
21 to Housing for the Funding for
22 Brooklyn Bridge Operations can be
23 found on the Brooklyn Bridge website.

24 My purpose is to run the
25 hearing in a fair and impartial

1 OPENING REMARKS

2 manner, and to try to make sure that
3 everyone who wishes to speak has that
4 opportunity. This is not a question
5 and answer session. It is, as I
6 said, an opportunity for you to
7 present your views so that BAE, and
8 the Committee on Alternatives to
9 Housing can consider them when
10 preparing its final report.

11 Written comments on the draft
12 report are requested and will
13 continue to be received and
14 considered by BAE and the CAH after
15 conclusion of tonight's hearing until
16 Monday, April 25. Please note that
17 written comments, if any, should be
18 sent by e-mail to
19 bayareaeconomics@bbttestimony@bael.
20 com. And there is a slip of paper
21 outside on the table with this
22 information on it.

23 We will take a break at
24 approximately 7:15 for about five
25 minutes and then immediately resume

1 OPENING REMARKS

2 the testimony. We will now begin the
3 public comment portion of this
4 hearing -- and let me go over the
5 procedures before we do that.

6 To testify at tonight's
7 hearing, individuals must first sign
8 up to speak at the table outside of
9 the auditorium. Second, as a
10 courtesy, public officials will be
11 allowed to speak as soon as possible
12 after their arrival. When a speaker
13 is called, I will also announce the
14 speaker after that speaker who should
15 take their place behind the announced
16 speaker; that's to sort of line
17 people up.

18 All speakers will be given a
19 maximum of three minutes to speak.
20 After two minutes, you will be given
21 a one minute warning to conclude your
22 remarks. And TJ to my left is the
23 timekeeper?

24 And the last thing is, please
25 keep in mind that either in addition

1 OPENING REMARKS

2 to or in lieu of an oral
3 presentation, you may submit written
4 testimony of any length at tonight's
5 hearing to the box outside on the
6 table or to the e-mail address
7 previously supplied.

8 In order to ensure an accurate
9 transcript and to be able -- to
10 enable all assembled to hear your
11 remarks, I ask that each speaker,
12 when called, come to the microphone
13 in front, state your name and
14 indicate if you are appearing as a
15 representative of an organization or
16 a governmental entity.

17 Finally, I want to remind you
18 that the purpose of this hearing is
19 to afford you an opportunity to make
20 comments on the draft report, the
21 Alternative Sources of Funding, in
22 regards to Pier 6 and the John Street
23 development sites.

24 So we will now begin the public
25 testimony portion of the evening.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LORI RAPHAEL

2 The first speaker is Lori Raphael and
3 after that Nancy Webster.

4 MS. RAPHAEL: Good evening.

5 Can you hear me? Good evening, my
6 name is Lori Raphael, and I am the
7 Director of Real Estate and
8 Development with the Brooklyn Chamber
9 of Commerce. President Hum was
10 unable to make it due to a prior
11 commitment. I'm here to address the
12 issues raised in the report on
13 alternatives to housing in Brooklyn
14 Bridge Park, which indicates that
15 there are a number of viable options
16 to supplement maintenance to the
17 park; none of which will support the
18 city's application for the park to be
19 entirely self sustaining.

20 The Brooklyn Chamber of
21 Commerce supports the current self
22 sustaining financing plan for
23 Brooklyn Bridge Park. And we urge
24 the committee on alternatives to
25 retain this plan as the only option

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LORI RAPHAEL
2 that will ensure the completion of
3 the park without significant delay.

4 The current financing plan
5 received sufficient public review and
6 study during the project's
7 environmental review stage, and is
8 encapsulated in the general project
9 plan.

10 Some of the alternative
11 financing plans require large amounts
12 of fundraising from corporate
13 sources, and have a greater
14 likelihood of commercializing the
15 park's use than housing built at its
16 current rate.

17 In fact, these commercial
18 sponsorships will add more private
19 residence to the park while producing
20 far less revenue, thereby increasing
21 pressure on the park's operator to
22 raise fees for public and
23 recreational use. The alternative,
24 with respect to the Watchtower
25 properties, generating revenue is

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LORI RAPHAEL
2 speculative and cannot be relied upon
3 to generate revenue in the near term.
4 Those properties are owned by a
5 private non-profit corporation that
6 has shown no sense of urgency to
7 sell. And the city has no standing
8 to incorporate tax revenues
9 associated with those sites into any
10 of its projections.

11 Housing and limited hotel use
12 -- is it complimentary to a public
13 park. The residents and visitors in
14 those buildings will enjoy the park
15 under the same terms as any other
16 users, and will ensure that it is
17 well traveled and well utilized.

18 We cannot afford to lose a
19 reliable and steady stream of income
20 to maintain the park and we should
21 not jeopardize the completion of this
22 important public access to waterfront
23 recreation for all of our citizens.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. HAYASHI: State Senator

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - SENATOR SQUADRON

2 Squadron is here, so he will be next
3 followed by Nancy Webster.

4 SENATOR SQUADRON: Thank you
5 very much and forgive me, Nancy, for
6 cutting in line. I wish I'd been
7 afforded that freedom when working on
8 the budget yesterday, and for
9 basically the last 25 hours.

10 Thank you all very much. Thank
11 you for being here. It's a great
12 turnout and not great weather. Thank
13 you very much Deputy Steel, all the
14 members of the CAH for coming out
15 tonight and spending what looks like
16 it might be quite a long evening
17 listening to public input, which is
18 incredibly important.

19 And as I said, thank you all
20 for coming. As I say at every one of
21 these meetings, this process is not
22 perfect by any means, they never are,
23 but it is one of the more open
24 processes we've seen. It has really
25 encouraged public input and

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - SENATOR SQUADRON

2 participation and your input and
3 participation really means a lot.

4 I would urge members of the CAH
5 to really listen with open ears today
6 both to those folks who you already
7 know and have seen before, and also
8 some of the folks who might be new
9 faces here. And we encourage
10 everyone speaking to, you know,
11 really acknowledge the fact that --
12 that these folks are spending a long
13 evening listening and if you have
14 strong disagreements, please be held
15 -- and they should all really be
16 dealt with in a respectful way.

17 In terms of my own testimony
18 and statement, BAE thanks you very
19 much for a report that really does
20 lay a lot of things out there. And I
21 think we could quibble on the
22 margins, on lots of them, but one of
23 the strengths of the report is there
24 are a lot of different pieces out
25 there that we can look at. I don't

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - SENATOR SQUADRON

2 think that it's clear, you know, I
3 don't think that any of us take
4 exactly chapter and verse, this is
5 the only way it could be done. I
6 think what we see is some ideas in
7 there; we see ranges of dollars;
8 that's useful.

9 I do -- I would like to see, I
10 think it's critical to see support at
11 the end of the report, what the
12 effect of the Watchtower properties
13 would be and what the financing is.
14 I think they meet the Federal
15 parameters and that this study hasn't
16 yet completed. The CAH has talked
17 about completing it. And so that is
18 an addition that I think is critical
19 before this process concludes to
20 really make this a complete process.

21 So it is -- I think you've been
22 very impressive if you look at where
23 we started a year ago, I think over
24 the next weeks and months we're going
25 to continue to work together to have

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY WEBSTER
2 a park that meets its potential. I
3 think it's a great park for this
4 community and for the City and for
5 the world. You know, this Brooklyn
6 Bridge Park is part of the greater
7 parks, the central part to the center
8 of the City, and without this part of
9 it our community is not reaching its
10 whole potential. And so with this
11 kind of community support I know we
12 will get there.

13 Thank you all very much and I
14 look forward to reading the testimony
15 I am not able to listen to tonight.
16 Thank you. Thank you.

17 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.
18 Nancy Webster and then Irene Janner.

19 MS. WEBSTER: Thank you. First
20 I'd like to thank the committee for
21 this opportunity to testify. I'm
22 Nancy Webster with the Brooklyn
23 Bridge Park Conservancy.

24 Since 2004, the Brooklyn Bridge
25 Park Conservancy has supported the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY WEBSTER
2 general project plan for Brooklyn
3 Bridge Park, which calls for a
4 limited amount of residential and
5 commercial development to fully
6 finance the maintenance and
7 operations of the self sustaining
8 Brooklyn Bridge Park.

9 While supporting the plan, we
10 have also consistently advocated for
11 the least amount of development
12 possible to adequately sustain the
13 park. And in that spirit we welcome
14 the work of this committee and its
15 most recent study on revenue
16 alternatives.

17 Of the alternative studies, the
18 conservancy believes that the careful
19 and judicious use of private events,
20 the exploration of sponsorship
21 opportunities, and private
22 philanthropy, and support of capital
23 projects, and the metering of street
24 level parking spaces holds the
25 potential as revenue sources.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY WEBSTER

2 But let's be clear, that these
3 and other revenue alternative
4 outlined in the report will not be
5 sufficient to replace the Pier 6 and
6 John Street residential sites, which
7 are expected to contribute
8 approximately eight and a quarter
9 million dollars in revenues per year
10 for the Pier 1 residents. However,
11 as we have advocated, these new funds
12 could help to reduce the scale of
13 residential development in the park.
14 And we hold the Brooklyn Bridge Park
15 Corporation to examine that potential
16 quickly and thoroughly.

17 Here's why this discussion is
18 so important tonight. Brooklyn
19 Bridge Park isn't fully funded yet.
20 The park still needs approximately
21 130 million dollars to complete its
22 construction. The City of New York
23 has said it will provide the capital
24 dollars to build the rest of Brooklyn
25 Bridge Park. But those dollars will

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY WEBSTER
2 flow only if the park has a viable
3 plan to fund its maintenance and
4 operations.

5 That means that 44 million
6 dollars in funds in the short term
7 along with an additional 85 million
8 that has been promised --

9 (One minute warning issued)
10 -- but not allocated is hanging in
11 the balance. We cannot afford to
12 walk away from that and loose the
13 promise of Brooklyn Bridge Park.

14 If we want the rest of this
15 park; Piers 2 & 3, the outer section
16 of Pier 6, the section at Dumbo,
17 Brooklyn Bridge Plaza to be built, we
18 need certainty about when we will
19 have the funding to maintain them and
20 where that funding will come from.
21 And we need that certainty now.

22 To that end, we call on the
23 Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, the
24 Mayor, and our local elected
25 officials to reach an agreement and

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE JANNER
2 move forward now with a revenue plan
3 that fully funds the beautiful, safe,
4 and vibrant Brooklyn Bridge Park and
5 to fully commit the remaining 130
6 million dollars in capital funds to
7 complete the world class waterfront
8 park this community has worked for
9 over the past 25 years. Thank you.

10 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Irene
11 Janner then Nancy Bowe.

12 MS. JANNER: Good evening,
13 thank you for this opportunity to
14 testify. I will be sending in
15 written material to expand on what I
16 have here.

17 Basically, I am speaking for
18 myself. My own opinions have been
19 informed by my activities as a
20 community member involved in the
21 planning of this park since 1986.
22 First with the Brooklyn Heights
23 Association that started the idea
24 when the piers were announced to be
25 disposable property. Later with the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE JANNER
2 Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition, which
3 has become the conservancy of which I
4 am still a board member. And as a
5 member of Community Board 2 since
6 1992, and I chaired the parks
7 committee there for seven years. So
8 with this background I am speaking
9 for myself.

10 Okay. The revenue alternatives
11 outlined in the report are not nearly
12 enough to replace the income that
13 would be lost if we give up on Pier 6
14 and John Street residential sites.

15 Some of the identified new
16 funds might not be considered as
17 helping to reduce the scale of the
18 proposed housing and that would be
19 good. I feel that the least amount
20 of building and development is a good
21 thing for a park but we must have
22 enough to report full maintenance
23 cost of this park.

24 The park is not fully funded
25 yet. After 25 years of effort that I

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE JANNER
2 have helped in for the whole 25
3 years, we now have the political will
4 by the City to actually complete the
5 construction of this park.

6 I thought my grandchildren
7 might play here, maybe my
8 great-grandchildren, but I am looking
9 forward to it. And I think if we do
10 any delays or look at alternatives
11 where we cannot count on the timing,
12 where we have no control of timing,
13 we risk perhaps languishing another
14 25 years at what point the piers
15 might fall down and we wouldn't have
16 anything to work with.

17 There has been concerns
18 expressed that --

19 (One minute warning issued)
20 -- that housing might privatize the
21 park, but what housing we have had
22 experience with, which is 1 Brooklyn
23 Bridge Park, has not seemed to
24 discourage people from 175 zip codes
25 and in the thousands coming to the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY BOWE

2 park, catching the ferry, playing in
3 the playgrounds, or doing what people
4 like to do in parks.

5 I speak to the limited
6 residential developments; it has less
7 of a privatization effect than some
8 of the proposals in the BAE report.
9 To me it is extremely repugnant and
10 offensive, the thought of charging
11 country club market rates to use
12 athletic fields and courts that are
13 being built with public funds and are
14 "public parks."

15 Housing, I find less
16 objectionable. The housing will take
17 much less acreage. We have with the
18 current plan that came through with
19 the GPC, we provide full sustaining
20 of the park with using only nine
21 percent of the area. Thank you.

22 MS. HAYASHI: Next we have
23 Nancy Bowe then Doug Biviano.

24 MS. BOWE: Hi, I'm Nancy Bowe
25 and I'm speaking on behalf of the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY BOWE

2 Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy.

3 I have lived in Willowtown and
4 over the past few years I've had the
5 great pleasure of a number of new
6 young families moving into Willowtown
7 because of Brooklyn Bridge Park. And
8 they always ask me one question, when
9 is it going to be done? And we need
10 to answer that question.

11 Now, we have a park plan that
12 has an acceptable revenue generating
13 plan with it using only nine percent
14 of the park's footprint. In
15 addition, some of the alternatives
16 that you all have uncovered are very
17 interesting and present room for
18 compromise on the amount of
19 development that would be needed.

20 Now, some have very
21 understandably raised concerns that
22 residential buildings adjacent to the
23 park could privatize the park. And
24 as Irene mentioned, we now have real
25 data. 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park has

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY BOWE
2 been open longer than Pier 6 has and
3 has no indication whatsoever that
4 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park, the building,
5 is interfering with the children at
6 Pier 6 playground or the many bikers,
7 joggers, and walkers like me on the
8 pathway. So we're fairly confident
9 that that should give people comfort.

10 In addition, the building is
11 not deterring visitors. Surveys
12 we've taken in conjunction with the
13 park have indicated, as Irene
14 mentioned, people have come from over
15 175 zip codes all across the City,
16 the country, and the world.

17 Now, we do believe that some of
18 the revenue generating ideas, as has
19 been mentioned by others, would
20 actually privatize the park more than
21 housing at its perimeter. By
22 building retail stores or parking
23 garages on what otherwise would be
24 open space or as I re-mention
25 charging fees for basketball courts

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY BOWE

2 that are free at every other City
3 park.

4 (One minute warning issued)

5 We also believe that the designers
6 were right. With the parks staggered
7 from the neighborhood I find the park
8 will be a big benefit keeping this
9 site vibrant and lively 24 hours a
10 day.

11 Now, as mentioned we still
12 don't have all the money to complete
13 the park. We want to make sure --
14 the conservancy wants a fully built
15 park. We want it as quickly as
16 possible with no delays and no more
17 uncertainty. So we call on the City,
18 and our local elected officials, and
19 you all on the board and in the park,
20 to agree on the revenue plan and
21 commit the remaining 130 million
22 dollars of construction funds. Let's
23 give my neighbors an answer.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Doug

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DOUG BIVIANO
2 Biviano and then Irene Van Slyke.

3 MR. BIVIANO: Hi, I'm Doug
4 Biviano. I'm a resident and a PSE
5 parent. I was a practicing and
6 licensed professional engineer so I'm
7 familiar with cost estimating and
8 capital reserve studies.

9 As the consultant's report
10 clearly shows there are many ways to
11 pay for the Brooklyn Bridge Park
12 without more housing and without
13 charging fees to use sports courts,
14 like basketball courts. So that's
15 not the bulk of the money identified
16 in the report.

17 From dollars in here -- one,
18 from dollars the Committee on
19 Alternative to Housing has already
20 identified in their report; from
21 dollars from the over three million
22 square feet of Jehovah's Witness
23 buildings adjacent to the park that
24 were unexplored in this report and
25 voted on in December to be

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DOUG BIVIANO

2 investigated.

3 Three, from dollars undervalued
4 in event and concessions rentals, the
5 1120 parking spaces that are in the
6 general project plan and new issues
7 that must be at market rates.

8 Four, from design changes that
9 will increase park utility and create
10 jobs as recommended in the
11 community's Pier 6 planning sessions
12 and the Atlantic -- concepts that
13 brings lots of people to the park
14 making it a destination, making it
15 safe and helping to build business
16 along the commercial corridors that
17 terminate the park and their
18 sales tax.

19 For design changes I would also
20 emphasize more modest designs. For
21 example, a pedestrian bridge from
22 Squibb Park to Pier 1 seems
23 unnecessary and would further blow
24 the capital reserve requirements for
25 its maintenance and would waste over

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DOUG BIVIANO
2 four million in capital that would be
3 used to complete the parks sooner
4 than later. In lieu of the bridge
5 you need a gradient plank ramp from
6 the southwest -- southeast corner of
7 Squibb, at the lowest elevation of
8 this retaining -- of the stone
9 retaining wall that is approximately
10 15 feet to the open space along the
11 -- The ramp can then be gradient to
12 the slope and switched back to the
13 existing gate.

14 By carefully marking,
15 crosswalks can be then placed.

16 (One minute warning issued)
17 The gate has lots of visual clearance
18 from the retaining wall on the blind
19 point where it starts curving. This
20 is an example of a more moderate
21 design for the park that should be
22 considered to save both capital
23 revenue and expenditures. Another
24 example would be minimizing the earth
25 work and fill -- expensive earth work

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE VAN SLYKE

2 and fill I should say, massive berms
3 along Furman -- that create pads of
4 space instead of active use to draw
5 more people.

6 Number five, by reduction in
7 the inflated operations and
8 maintenance budget itself. Bring it
9 down to other park roles, including
10 the elimination of the --
11 bureaucracies of the entity and
12 conservancy. We urge the BEP board
13 to adopt their report's measures and
14 market this to the numbers, and
15 Jehovah's Witness buildings, and to
16 several other community ideas and
17 recommendations that would employ
18 including the real estate transaction
19 fee -- so that we can finally and
20 completely eliminate any future
21 housing inside this park.

22 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Irene
23 Van Slyke and then T.K. Small.

24 MS. VAN SLYKE: Hi, I'm Irene
25 Van Slyke. I'm a member of the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE VAN SLYKE
2 Sierra Club. For the record both the
3 New York City and New York State
4 Sierra Club Chapters have long
5 standing retributions opposing any
6 plans for a future Brooklyn Bridge
7 Park that incorporates residential
8 buildings because it's incompatible
9 with a public park.

10 The Sierra Club is a member of
11 the ten group coalition opposing
12 residential development. The Sierra
13 Club believes that a real public park
14 has dedicated park land and is
15 managed by the City or state
16 department of parks.

17 A public park is a park in the
18 democratic tradition of inviting and
19 serving all peoples of the rainbow,
20 from young to old, rich and poor,
21 able bodied or challenged. And as
22 for accountability, a public park you
23 can complain to the parks department
24 or elected officials. Not so for
25 this park. It's not really a park

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE VAN SLYKE
2 even though everyone continues to
3 call it that. In the future we see a
4 lack of accountability because of the
5 corporate structure rather than the
6 public one.

7 Having said that, we commend
8 our elected officials for forcing the
9 Brooklyn Bridge Corporation to at
10 least go through an exercise to
11 justify why building residential and
12 commercial real estate are the only
13 way to finance the park.

14 The Committee for Alternative
15 Housing was hampered by many caveats.
16 It could not consider any funds from
17 City buses, no tax increment
18 financing or any other scheme that
19 would reduce revenue to the City
20 coffers.

21 They could not even consider
22 PILOTS or payment in lieu of taxes as
23 tax revenue as tax exempt once
24 Federal properties are sold to new
25 tax payers only. The CAH looked at

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE VAN SLYKE

2 it then decided that PILOT's would
3 displace income the City was entitled
4 to so they abandoned that
5 possibility.

6 The result was that it could
7 not come up with enough monies to --

8 (One minute warning issued)
9 -- satisfy the sustainability
10 requirement even though it calls for
11 four million dollars in extra taxes
12 from people who live in proximity of
13 the park.

14 And it calls for more parking
15 to raise income, higher fees for
16 recreational facilities and
17 concessions, and additional income
18 from commercial real estate.

19 Unexplored were the
20 possibilities of repurposing of the
21 360 Berman Building to increase revue
22 of this commercial entity. By the
23 way, the apartments remain empty even
24 though there's daily extensive
25 marketing for people to buy those

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - T. K. SMALL
2 apartments. There's mention of a
3 community plan for Pier 6 that would
4 create a destination for visitors and
5 community alike.

6 Connecting cultural and
7 recreational activities with
8 businesses in their retail corridor
9 of Atlantic Avenue. It's a plan that
10 would add jobs and income that would
11 be welcome to during the present
12 economic downturn.

13 MS. HAYASHI: I thank you very
14 much. T.K. Small and then
15 John Watts.

16 MR. SMALL: My name is T.K.
17 Small. I'm a lifelong resident of
18 Brooklyn Heights. I live on
19 Pierrepont Street. I'm also an
20 attorney. I'm a member of the
21 community board too.

22 I don't really believe some the
23 language in the draft report so far.
24 The idea not including a bigger park
25 improvement district I think is

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - T. K. SMALL
2 something serious. I think that
3 there's something that needs to be
4 explored further. Basic numbers are
5 wrong.

6 How much money should be
7 captured from parking also looks kind
8 of questionable. I think parking for
9 market rate people is a little bit
10 more valuable than the plan suggests.
11 And I also quite concerned that the
12 idea of the Watchtower properties
13 were completely written off.

14 Which I think that's maybe
15 something -- the Watchtower
16 properties are a uniquely -- it's a
17 unique opportunity. I'm not saying I
18 know what exactly could happen with
19 that but it leads me to mind of
20 bigger points above the process of
21 how this plan is being put together.

22 I think that we have all find
23 ourselves -- into sort of a mandatory
24 make a decision now, you know, the
25 sky is falling, you know. We've

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - T. K. SMALL
2 created this sense of urgency that I
3 really feel is dividing the
4 community. You know, you are either
5 pro or con, yes or no.

6 And I think that it's serving
7 to divide neighbors from one another
8 and I think that's a bad thing for
9 the community. As my niece grows up,
10 she's three years old now, and I take
11 her down to the park and so forth.
12 I'd hope -- always remembered the
13 borderline hostility and skepticism
14 that people deal each other with as
15 they go forward with this.

16 (One minute warning issued)

17 I urge the politicians to
18 really review their memorandum of
19 understanding. I think they -- you
20 know, we set this thing up where we
21 have to solve this thing now. We
22 should take the time to do it right.
23 Thank you.

24 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. John
25 Watts and then Meredith Leslie.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOHN WATTS

2 MR. WATTS: I'm John Watts.

3 I've been I've been interested in
4 this park for a long time. I live on
5 Pierrepont Place. I just want to
6 make a strong plea for action but
7 beforehand I would like to just
8 remember about four milestones that
9 have come through since I got
10 involved in '85, I think.

11 The first one was the
12 Port Authority's idea of auctioning
13 off up into Pier 4. I went with a
14 cashier's check to buy it and there
15 was nothing. And he had an agreement
16 and a plan to -- an agreement with
17 the Port Authorities to build a
18 marina there. Well, they didn't hold
19 the auction, they called it off and
20 then that turned into a long bunch of
21 talk.

22 Well, we finally ended up with
23 the Port Authority Plan, which if any
24 of you remember it was just looked
25 like somebody planted towers out

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOHN WATTS
2 there. It was about ten percent
3 grass and the rest of it was housing.
4 And we went to a meeting where we had
5 to choose between those different
6 plans, and one or the other long
7 timers stood up and said, hey, let's
8 have another plan. That's how that
9 thing ended. And maybe we should do
10 something else with it. And so that
11 led to more talk.

12 Then there was the conservancy
13 and I'd like to mention the first
14 financial plan, which I believe was
15 the one that Bob Reuben who was very
16 prominent real estate oriented
17 investment banker and I put together
18 in my office.

19 Bob knew all of it by heart.
20 All the first square foot rents from
21 the house for concessions, housing
22 and various things. It was quite
23 clear that we had to have
24 multi-storied buildings and the ones
25 that are all ready in the park, as it

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOHN WATTS
2 turned out over time it's also quite
3 clear we need multi-story buildings.
4 But I'd like to emphasis is the
5 ones that we are talking about
6 tonight are less than one percent --
7 (One minute warning issued)
8 -- of the land area of the park. And
9 we had accepted all along that we had
10 to have some commercial operations
11 because the park had to carry itself.
12 So I urge everyone not to run the
13 risk of losing the third of the park
14 that's not even promised, or the even
15 greater portion that's not yet
16 allocated.
17 And let's get this very fine
18 plan which came in over the last five
19 years we've worked by probably the
20 best landscape and park planning
21 architect in the country and get that
22 going. Because I don't think any
23 of -- I don't think any of the things
24 that have been proposed has great big
25 chunks could solve the problem.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - MEREDITH LESLIE

2 They're going to solve it but we
3 could talk ourselves out of a big
4 part of the park. Thank you.

5 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

6 Meredith Leslie and Neely Cather.

7 MS. LESLIE: Good evening. My
8 name is Meredith Leslie. I'm the
9 outreach coordinator for New Yorkers
10 for Park. New Yorkers for Park is
11 City independent organization
12 dedicated to ensuring that all
13 New Yorkers enjoy world class parks
14 system.

15 We fulfill our mission through
16 integrated framework of advocacy
17 research and a coalition of park,
18 recreation, and civic organization.

19 We would like to thank the
20 Brooklyn Bridge Park Committee on
21 Alternatives to Housing for their
22 effort to solicit public input and
23 applaud the BAE for its thoughtful
24 and thorough report. BAE's
25 examination of potential alternatives

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - MEREDITH LESLIE
2 to housing in the park provides a
3 number of options that could divert
4 funding sources.

5 Thanks to the study we have a
6 much clearer understanding of the
7 limited options for funding this
8 park. The 2002 MOU between the City
9 and state of New York requires
10 Brooklyn Bridge Park to be a self
11 sustaining park. It is now the task
12 of the park's governing body to
13 develop a strategy that will provide
14 adequate long term funding that will
15 address the rising cost of
16 maintenance and operations facing
17 today's parks.

18 In April 2010, New Yorkers for
19 Park published Supporting Our Parks:
20 A Guide to Alternative Revenue
21 Strategies. This report examines
22 almost 30 strategies that have been
23 used for generate revenue for City,
24 state, and Federal parks across the
25 country. The different models employ

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - MEREDITH LESLIE
2 a mix of commercial, residential, and
3 cultural revenue programs as well as
4 a varied tax structure that generates
5 funding for parks.

6 Unfortunately there is no
7 silver bullet solution. In most
8 cases the financing programs were a
9 product of community negotiations and
10 compromises. And The final revenue
11 generating model was a unique balance
12 that met the needs of the park, the
13 community, and the marketplace.

14 BAE's comprehensive report
15 provides us with a number of
16 mechanisms that will help to better
17 define park funding. Of the nine
18 alternatives examined in the report
19 New Yorkers for Park encourages the
20 committee to consider the park
21 improvement district and a limited --
22 limitation of parking, concession and
23 event models.

24 A park improvement district
25 could provide a reliable steady

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - MEREDITH LESLIE
2 stream of revenue to the park and
3 while having no negative impact on
4 the physical park experience. The
5 creation of metered parking along --
6 (One minute warning issued)
7 -- street is a low cost alternative
8 that could be implemented quickly and
9 have little impact on the park
10 experience as well.

11 Increasing concessions and
12 expanding event programing in the
13 park are viable options for same
14 reason. While we would caution the
15 park from relying too heavily on
16 these options as they could create an
17 overly commercialized environment if
18 they expended to their fullest
19 potential.

20 The fee based recreation option
21 concerns us as the central mission to
22 ensure equitable services across the
23 City. The pay to play model prices
24 out the city's most vulnerable
25 population and raises troubling

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NEELY CATHER
2 issues of privatization in public
3 parks. We urge the committee to
4 avoid this alternative.

5 The commercial real estate
6 sponsorship, fund raising and
7 Watchtower alternatives do not appear
8 to be viable options within the
9 stated time and risk constraint. So
10 we will not address these
11 alternatives tonight.

12 The conclusion of this report
13 seems to be that there a limited
14 mechanisms for creating the funds
15 that this park needs to operate. New
16 Yorkers for Parks looks forward to
17 engaging the City in a dialog to
18 discuss the alternatives as well as
19 the program outlined in the original
20 plan. Thank you.

21 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Neely
22 Cather and then Jim Lima.

23 MS. CATHER: I'm Neely and
24 actually I signed up accidentally.

25 MS. HAYASHI: Would you like to

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JIM LIMA

2 make a comment?

3 MS. CATHER: I live at
4 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park. I could just
5 speak loudly. I live Brooklyn Bridge
6 Park and this is my first hearing.
7 I've lived in the neighborhood for 11
8 years and was just waiting for this
9 park to come. I think that you're
10 doing amazing things and we would
11 like to see less housing as well.

12 But it is because -- the
13 blueprint shows that we, like Nancy
14 was saying, we need a current plan to
15 work in sustaining, so that the park
16 can actually function.

17 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Jim
18 Lima and then William Russell.

19 MR. LIMA: Good evening. My
20 name is James Lima; I'm a partner
21 with HRNA advisors for real estate
22 and we came out as advisors. The
23 firm has been very involved in
24 working through planning and
25 implementation conditions for the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JIM LIMA

2 park for more than a decade.

3 And I am speaking on behalf the
4 firm first to commend the BAE for
5 creative, thoughtful, and innovative
6 ideas to supplement long term
7 operating revenues for the park. But
8 to caution that, history shows that
9 in America many of the parks that
10 working on in an advisory role we are
11 pretty good at coming up with the
12 capital first costs of the park and
13 are almost always delinquent in
14 planning for the future
15 sustainability of the operations and
16 maintenance to ensure the quality and
17 the character of those parks are
18 preserved.

19 So, I think while there are a
20 number of interesting options to
21 supplement I can also speak from my
22 experience as the founding presidents
23 of companies I own, preservation and
24 education corporations with very
25 similar mandates -- that's closer to

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JIM LIMA

2 many of you.

3 These park operating budgets
4 are always threadbare and there's no
5 reason to believe that that will not
6 be true going forward. To the extent
7 that you rely on special events and
8 other activities in the park its an
9 enormous call on staff resources for
10 a relatively small payback from those
11 revenue incomes. And so we would
12 like to think that the limited staff
13 that the corporation will tend to
14 have will focus on the core mission
15 of the park as a public place and
16 will not need to rely on significant
17 special event revenues.

18 I'd like to make a point that
19 we believe that housing is, again to
20 echo the remarks previously, that
21 housing is not a viable -- with
22 public park but is in fact is both
23 the feet on the street and the eyes
24 on the street that will make it --

25 (One minute warning issued)

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JIM LIMA
2 -- a vibrant and safer park. And I
3 think its important to note also that
4 the corporation will control these
5 sites long term.

6 There's tremendous value in
7 having single ownership of this.
8 These are very valuable sites from a
9 real estate point of view and so
10 there will be the ability to overlay
11 premium design quality considerations
12 to make it the best possible
13 component it can be within the larger
14 park.

15 And that is not something that
16 you can always say is true but here
17 we know that you can leverage that
18 land value to both create a great
19 source of sustained revenue but also
20 to create something that will not in
21 any way conflict with but will in
22 fact will compliment and enhance the
23 park. Thank you very much.

24 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.
25 William Russell then Kate Collignon.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - WILLIAM RUSSELL

2 MR. RUSSELL: Hi, my name is
3 Bill Russell. I'm speaking as a
4 resident of 1 Main Street in --
5 Brooklyn. First let me say that I
6 think the park is great. I very much
7 support the idea of the park. I
8 think that if it does get created it
9 will be a beautiful thing.

10 Its not shocking that the park
11 got started based on funding that
12 maybe was a bit short sighted. Low
13 and behold it seems that we've run
14 out of money to finish the park.

15 It is also not shocking that
16 what seems to be occurring, although
17 I have to confess there are not
18 copies of the MOU up there, I haven't
19 had a chance to study it and I don't
20 have full details of what the park
21 improvement district is but, it seems
22 to me that what is occurring is we're
23 now out of money. How do we find the
24 money? And so what seems to be one
25 of the ideas is to charge more taxes

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - WILLIAM RUSSELL

2 on the folks -- the residents that
3 live nearby the park.

4 To me that seems to be a bit of
5 an incongruent approach where we want
6 treat the park as a public park. A
7 democratic park where everybody is
8 enjoying, including folks from all
9 around the world, folks from all
10 across the City. I think that's a
11 great thing but to run out money and
12 to say in order to support that
13 public openness we're going charge
14 just a few residents who happen to
15 live by the park; many of whom,
16 including myself, moved near the park
17 before the park got started or
18 approved and these funding shortfalls
19 had occurred, just seems to me to be
20 frankly unfair.

21 I haven't checked but I don't
22 think that the residents along
23 5th Avenue who live in very nice
24 areas that freely enjoy the benefits
25 of Central Park haven't been paying a

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - WILLIAM RUSSELL
2 special assessment because they
3 happen to live next to Central park.
4 If I'm wrong about that please let me
5 know. But I do believe the
6 department should be funded by the
7 public at large if the public at
8 large wants to enjoy it.

9 If that's not the case then
10 through user fees or some other fair
11 allocation to cover the cost of the
12 park. Then, and I know this is going
13 to be unpopular, put a gate around
14 it. If you want to treat it as a
15 private park --

16 (One minute warning issued)
17 -- and fund it as a private park then
18 let's give us all keys for the folks
19 who are paying for it.

20 Otherwise, if you want the
21 public to enjoy it, and tourist and
22 other folks, then increase the value
23 of the park to the City, then let's
24 publically fund it. Thank you so
25 much.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

2 MS. HAYASHI: Kate Collignon
3 and then Matt Hopkins.

4 MS. COLLIGNON: I don't think
5 this mic is on.

6 MS. HAYASHI: Speak loudly,
7 it's not.

8 MALE SPEAKER: Mike's not
9 arrived.

10 MS. HAYASHI: Okay.

11 MS. COLLIGNON: My name is Kate
12 Collignon.

13 MALE SPEAKER: You must be very
14 close.

15 FEMALE SPEAKER: Is that
16 better?

17 2ND FEMALE SPEAKER: No.

18 MS. COLLIGNON: My name is Kate
19 Collignon. I'm a member of the
20 Brooklyn Bridge Park Community
21 Advisory Council. I'm also a --
22 Park resident. And I am a former
23 employee of the New York City
24 Development Corporation and was --
25 involved in the negotiating agreement

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON
2 that allowed 360 Park Berman to
3 become part of park boundary and
4 contribute revenue towards park
5 operations.

6 I have reviewed the report from
7 BAE. I'm on the record already as
8 not sharing several of the concerns
9 that have been raised about housing
10 and principles in the park's
11 boundaries. And in fact I think that
12 residential development there can be
13 a great asset to the park in terms
14 eyes on the park.

15 That said, there are ways to
16 address the concerns that have been
17 raised by the community, by other
18 community members about the
19 residential and still find a way to
20 support park operations at the level
21 we all want. Moving forward we
22 should fully explore those and I
23 applaud the Committee on Alternative
24 to Housing and their consultant for
25 doing so.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

2 However, having reviewed the
3 report, I don't see significant
4 opportunity for offsetting the
5 operating costs -- for residential
6 development. Certainly there are
7 minor opportunities in connection
8 with things like new concessions as
9 well as other needs of the people
10 like private events or teenage
11 recreation that run the risk of
12 privatizing the park.

13 Other opportunities like
14 revenue potential associated with
15 reconfiguration of developments on
16 Pier 1 are promising. But their only
17 one time wins and they're subject to
18 negotiation with private property
19 owners outside the park's boundaries
20 and with no specific time line
21 associated.

22 As I mentioned I remain
23 supportive of exploring every
24 alternative and I know one that has
25 been generated outside the report is

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

2 whether PILOT's from the Watchtower
3 properties could generate additional
4 revenue.

5 Putting aside the larger
6 question about whether or not to rely
7 on general funds as a replacement for
8 the residential that is currently
9 conceived, if the scope is expanded
10 to review that please be sure that
11 included in that scope is looking at
12 the mechanism by which --

13 (One minute warning issued.
14 -- those funds could be made
15 available. I don't think it's a
16 straight forward process. Title
17 attainments generally prove the City
18 has a ground lease, but a developer
19 can't legally do the project. Just
20 likely the highest best use, if
21 Watchtower is converted.

22 On the ground lease, they're
23 permitted in Brooklyn Bridge Park
24 thanks to special state legislation
25 but I'm not familiar with examples.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

2 Perhaps its done outside of large
3 scale plan. And so it would require
4 participation and agreement of the
5 private developers to become part of
6 the general project plan. Don't know
7 if anybody has talked to
8 Robert Levine who developed
9 360 Berman but I don't know if he
10 would decide to go that route again
11 if he had the opportunity in the
12 future.

13 As has been mentioned already
14 the Watchtower buildings are also
15 privately owned. There's no explicit
16 timeline associated with converting
17 those to housing. This doesn't look
18 like a revenue source that is going
19 to be a reliable alternative to the
20 housing that's currently proposed.

21 In sum -- the approach is
22 certainly to explore every
23 opportunity but it's also important
24 that we resolve this process and not
25 get caught up in too many political

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATT HOPKINS

2 debates. Thank you.

3 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Matt
4 Hopkins and then Chris Tepper.

5 MR. HOPKINS: Sorry. My name
6 is Matt Hopkins. I spoke on this
7 before so this is not going to be all
8 that dissimilar to my last comments
9 but I'm here to speak in support of
10 the current financing plan for
11 Brooklyn Bridge Park or the existing
12 financing plan and to urge the
13 committee to move forward to ensure
14 the park is completed without delay.

15 I'm a lifelong Brooklynite,
16 born and raised in Park Slope and I
17 went to school two blocks away from
18 here at St. Anne's. So I spent a
19 good portion of my life enjoy both
20 Prospect Park and Kent and Plaza Park
21 one of which I think pales in
22 comparison, obviously to Brooklyn
23 Bridge Park. Because of this I'm
24 acutely aware of the great need for
25 public spaces like Brooklyn Bridge

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATT HOPKINS

2 Park because I think they enhance a
3 lot of residence and provided
4 opportunities for outdoor recreation,
5 exercise, and relaxation.

6 In terms of the financing plan
7 which is the issue of the evening, as
8 an economic development professional
9 I am well aware that the plan is
10 undergoing intense scrutiny in the
11 course of the project's environmental
12 review phase and creation of the
13 park master plan. And I have
14 also reviewed the current
15 alternatives proposal.

16 The -- plan is aimed at
17 minimizing the development footprint
18 within the park while simultaneously
19 recognizing that waterfront parks are
20 expensive to maintain and cannot be
21 operated without some alternative
22 source of capital. The proposed
23 housing and limited hotel uses on
24 site are compatible with the park and
25 would provide ancillary spaces like

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATT HOPKINS
2 restrooms and restaurants for park
3 users. Furthermore, while others
4 will argue the plan is a push to
5 privatize the park it really has no
6 basis in this example based on the
7 minimal size of the development
8 footprint as well as the fact that
9 the plan is already, in some respect,
10 in action with maintenance and upkeep
11 funds that are contributed from
12 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park without a
13 conflict.

14 My final point is simply that
15 the current financial plan is not
16 subject to unforeseen government
17 budget cycles and ensures the park
18 will be adequately maintained and
19 continue to offer the fantastic
20 amenities that make it a real --

21 (One minute warning issued)
22 -- gem on the Brooklyn Waterfront.

23 The last thing that I just
24 wanted to say which is off from my
25 written statements, is that in the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRISTOPHER TEPPER

2 past I have heard people propose as
3 far as the landscaping options
4 scaling that down. And I think one
5 of the many assets of the park in
6 particular is its amazing landscape
7 architecture and design.

8 Its not only a recreational and
9 exercise place its also a beautiful
10 location that has really been
11 artfully crafted as something that
12 both visually stimulating. So I
13 think to not put in the needed
14 financing to maintain and continue to
15 enhance those type of upgrades in the
16 park would certainly be a disservice
17 to the users of the park. Thank you.

18 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Chris
19 Tepper and then Ben Bankson.

20 MR. TEPPER: My name is
21 Christopher Tepper. I live in
22 Brooklyn and I work in Brooklyn in
23 real estate, industrial real estate
24 development.

25 I'm already on the record as

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRISTOPHER TEPPER

2 well here as being a supporter of the
3 current financing plan. If anything,
4 I think that the report which is very
5 well done shows pretty definitively
6 that are alternatives to the current
7 plan that provide stable revenues
8 source that could be -- that could
9 replace the residential development
10 proposed in the current plan.

11 I think that we should be
12 thinking about these alternatives as
13 supplements, sorry that compliments
14 the current financing plan, not
15 supplement. I actually have then a
16 couple technical questions I'd like
17 to address about the draft report
18 that I think hopefully will be
19 corrected for the final version.

20 One of them was already brought
21 up by the speaker who spoke two
22 people before me, Kate Collignon. I
23 think that alternative that we --
24 that's been asked -- is the most
25 about the Watchtower property is a

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRISTOPHER TEPPER

2 real one.

3 I don't thing that there's an
4 actual mechanism. TIFF zones are no
5 allowed in the state of New York to
6 actually capture the real estate
7 taxes that would be produced by the
8 Watchtower property.

9 Several of my other critiques
10 are -- I don't think that the Park
11 Improvement District that's proposed
12 actually meets the spirit of the
13 first threshold requirement. Biz --
14 being as there's no such thing as a
15 pre-assessment and increasing
16 assessments on the people who live in
17 the -- what would be the proposed
18 Park Improvement District is just --
19 it's additional taxes on those
20 people.

21 Its been projected that that
22 would be between 111 and
23 approximately 450 dollars per person
24 per year. That is four more meals
25 that they're not eating out in the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRISTOPHER TEPPER
2 City of New York creating sales tax,
3 generating other jobs and economic
4 activity in the City. So, I don't
5 think that that actually meets the
6 spirit of the fact that you're not
7 taking away revenue that would have
8 already been generated for the
9 general fund.

10 One other technical point is
11 that there's, I think two unfair
12 criticisms of the current financing
13 plan in the section. One is on the
14 potential risk that PILOT proceeds
15 would be foreclosed on.

16 I don't -- I have not seen the
17 current lease of -- for 1 Brooklyn
18 Bridge Park, but in my experience
19 working on City projects and working
20 on PILOT agreements I don't think
21 that PILOT is generally senior to any
22 financing and I don't think there's
23 any reason that it would be any
24 different here.

25 So I don't think that's

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

2 actually a risk that PILOT could not
3 be -- continue to be collected by the
4 development should there be a
5 foreclosure on the property by a
6 senior lender.

7 The second point is that the
8 financing risk, the business
9 development risk that is highlighted
10 about the current financing plan, I
11 think that's real but I think its
12 also not highlighted. The business
13 risk in finance and risk of the fee
14 based and concession options are not
15 highlighted. Thank you.

16 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. We
17 have council member Steven Levin with
18 us. If he could speak and then we
19 will have Ben Bankson.

20 COUNCILMAN LEVIN: Thank you
21 very much. I'll try to keep my
22 remarks rather brief but first I
23 would like to thank the members of
24 the Committee on Alternatives to
25 Housing for taking their role in this

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

2 endeavor very seriously and for going
3 the extra mile by serving on this
4 committee and on the full board.

5 I would like to also to thank
6 the Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation,
7 Regina, Ellen, David, Bay Area
8 Economics, for their work taking a
9 serious look at the issue and
10 producing this report.

11 In comments this evening I'll
12 be addressing some of the ideas that
13 this study and report took up as well
14 as some that it has not taken up.
15 First I would like to say that I
16 continue to be opposed any housing in
17 the park other than what is already
18 within the park at 1 Brooklyn Bridge
19 Park. And that includes Piers 1 and
20 6 as well as John Street.

21 I continue to believe that we
22 can develop an operating budget
23 strategy that would create the
24 revenue needed to match the cost of
25 upkeep and maintenance for the entire

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

2 park. In short, Brooklyn Bridge Park
3 ought to look and feel like a park
4 and not a development.

5 FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN LEVIN: I believe
7 that the CAH and the board as a whole
8 should look at and be open to all
9 options that this report lays out and
10 addresses and I believe that nothing
11 that is -- that is bought up at this
12 point should be ruled out.

13 Some brief details on specific
14 proposals. With regard to event
15 space, I believe that Brooklyn Bridge
16 Park should be able to the continue
17 to charge more than the city's \$300
18 film permit fee. The fact of the
19 matter is that this site is unique in
20 all of New York City as to filming
21 location and cannot be easily
22 re-created, even from someplace
23 nearby.

24 Therefore, I believe that this
25 fee can be substantially raised. And

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

2 by that same logic I believe that we
3 could increase the revenue generated
4 by event fees. In 2010 the park
5 raised 145,000 dollars in events.
6 That income at an average per event
7 would be 2,500 dollars. I believe
8 that Brooklyn Bridge Park is a
9 special enough backdrop that event
10 organizers would be willing to pay a
11 premium for an event there. And with
12 substantially more space available
13 for events once the park is built
14 out, the estimate of 288,000 dollars
15 per year I believe is too
16 conservative and ought to be looked
17 at again.

18 With regard to parking, to me
19 the estimate of 438,000 dollars per
20 year seems that what could actually
21 be achieved. One needs to look at
22 Manhattan where below 96th street
23 many meters are currently charging
24 3 dollars per hour for on street
25 parking.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

2 The study uses an hourly rate
3 of 2 dollars and 50 cents for the
4 extra 80 spaces at Berman Street and
5 Pier 6. As anyone can tell you,
6 parking in the area is difficult to
7 find. I believe that visitors would
8 be willing to pay a premium to be
9 able to park in prime parking spaces.

10 And then I -- we should look at
11 additional revenue to be generated
12 from the 1103 parking spaces
13 currently in the park.

14 With regard to the PID idea,
15 the Park Improvement District, I
16 think that this idea ought to be
17 explored further. Personally, would
18 I have a problem paying an increased
19 assessment for Brooklyn Bridge Park
20 if I owned a home in the catchment
21 area where I saw an increase in my
22 assessed value due to the park being
23 there? No, personally I would not.

24 Obviously -- or -- I don't --
25 I'm not a home owner in that area.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

2 So, I don't want to the speak for
3 everyone that is, but this is
4 something that is ultimately up to
5 the property owners in the catchment
6 area, but I don't think that it
7 should be dismissed at this point.

8 And then to me the elephant in
9 the room and this I think ought to be
10 something that we really take a
11 serious look at is how to involve the
12 Watchtower properties as part of a
13 revenue stream for the funding of
14 this park. I believe that there a
15 numerous options that -- that we have
16 as a City and that the -- that we
17 should be looking at as a way to --
18 to -- to meet our obligations of
19 creating a self sustaining park.

20 This is a -- it's an amazingly
21 propitious opportunity in terms of
22 what -- what can be raised upon the
23 sale of those properties as part of
24 a -- the taxes that could result of
25 it. We're looking at 26 properties

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN
2 that Watchtower owns, none of which
3 are paying taxes to the City coffers.
4 And with that type of opportunity the
5 9 million dollars that you need to
6 raise to bridge the gap in terms of
7 our operating budget and maintenance
8 budget per year is a drop in that
9 bucket. And I think that, again, its
10 a tremendous opportunity. I think we
11 really should be -- ought to be
12 really looking at it seriously and
13 from a broader City perspective
14 because this again is -- is, you
15 know if you look at the just the
16 opportunity of space in downtown
17 Brooklyn and if -- if in fact,
18 what -- what we're hearing is true
19 that the Jehovah's Witnesses are
20 planning on moving out of Brooklyn,
21 again its something that could be
22 incorporated and fill a whole lot of
23 needs beyond just the park here.
24 But -- but it could certainly address
25 the situation. So, with that I think

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN BANKSON
2 thank you very much and have a great
3 night. Thanks.

4 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you very
5 much. Next we have speaker
6 Ben Bankson and then we are going to
7 take a five minute break.

8 MR. BANKSON: My name is Ben
9 Bankson. I'm the president of the
10 Willowtown Association. Willowtown
11 is in the southwest corner of
12 Brooklyn Heights and borders Piers 5
13 & 6 in Brooklyn Bridge Park.

14 Pier 6, one of the two gateways
15 into the park contains two of the
16 park's designated development
17 parcels. Even though now fenced in
18 these parcels are never less open.
19 The 58 year old Willowtown
20 Association very much wants these
21 parcels to remain this way.

22 We suggest that they be
23 redesigned as intricate parts of the
24 park. They provide good
25 possibilities for a far more

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN BANKSON
2 appropriate and inviting gateway then
3 two bulky condo towers that many
4 people do not seem to realize are a
5 real possibility.

6 The Willowtown Association is
7 strongly opposed to construction of
8 residential buildings on these sites
9 and elsewhere in the park. Ever
10 sense new housing units were put
11 forward as the means to raise the
12 money to maintain the park. To take
13 our precious waterfront park land for
14 buildings to make the park self
15 supporting as required, seems
16 downright wrong.

17 This beautifies too to the also
18 now clear and open site designated
19 for the hotel. Thankfully the push
20 to consider alternative means of
21 support has prevailed. Now we have
22 before us for comment nine such ways
23 analyzed by BAE.

24 In our view, the draft report
25 in and of itself underscores the real

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN BANKSON

2 possibility that the maintenance cost
3 can be met without more housing in
4 the park. We do reject one funding
5 alternative outright, commercial real
6 estate development. This too calls
7 for buildings on the development
8 sites to be used for offices instead
9 of housing. As already stated, we
10 want these sites to become more park
11 land.

12 The eight other alternatives
13 each has merit, we believe, however,
14 the potential income seems
15 undervalued especially when you think
16 of the high degree of excitement
17 already generated by the two piers
18 opened last year.

19 (One minute warning issued)

20 Certainly this excitement in turn can
21 be tapped to bring a lot more money
22 through the given alternatives.

23 We urge that the report go
24 forward to the park's board for
25 adoption and implementation. Some

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN BANKSON
2 say that the first alternative, a
3 park improvement district, is dead on
4 arrival. We disagree. Nearly all of
5 Willoughton is within the boundaries
6 of the conceptual PID. Our
7 residents, we are confident, would
8 fully support it and gladly pay the
9 new tax of assessments of a little
10 more than one dollar a day.

11 Such an assessment is simply a
12 fair exchange for the value of the
13 park adds to our neighborhood and to
14 our houses. Let's be democratic and
15 put the matter up for a vote.
16 Furthermore the PID boundaries of
17 delineage -- they have expanded to
18 include all of Brooklyn Heights and
19 Vinegar Hill as well as go into
20 Cobble Hill.

21 We see a great and timely
22 opportunity in the expected
23 disposition of the Watchtower
24 properties and call on the political
25 will to cull the necessary strengths

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN BANKSON
2 to make this happen. Here again, we
3 have buildings as the source of
4 needed funding. But these buildings
5 front --

6 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

7 MR. BANKSON: -- and are not in
8 the park just as grand buildings line
9 all sides of Central Park and are
10 prime pieces of Manhattan real
11 estate. Thank you.

12 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Okay.
13 We're going to break for five minutes
14 and then we will start with Ian Riley
15 as the first speaker and Norman Cox
16 as the second speaker.

17 (Recess.)

18 MS. HAYASHI: Ian Riley is now
19 at the microphone so if we can go
20 ahead and get started. And this is
21 just to be mindful of everyone's time
22 and to give everyone an opportunity
23 to speak. So thank you Ian, if you
24 can state your affiliation and then
25 we can get started.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IAN RILEY

2 MR. RILEY: My name is Ian
3 Riley --

4 MALE SPEAKER: Use the
5 microphone.

6 MR. RILEY: My name's Ian Rile
7 I'm representing the New York
8 Building Congress and I'll be reading
9 the testimony of Richard T. Anderson,
10 the president of the New York
11 Building Congress.

12 The Building Congress is
13 committed to specific leadership
14 organization promoting smart
15 development that encourages economic
16 growth and strength through our City.
17 We have long applauded the City and
18 state for committing hundreds of
19 millions of dollars and 85 highly
20 valuable acres to create a new public
21 amenity out of underutilized
22 industrial space that once severed
23 Brooklyn from its waterfront.

24 Having built this park it is
25 now our duty as its stewards to

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - IAN RILEY
2 ensure that it remains a first class
3 attraction to millions of visitors to
4 the City and beyond. Brooklyn Bridge
5 Park in close partnership with the
6 City and state has completed another
7 study scrutinizing revenue generating
8 options necessary to maintain the
9 park and the underwater
10 infrastructure that supports this.

11 We believe the residential
12 development model to be the most
13 sensible solution as to how to
14 adequately and reliably fund the
15 upkeep of the park. Considerable
16 discussion has been given over to
17 other funding alternatives, however,
18 the Building Congress believes the
19 current proposal is the best for two
20 reasons.

21 Number one, residential
22 structures adjacent to the park will
23 create a critical mass, that will
24 assure a safe environment within the
25 park district and create important

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NORMAN COX
2 24/7 use to anchor the western edge
3 of Brooklyn Heights.

4 Number two, the proposal also
5 maximizes opportunities for sensible
6 economic development and growth. The
7 current plan will generate the most
8 construction and post construction
9 jobs and the most return to the City
10 by the way of new future taxes and
11 other spin off revenues.

12 For these reasons it is
13 critical that Brooklyn Bridge Park
14 continue to operate under the
15 existing plan. We must not
16 jeopardize the future of this great
17 park or of our City that stands to
18 benefit so greatly from it.

19 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.
20 Norman Cox is next and then Ken Baer.

21 MR. COX: Hello. My name is
22 Norman Cox. I'm representing the
23 Columbia Waterfront Neighborhood
24 Association. A few comments on the
25 BAE report, the last section in one

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NORMAN COX
2 of the appendixes is recorded a
3 comparison of eight other parks
4 around the country and the world.

5 And this is a really very
6 interesting portion of the report.
7 It has one serious flaw in my opinion
8 which is that three of the parks --
9 in three of the parks there isn't
10 really very much useful data out
11 there, operating expenses and where
12 that money comes from.

13 Then if you look at the data as
14 a whole something very interesting is
15 revealed. Which is that the money
16 that is -- that these parks use to
17 operate comes from a wide variety of
18 sources. In stark contrast to the
19 proposal for Brooklyn Bridge Park in
20 which 96 percent of the proposed
21 revenue comes from residential
22 development.

23 I think this is quite an
24 extraordinary plan. We have what is
25 proposed to be a great public amenity

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - NORMAN COX
2 yet it is proposed to fund it almost
3 entirely from fairly risky private
4 sources. It seems to me that if is
5 --

6 MS. HAYASHI: I apologize.
7 Maybe you should turn that mic off.
8 Sorry about that.

9 MR. COX: It seems to me that
10 if this is to be a truly public
11 amenity that the public has an
12 obligation to support it. And if the
13 public really wants this I'm sure
14 that means can be found.

15 To my mind the PID is one of
16 the more interesting opportunities.
17 I feel that the boundaries of the PID
18 or someone arbitrary. I think it
19 could be expanded considerably with
20 some logic. Also I think that the
21 opportunities presented by the
22 Watchtower properties are very -- are
23 very important and they should be
24 looked at carefully and more --

25 (One minute warning issued.)

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - KEN BAER

2 -- effort taken to do a financial
3 analysis on those. Thank you.

4 MS. HAYASHI: Ken Baer and then
5 David Kramer.

6 Excuse me, could you wait just
7 one second.

8 MR. BAER: My name is Ken Baer.
9 I serve as chair of the New York City
10 Group Sierra Club. The Sierra Club
11 believes public parks are dedicated
12 park land which should be supported
13 from general tax revenue. Public
14 parks are for everyone to enjoy and
15 to provide opportunities for passive
16 and active recreation for people of
17 all abilities.

18 A park is not a place to
19 reside. The worst thing that could
20 happen to the Brooklyn Bridge Park
21 would be construction of additional
22 residential buildings. Public access
23 to the park is of paramount
24 importance and more high rises would
25 serve as an unwelcoming obstacle to

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - KEN BAER

2 enjoying this public amenity.

3 The Sierra Group feels that
4 high rise residential buildings that
5 have been considered for the south
6 and north sides of the park would
7 certainly discourage residents from
8 using the park. We're of the opinion
9 that large out of scale buildings
10 would especially have this effect
11 on people from lower income
12 neighborhoods.

13 In the richest City of the
14 U.S., in the richest country in the
15 world we should be able to afford a
16 publicly funded park. The Sierra
17 Club recognizes the principles under
18 which the park was conceived and that
19 funds to maintain the park need to be
20 generated. We hope the concept such
21 as Senator Daniel Squadron's perk
22 plan will be given serious
23 consideration as revenue generators.

24 Under no circumstances should
25 the operating budget be loaded with

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAVID KRAMER
2 expenditures related capital
3 facilities. And maintenance budget
4 must be brought done to the level of
5 other parks.

6 By virtue of its location the
7 Brooklyn Bridge Park is world class.
8 But that is no excuse for making
9 it an extravagant, loaded, and
10 exclusive destination.

11 (One minute warning issued.)
12 As with everything Brooklyn this park
13 must pass the simplest reality check;
14 is this a people's park?
15 Thank you.

16 MS. HAYASHI: David Kramer and
17 then Fred Kent.

18 MR. KRAMER: Good evening. My
19 name is David Kramer and to the
20 members of the CAH I say you guys
21 seriously need a new acronym.

22 I have no pride of authorship
23 in the original DIS having had
24 nothing to do with the financial
25 analysis of the park plan. But as I

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAVID KRAMER

2 read BAE full report, not just the
3 executive summary, my first reaction
4 was boy; they really had it right the
5 first time.

6 Because as you look through the
7 BAE report and really crunch the
8 numbers you'll realize there's really
9 no there. Half of the alternatives
10 conclude with the line, that such and
11 such after further review is not
12 financially feasible.

13 And when you look at the
14 details of the revenue, for example
15 let's say planned recreational uses,
16 BAE is assuming that each outdoor
17 basketball court will rent for
18 \$25 an hour for 30 hours a week for
19 all 52 weeks of the year. That's in
20 the numbers that are in the report.

21 That's right in the middle of
22 February there's going to be a cash
23 spewing basketball playing profit
24 center day after day. And if you
25 think about it and compare to other

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAVID KRAMER
2 basketball courts in the City or
3 around the world, you know. Visitors
4 are going to come to our park in ten
5 years and they're never going
6 notice the 15 story building hugging
7 Berman Street and paying for the park
8 but they will say can you believe
9 they're charging \$25 for a
10 basketball court?

11 And I say this not because it's
12 a crazy idea to charge for
13 recreational facilities but I think
14 if anything BAE probably rounded up,
15 way up.

16 Some of the idea is that they
17 could come up with something,
18 anything with six digits to come up
19 with an alternative to housing. And
20 if it has any certain, it's a heavy
21 lift to considers raising one million
22 dollars for maintenance and
23 operations of the park.

24 We at the conservancy -- I'm
25 on the board -- have been in the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAVID KRAMER
2 fundraising business for a while and
3 people want contribute to programs,
4 to -- to program associates not to
5 fund people picking up trash and
6 mowing the lawn. It's just not --

7 (One minute warning issued.)
8 -- a particularly compelling ask to
9 say to a donor well yeah, we had a
10 way to pay for the park but we'd
11 rather you write the check.

12 So, I do not make constructive
13 suggestions to consider and if I am
14 to examine the alternatives, but as
15 the City has changed the rules for
16 421A taxes and the general exclusion
17 area it's worth analyzing how
18 environmental upfront -- taxes could
19 lessen the financial burdens of the
20 park in the first ten years given the
21 original assumption that there be a
22 10 - 15 year abatement of taxes.

23 I think that would some updated
24 tax projections along with a few of
25 the BAE ideas such as parking

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - FRED KENT

2 revenues and concessions we will be
3 in the position to build smaller
4 buildings on Pier 6. Something
5 everyone you can agree is a
6 worthwhile and realistic goal. And
7 speaking for the conservancy, it's
8 always been our hope that some of the
9 revenue stream from the event
10 facilities and special events that
11 are included in this report would be
12 used not for operations but to help
13 fund free programming in the park for
14 all income brackets. Thank you.

15 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Fred
16 Kent and then Sandy Balboza.

17 MR. KENT: My name is Fred
18 Kent. I am president of Projects for
19 Public Spaces. We work all over the
20 world in public spaces, 41 countries,
21 50 states. All the Canadian
22 providence's except for the Yukon.
23 Canadian -- Australian states, so we
24 get around working in public spaces.

25 I have now the pleasure of, I

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - FRED KENT
2 love working on waterfronts. We are
3 now working on Abu Dhabi on the
4 biggest know project in the world and
5 Perth Australian, I'll be working
6 there in May. Annapolis, Nassau in
7 the Bahamas not Nassau right around
8 here and Buffalo.

9 Buffalo, I was there yesterday
10 and the day before and there's a
11 little story which is so relevant to
12 this that I'll spend a minute on it.

13 In November, 600 people came to
14 a meeting. The Erie Canal
15 Development Corporation which is a
16 subsidiary of the Empire State
17 Corporation, there was major coup.
18 These 600 people spoke out against
19 the top down plan with a big
20 development that the Erie Canal
21 Corporation had put forward.

22 And what happened is it was
23 totally turned upside down. And
24 yesterday and the day before 350
25 people came talking about

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - FRED KENT
2 collaboration between the community
3 and the creative people in the
4 community and the Erie Canal
5 Development Corporation to work
6 together to create a destination on
7 their waterfront.

8 There are three committees and
9 instead of the top down committee
10 heads of one person -- seven people
11 deciding the outcomes there are now
12 120 people that are working together
13 to create a great destination.
14 There's a 125 million dollars in the
15 Empire State Development Corporation.
16 They -- the community thinks they can
17 match that. Both in labor and
18 financing to help bring that
19 waterfront back to what it was in
20 the 1850's.

21 So my recommendation for how to
22 take this -- and the big words in
23 Buffalo are lighter, quicker,
24 cheaper. How can we do a whole bunch
25 of short term high energy type of

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - FRED KENT
2 activities that can be brought onto
3 the waterfront and experiment --
4 we'll have 300 jobs in Buffalo this
5 summer. There are no jobs in this
6 plan in the future. There are no --
7 like a market. If you put a
8 market -- Island has a market.
9 There's a 125 dollars a square foot
10 that is -- the leases that the
11 vendors pay in that market.

12 The revenue from that would be
13 great. You could put that in a
14 temporary basis on those housing
15 sights to see how those work. You
16 could take out the mounds. No one's
17 really going to use those mounds, put
18 buildings, low buildings, green roofs
19 so people up in Brooklyn Heights can
20 have their magnificent green in front
21 of them which is fine.

22 And then take Pier 6, where if
23 you've ever heard of a stupider idea
24 than a perched wetland I would like
25 to know what that is. Remember a

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - SANDY BALBOZA
2 perched wetland is something that is
3 above the water and cost an enormous
4 amount of money. Put the community
5 plan that they did on that Pier and
6 you will get the kind of revenue and
7 support from the community that you
8 don't have now.

9 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Sandy
10 Balboza and then Roy Sloane.

11 MS. BALBOZA: I am going to
12 need this lowered.

13 MALE VOICE: It will have to
14 fall to go lower.

15 2ND MALE VOICE: Pick it up.
16 Take it out of the -- can you take it
17 out?

18 MS. BALBOZA: Can you hear me?

19 MALE VOICE: Yeah.

20 MS. BALBOZA: Okay. I'm Sandy
21 Balboza, president of the Atlantic
22 Avenue Betterment Association, AABA.
23 It is unfortunate that the
24 consultants BAE did not meet with
25 community members before the draft

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - SANDY BALBOZA
2 study was completed. That dialog
3 would have been formed this better
4 results. It is the community which
5 will make the park a destination and
6 a success, not high rises, roads, and
7 nonfunctional landscaping.

8 The draft study shows that
9 there are viable funding alternatives
10 to building housing inside the park.
11 However, this study is inadequate.
12 Several important alternative funding
13 models were not fully explored.
14 Concessions and events, a park
15 improvement district, PID, and the
16 Jehovah's Witness properties. The
17 real estate transfer tax was not
18 mentioned and -- and operating budget
19 reduction were eliminated from the
20 scope of the study by the CAH.

21 Skipping that.

22 We can build a less expensive
23 park by eliminating costly park
24 features which are expensive to
25 build, operate, and maintain. For

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - SANDY BALBOZA
2 example the perched wetlands which
3 Fred just mentioned, planed for Pier
4 6 are expensive to build and
5 maintain; not useable, not revenue
6 producing. A simple open space
7 would allow for revenue producing
8 events, pop-ups, concessions, and
9 seasonal markets.

10 If operating expenses can --
11 operating and maintenance costs can
12 be reduced it changes everything.
13 Elimination -- it eliminates the need
14 to construct housing in Brooklyn
15 Bridge Park. The PID, a Park
16 Improvement District, as a funding
17 model for Brooklyn Bridge Park should
18 not be dismissed. A PID is an
19 assessment on properties benefitting
20 economically from their proximity to
21 a park and is one of the most
22 equitable ways to help finance
23 Brooklyn Bridge Park.

24 A well designed, well --
25 (One minute warning issued.)

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - SANDY BALBOZA
2 -- maintained park is a great
3 amenity. Property owners will
4 realize measurable gains in higher
5 rental rates, tenant retention, and
6 increased property values. A PID
7 must be approved by simple majority
8 of property owners within a fixed
9 unit of geographic boundary.

10 The boundaries in the draft
11 study should be expanded. That would
12 increase properties near several
13 community parks. Those parks should
14 also be included in the PID and they
15 would benefit by having some share of
16 the funding. Okay. Okay.

17 The 2008 community plan for
18 Pier 6 which was submitted to BEA --
19 BAE, sorry guys, generates revenue
20 for the park, creates jobs, and
21 provides a variety of opportunities
22 for all ages and abilities. I have
23 another minute?

24 MS. HAYASHI: That was it.

25 That was all.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROY SLOANE

2 MS. BALBOZA: That was it.

3 MS. HAYASHI: Yes.

4 MS. BALBOZA: Oh, oh.

5 MS. HAYASHI: Would you please
6 submit your written testimony?

7 MS. BALBOZA: All right, I did.
8 But I just want to the say just one
9 thing. The Jehovah's Witness plan
10 AABA supports the Manheim proposal
11 and recommends that it be included in
12 the study.

13 MS. HAYASHI: Okay, thank you.
14 We have now Roy Sloan and Ethan Kent.

15 MR. SLOANE: Hi there. My name
16 is Roy Sloane and I'm the president
17 of the Cobble Hill Association.
18 We've been on record as opposed to
19 housing from the very beginning. I
20 want to say that all those who feel
21 that somehow housing does not
22 privatize this site would certainly
23 feel so if it were in front of their
24 community and would not accept it.
25 There's no question in my mind that

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROY SLOANE
2 that would be opposed. So it's
3 really disingenuous and self serving
4 to say that it is not privatized.

5 And what we mean by privatized
6 is that there will be housing there.
7 It will not be a park. It will be
8 taken away from public use forever.
9 And the roads which are supposed to
10 protect us from privatizing are the
11 exact example of what we mean by
12 privatized. We have -- my guess is
13 the road is six or seven acres.

14 It's an immense set of roads.
15 I mean they are lost. Kids are not
16 going to play on them, there will be
17 no ball games there, you will not
18 hear music there, it really deprives
19 us of the value of the park.

20 The BAE report conclusively
21 demonstrates that there are
22 significant untapped funding sources
23 but in my opinion in virtually every
24 case important revenue sources were
25 not investigated or were minimized.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROY SLOANE

2 I am concerned that the -- the report
3 is designed to prove that housing is
4 the only alternative and I'm not
5 happy about that.

6 The Jehovah's Witness property
7 was not looked at by the consultants.
8 They had no meeting with the
9 Jehovah's Witnesses. They had no
10 meeting with Tony Manheim to
11 investigate the most likely solution
12 to this problem which I think -- I
13 guarantee you John -- could make the
14 deal with the port -- with the
15 Jehovah's Witnesses with two hours in
16 a room. So I find it disingenuous
17 for them to make no comments now and
18 then we should note that at least
19 five representatives from HRNA have
20 spoken at the CAH hearings over the
21 time.

22 They do not recommend
23 monetizing any of the --

24 (One minute warning issued.)

25 -- over 1000 spots that are in the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROY SLOANE

2 park and did not even look at the
3 empty police garage with 400 spots
4 and did not include that in -- by
5 their own formula would have
6 generated two million dollars.

7 Now, let me just say I have a
8 few rules of my own. I will never
9 approve a park until it actually
10 serves the children, the young
11 adults, and all the people of
12 Cobble Road. I will never approve of
13 a plan until it activates
14 economically Atlantic Avenue and
15 Columbia Street. And I am happy to
16 support a PID on the day that every
17 single -- that PID includes every
18 single person in New York and I will
19 never support housing until there is
20 a high rise in Prospect Park, Central
21 Park, also in front of Commissioner
22 Benepe's house, and commercial
23 revenue generating source in every
24 single in New York state. Thank you
25 very much.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ETHAN KENT

2 MS. HAYASHI: Ethan Kent and
3 then Ben Crane.

4 MR. KENT: All right, thanks.
5 I'm Ethan Kent. I'm the
6 vice-president of Projects for Public
7 Spaces. We're a not-for-profit
8 planning for -- advocates --
9 non-profit educational advocacy and
10 technical assistance -- I've been
11 lucky enough to work around the world
12 on several waterfronts and have to
13 tell you that almost all waterfront
14 processes have a lot of contention in
15 them.

16 There's a lot of debate, it's
17 always about switching from one
18 single use to another. I could also
19 tell you that the best waterfronts
20 around the world are the waterfront
21 planning processes that have become
22 the most creative.

23 I've actually become creative
24 because of looking at these types of
25 issues. In looking how do we more

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ETHAN KENT
2 creatively fund and create
3 destinations that drive economic
4 activity, create cultural amenities,
5 become the faces of our boroughs.

6 Now, this may sound a little
7 controversial but parks with them are
8 not great water parks. People --
9 when you ask them what they want the
10 say parks first. But then we asked
11 them further what do you want to do
12 on the waterfront, what do you want
13 the face of your City to be like;
14 they start to come up with these
15 great definitions. All of them
16 connected by parks and may have
17 parklike settings but there's said
18 other things to do there.

19 So I think there's a
20 misunderstanding about the
21 relationship between housing and
22 parks. Housing in and of itself --
23 in and of itself is not a problem.
24 It's the -- it's the way into this
25 park and the way the housing is

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ETHAN KENT

2 significantly changed the park and --
3 since it's been introduced.

4 The -- it's the design of the
5 park that is the extremely
6 privatizing. Its -- its single
7 use -- the way it precludes evolution
8 of the park over time is the problem
9 that's going to make it the most
10 expensive and costly to the City.
11 And it's the way that it is going to
12 preclude it from really realizing the
13 potential of this incredible location
14 on the waterfront.

15 The issue that HRNA mentioned,
16 that housing generates activity in
17 park. We don't actually find that,
18 there's a little bit of a myth about
19 on that, the eyes on the -- it is --
20 how it's actually evolved is
21 potential usage, it actually varies
22 but -- the footfall of walking.

23 The eyes on the street issue is
24 actually, that's what prevents
25 activity. We did a training course

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ETHAN KENT

2 in Vancouver Canada --

3 (One minute warning issued.)

4 -- for the Planning Department and we
5 can do this all over. They are very
6 proud of their green swath they
7 preserved, very similar to what you
8 are envisioning here.

9 And then we asked them, what
10 are the great places, you know, in
11 your City and there weren't that many
12 and none of them were on the
13 waterfront. And they realized they
14 had high rise residential along this
15 park. And they wanted then to create
16 green spaces afterwards. After the
17 high rises had essentially gone in.
18 And they didn't have the political
19 potential to do that and they
20 couldn't change the design of the
21 park because it been designed in a
22 very expensive rigid way.

23 So we recommend this; This
24 might have been a cheaper idea. It
25 once was the -- what the corporation

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN CRANE

2 with Pier 1 as a temporary pier is
3 revenue neutral. How do you start
4 experimenting grand momentum, um.
5 Drawing on this creativity, drawing
6 on the opportunity this tension has
7 afforded us. I have a really dynamic
8 suggestion, learn from each other,
9 learn from examples around the world
10 and create a great waterfront that
11 only Brooklyn can create to be our
12 face to the world.

13 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Ben
14 Crane and then Robert Elmes.

15 MR. CRANE: My name is Ben
16 Crane and I do not represent anyone.

17 MALE SPEAKER: Except yourself.

18 MR. CRANE: Well, I'm not sure
19 about that. There's only one
20 important thing that sticks out for
21 me. I've been going to these things
22 for 26 years and I've heard it all by
23 now. And what I would like to say is
24 this is an opportune moment to
25 actually do something.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROBERT ELMES

2 The City of New York is under
3 the management of an administration
4 that is sympathetic to this park has
5 been extraordinarily helpful and
6 generous. Political situations come
7 and go and the notion that we will
8 sit here and talk about fantasy and
9 minutia for another one year, two
10 years, three years, four years. It
11 is ludicrous, totally ludicrous. We
12 have a great park; we should finish
13 the great park. And that obviously
14 takes the corporations cooperation,
15 and the mayor's cooperation, and our
16 elected officials cooperation to in
17 fact create a financing plan today to
18 make this park actually happen.

19 Thank you.

20 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

21 Robert Elmes and then Jane Kojima.

22 MR. ELMES: Thank you very much
23 to the committee. My name is Robert
24 Elmes. I'm the director of
25 Galapagos Art Space we're at 16 Main

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROBERT ELMES
2 Street in Dumbo. We're a 250 person
3 cultural venue. We do theater,
4 dance, performance, et cetera. We
5 also began Dumbo Kite Flying Society
6 for kids and it's a program that we
7 run the first month -- the first
8 Saturday of every month in Brooklyn
9 Bridge Park.

10 We fully support the housing on
11 the periphery of the park. We think
12 it's the best and most viable option
13 to create the park now and to offer
14 the park in the future. We think
15 it's a solution that will draw
16 families and increase nighttime
17 safety through eyes in the park which
18 we believe will be the case. And
19 daytime amenities for families and
20 local residents.

21 We think it would help us to
22 draw residents -- or audiences to
23 Dumbo and their economic impact would
24 be felt in our neighborhood and we
25 think that is important as well. The

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JANE KOJIMA
2 next meeting of the Kite Flying
3 Society is this Saturday at
4 10:00 a.m. and you all invited.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Jane
7 Kojima and then Alexandria Sica.

8 MS. KOJIMA: Good evening, I'm
9 Jane Kojima. I'm reading testimony
10 on behalf of Ray Levin a resident of
11 1 Main Street in Dumbo who is unable
12 to join us this evening.

13 I have been waiting for many
14 years for the park to come into being
15 any longer while unproven schemes are
16 set afloat on the turbulent seas of
17 legislative deliberation and
18 inevitable litigations. Just look at
19 what a carousel and theater have
20 brought.

21 The current financing plan
22 should move forward not only to avoid
23 the inevitable delays associated with
24 new funding structures but because
25 the added population occupying the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JANE KOJIMA
2 promised buildings lining the edge of
3 the park as my building does will add
4 life and safety 12 months of the year
5 not just the slowest months.

6 The maintenance of the park is
7 an obvious concern of those living
8 next to it. The required funds can
9 be provided under the current plan
10 while the alternatives are
11 speculative subjects to uncertain
12 market conditions and possibly
13 destructive to the park by
14 introducing excessive
15 commercialization.

16 The Watchtower option relies on
17 rezoning. Actions that have been
18 extremely contentious on other
19 projects and all in order to create
20 luxury housing within a stone's throw
21 of where the current plan proposes
22 housing. It doesn't make sense.

23 Taxing locally for a regional
24 park seems to place the burden on the
25 wrong folks. The vast majority of

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ALEXANDRIA SICA

2 the users will come from outside the
3 proposed incremental tax district.

4 This is a City park not a local park.

5 We already pay taxes that take
6 into account any value added to our
7 homes by reason of being adjacent to
8 a park. Adding another tax on local
9 owners that goes in large part to
10 serve the needs of and pick up after
11 tourist is unfair. The economic
12 benefits towards them goes to the
13 City as a whole as should the expense
14 of maintaining the park.

15 In conclusion, stay the course
16 and the park will be completed and
17 maintained in a timely and
18 appropriate fashion. Thank you.

19 MS. HAYASHI: Alexandria Sica
20 and Clint Padgitt.

21 MS. SICA: Thank you. My name
22 is Alexandria Sica. I'm the
23 executive director of the Dumbo
24 Improvement District. We're an
25 organization that supports the small

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - ALEXANDRIA SICA

2 businesses, property owners, and
3 residents of Dumbo, Brooklyn.

4 Brooklyn Bridge Park is a
5 transformative space and we look
6 forward to the continued progress and
7 support the exist -- moving forward
8 with the existing general project
9 plan. In my role at the DIB we work
10 closely Dumbo retail and cultural
11 community and their businesses are
12 really looking forward to enjoying
13 this amenity and the traffic that it
14 brings to the neighborhood is a
15 vibrant addition to the neighborhood
16 and the local economy.

17 What -- what's important to the
18 businesses is that it's a well
19 maintained access. And the report
20 indicates that a number of the
21 options that were looked at don't
22 meet the requirement that the housing
23 plan would put forth. And so we ask
24 that -- that we move forward with the
25 general plan as it is.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CLINT PADGITT

2 The -- it's a plan that has a
3 reliable source and the timing can be
4 in greater control than some of the
5 alternatives with that including the
6 Watchtower property.

7 So in conclusion, we hope that
8 the park moves forward as quickly as
9 possible and that it is maintained in
10 a wonderful manner using the
11 agreement that has been already
12 established. Thank you.

13 MS. HAYASHI: Clint Padgitt and
14 then Mike Rafsky (phonetic).

15 MR. PADGITT: Good evening, my
16 name is Clint Padgitt. I live on
17 Hicks Street and am a member the
18 Willowtown Association and I'm
19 concerned about the plan to build
20 housing at the foot of Atlantic
21 Avenue next to Pier 6.

22 And I understand from the plans
23 I've seen that one of the buildings
24 is supposed to be 31 stories high.
25 And I wonder if people who support

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CLINT PADGITT
2 housing there realize how tall such a
3 building is. And if you're
4 interested in urban planning or
5 historic preservation you would not
6 want a building that tall. There has
7 to be a solution that provides
8 alternative funding but does not
9 require a building of that size.

10 Because this is a world famous
11 historic skyline stretching from
12 Governor's Island around to
13 Battery Park up to South Street Sea
14 Port to Brooklyn Bridge. We have
15 literally thousands and thousands of
16 people who are looking at this view
17 which is largely unchanged since the
18 19th century.

19 And think if you think what
20 this is going to look like you'll
21 think we have to change our mind, we
22 have to think of some way not to
23 build such a high tower. Thank you.

24 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Next
25 we have Mike Rafsky and Tony Manheim.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - TONY MANHEIM

2 Is Mike here? No, okay. We'll
3 put Mike aside and call him later.

4 Tony Manheim and Chris Havens.

5 MR. MANHEIM: Okay, most of
6 you, I think know who I am. I was
7 involved in the park in the beginning
8 which is actually more than 25 years
9 ago and sort of came out of
10 retirement a few years back when the
11 whole plans for the park changed. I
12 think they changed because the
13 original plan was come up -- the
14 original deal which I signed on
15 behalf the community, was the park
16 had to pay its park operating
17 expenses. They were 10 million
18 dollars a year.

19 A while later it was changed
20 where the park had to raise the funds
21 on site to maintain the site on which
22 the park sits. Very different order
23 of magnitude. That's why we have a
24 budget now set at five million which
25 is what we think it would have been

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - TONY MANHEIM

2 of 16 million.

3 However, having said that I
4 think it's terrific that the CAH has
5 been established and they'll look at
6 alternative sources. Financing has
7 been established. I think -- I have
8 nothing against BAE Economics but I
9 did have trouble making contact with
10 them. Thank you. Great trouble
11 making contact with them initially
12 but we did have a phone conversation
13 since the last meeting of the board
14 of the corporation.

15 And maybe it's because they are
16 the Bay Area Economics, they don't
17 really understand New York very well.
18 One thing -- they talk about
19 confusing the Highline and its
20 neighborhood, that park, with
21 Brooklyn Heights. They're really not
22 the same thing. One is just
23 beginning its identification process,
24 Brooklyn Heights is Brooklyn Heights.

25 They're countless other

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - TONY MANHEIM
2 examples of this misunderstanding of
3 the nature of the park. But the most
4 egregious, most egregious failing in
5 their study is they total ignored a
6 much more serious in depth quarter of
7 a million dollar -- 14 year ago
8 quarter of a million dollar study of
9 just the piers section, Piers 1
10 through 6, with Ernst and Young
11 numbers indicating that 4.7 million,
12 nearly 5 million dollars a year would
13 generated without housing from on
14 site concession type and other
15 sources including parking, by the
16 way --

17 (One minute warning issued.)
18 -- in dominion 2. I'm going to skip
19 over that but this is available, a
20 couple copies are available.

21 And touch on the Jehovah's
22 Witnesses prospect. There's been a
23 gross, rejection of a gross of
24 Jehovah's Witnesses property, gross
25 misunderstanding in two respects.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - TONY MANHEIM

2 First of all in phase one; it's
3 interesting but not really germane
4 any more that what the property
5 owners around Atlantic Yards wanted
6 was germane. The City has the right
7 to take this property for a public
8 purpose like building a park, at
9 least as great a public purpose as
10 building a commercial basketball
11 stadium.

12 I don't think it has to do that
13 or that it should do that. I think
14 should be because it can do that. It
15 can negotiate a reasonable
16 acquisition of the million square
17 feet, 1.1, that's proposed to be
18 built within the park, across the
19 street from the park, and yes it does
20 make a difference not building
21 housing in the park.

22 There's nothing wrong with the
23 Plaza Hotel model of building luxury
24 housing along 5th Avenue along side
25 of Central Park West and not inside

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRIS HAVENS

2 the park. Thank you.

3 MS. HAYASHI: Chris Havens and
4 then Tom Monsocohen (phonetic.)

5 MR. HAVENS: Greetings, I'm
6 Chris Havens, a Brooklyn resident;
7 graduate of Hunter Community Planning
8 School; a former affordable housing
9 developer and now a commercial real
10 estate professional.

11 I'd like to note that members
12 of my family have lived, worked, or
13 gone to school in this area many
14 decades. I have worked near the park
15 since 2002.

16 I believe that all revenue
17 sources are needed that can be found
18 without overwhelming the park with
19 commercial use. So this study is
20 excellent because you're going to
21 need more money that we think now and
22 I also believe in events; however,
23 the size and quality are the issue.

24 Collectively though, the
25 alternatives proposed are not

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRIS HAVENS

2 remotely adequate. They're too far
3 in the future and they're too
4 speculative to underwrite the park
5 maintenance budget which must come
6 from the park and nowhere else. The
7 committee cannot consider taxing of
8 Watchtower properties. Although
9 you're right, they could condemn and
10 take Churchill property but I don't
11 they're going to be able to do that
12 in New York City.

13 One thought too, imagine if
14 Brooklyn Bridge Park Development
15 Corporation had come to the community
16 with substantial commercial use
17 proposals instead of housing; come
18 there first. The howling would be
19 deafening. Now they're offered as an
20 alternative. I wish there were
21 practical alternative to housing and
22 hotels to support the park. I really
23 do. I don't like it either.

24 But let me -- let's talk about
25 numbers. If you took the 40 plus

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRIS HAVENS
2 bars -- the 40 bars and restaurants
3 on Smith Street. And assuming they
4 were paying ten thousand a month in
5 rent, which not all of them do, but
6 just assume they were. 40 bars and
7 restaurants. If you took all that
8 rent and put 40 saloons in the park
9 you would cover less than one third
10 of the maintenance budget.

11 That's the kind of activity
12 you're going to need to get money.
13 You're going to have to have events
14 24/7, you're going to have movie
15 shoots.

16 (One minute warning issued.)
17 If you want to turn it into an
18 alcohol mall like Bourbon Street in
19 Enola (phonetic), its fun for me but
20 that's not a park.

21 Watchtower. The Watchtower
22 Clock property under discussion is
23 occupied. It is not on the sale
24 market. I know that for a fact. The
25 Watchtower organization owns three,

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRIS HAVENS
2 three ready to go development sites
3 in Dumbo as well as four nearly
4 vacant commercial buildings on
5 Sand Street and a mostly vacant hotel
6 on Montague. Those are selling
7 first. The clock property is
8 irrelevant.

9 The commercial use of
10 property -- the commercial uses for
11 -- occupied 30 to 50 percent of the
12 park land at times. Rent,
13 residential users are 90 percent,
14 it's a no-brainer. Movie shoots -- I
15 thought everyone around here hated
16 movie shoots. Let's do the most.
17 Best part we can. Last but not
18 least, it's easy, high end housing
19 paying the maintenance is best. It's
20 a tax on the wealthy. User fees and
21 everything else is a tax on the rest
22 us. Let the wealthy pay for the park
23 maintenance. Thank you.

24 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Tom
25 Monsocohen and then Reed Kennedy.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - REED KENNEDY

2 Reed Kennedy. Do we have either of
3 those? So it will be Reed Kennedy
4 and then Lucy Koteen.

5 MR. KENNEDY: First I'd like to
6 thank everybody for coming out. My
7 name is Reed Kennedy and I'm a
8 resident of Fort Greene here in
9 Brooklyn. I guess when I look at
10 this park I see it as -- it's a large
11 opportunity -- it's an unprecedented
12 opportunity to revitalize the
13 waterfront.

14 I think the park's bigger than
15 Willowtown; I think it's bigger than
16 Cobble Hill; I think it's bigger than
17 Brooklyn Heights. I think this park
18 as far as -- as Senator Squadron said
19 earlier, it's for all of New York
20 City. It's for all of the world.

21 And I think -- while I think a
22 very vocal local opposition -- it's
23 important and everybody should have
24 the opportunity to speak their voice.
25 I think again, this is larger

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LUCY KOTEEN
2 opportunity for the City. It's a
3 larger opportunity for kids. It's a
4 larger opportunity for families.

5 As much as I hate sidestepping
6 tourist, realizing New York City
7 tourism drives a big part of our
8 economy, Brooklyn's no longer in the
9 shadow of Manhattan and I think this
10 park will go a long way in bringing a
11 shine to Brooklyn.

12 So, if you look at the plan, if
13 you look actual footprint of the
14 residential properties they're
15 proposing, it's pretty minimal
16 relative to what you could be
17 getting. You could be getting an
18 IKEA; you could be getting a fairway.
19 And so I think long term it's a very
20 agreeable plan and I support it.

21 Thank you.

22 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you also.
23 Lucy Koteen and then Paul Thompson.
24 Is Paul here?

25 MS. KOTEEN: Hi, my name is

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LUCY KOTEEN

2 Lucy Koteen and I am speaking for
3 myself and I'm also a resident of
4 Fort Greene. The Alternatives to
5 Housing Consultants of Bay Area
6 Economic report has identified other
7 ways to pay for Brooklyn Bridge Park
8 without more housing inside the park
9 corridors.

10 The surrounding communities
11 have spent over 25 years investing
12 their time and volunteers to imagine
13 a park that would serve the people in
14 the area and be a year destination
15 for all without including private
16 housing inside its borders. In this
17 plan they fulfilled the original
18 mission of finding ways to produce
19 funds from maintaining the park.

20 It was only after the current
21 administration had reconfigured the
22 park that grossly inflated the
23 maintenance demands of the park and
24 designed on that no longer represents
25 the founding principles of the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LUCY KOTEEN
2 Brooklyn Bridge Park that it was
3 determined that luxury housing had to
4 be embraced as a funding mechanism
5 for this park.

6 The founding principles of this
7 park, the self funding model, was
8 that the park should only be
9 responsible the for normal park
10 operations and maintenance, not long
11 term capital funds. It is wrong and
12 it is unfair. It is not what was
13 agreed to by the community. It sets
14 a dangerous precedent and represents
15 bad public policy to have this park
16 pay for capital expenses.

17 If this had been the deal back
18 in 1984 or again in 2001, the
19 community would certainly have
20 recommended a different plan for the
21 piers. As it stands now these deal
22 is unseemly. This project need to
23 eliminate the duplicative
24 bureaucracies of the entity and the
25 conservancy and the park should be

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LUCY KOTEEN

2 placed under the management of New
3 York City Park System.

4 It is wrong to make a park pay
5 for capital expenses. No park and no
6 other public service for that matter,
7 has this level of funding
8 responsibilities. The BAE report
9 compares how seven other parks both
10 inside and outside of New York City
11 fund their parks through a
12 combination of public private means
13 every one of which must be looked at.

14 (One minute warning issued.)

15 In addition they have all developed
16 their government agreements.

17 Through event fees, food
18 concessions, film studio fees,
19 parking fees, corporate sponsorships,
20 private donations, facility rentals
21 and other programs they have all
22 found ways to pay for their parks.
23 It is frustrating to realize that one
24 of the world centers of creativity
25 and so little imagination has been

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - PAUL THOMPSON

2 activated to consider ways to finance
3 this park.

4 Surely a park with the quality
5 and views of the Brooklyn Bridge Park
6 will attract a wide range of events
7 and sponsors that will pay dearly for
8 the park's use. We ask that the
9 Brooklyn Bridge Park Board adopt many
10 of the reports measures in order to
11 eliminate the need for housing --
12 more housing inside the park's
13 borders. And if the Brooklyn Bridge
14 Park Board refuses to do the duty to
15 study the Jehovah's Witness building
16 and the other funding discussed in
17 this consultants report then I urge
18 Senator Squadron and Assemblywoman
19 Millman to exercise their veto power
20 over housing. Thank you for your
21 consideration.

22 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Paul
23 Thompson and then Glen Markman.

24 MR. THOMPSON: Good evening.

25 My name is Paul Thompson. I'm the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - PAUL THOMPSON
2 founding principle of the Urban
3 Assembly School of Music and Art
4 which is a public high school. We
5 are on Flatbush Avenue Extension just
6 west of Tiller (phonetic). So we are
7 literally at the mouth of the
8 Manhattan Bridge.

9 The park for us, like many in
10 New York City attractions, because we
11 service students who are 80 to
12 85 percent on free or reduced lunch.
13 None of my kids are living around the
14 park. But it, like many of New York
15 City attractions provide an
16 experience in life other than the one
17 they regularly know.

18 So we would simply ask that the
19 committee adopt a plan that would
20 enable us to use the park and all the
21 fantastic planning that they have as
22 soon as possible. So that we can
23 continue to do the things that we do
24 with our students which is show them
25 the world which is really other than

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - PAUL THOMPSON

2 their home so that they can dream and
3 hopefully plan for a better future.

4 Other than that, I have been
5 sitting and thinking tonight as I've
6 listened to all of the different
7 speakers speak and I had thought that
8 there are education opportunities
9 that we are truly missing in
10 relationship to the park. And to be
11 at little light I thought it would be
12 interesting for my students to really
13 understand the CAH.

14 That could be a good moment. I
15 thought that there is definitely
16 science lessons, building and
17 construction lessons that could
18 definitely happen. There is
19 certainly math and financing, so
20 however creative we could get on the
21 financing would create greater
22 lessons for us.

23 And I think there is certainly
24 a lesson in physics where fine friend
25 talked about perched wetlands. I

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - GLEN MARKMAN
2 wasn't really familiar with that part
3 of the plan but I think I'm going to
4 bring that back to one of my science
5 teachers so that we can understand
6 what that means and whether that
7 really happens in nature.

8 (One minute warning issued.)

9 Thank you very much.

10 MS. HAYASHI: Glen Markman and
11 Barbara Parker.

12 MR. MARKMAN: Hi, my name is
13 Glen Markman. As a Brooklyn business
14 and property owner and real estate
15 professional who does a lot of work
16 in downtown Brooklyn I can attest to
17 the fact that the Brooklyn Bridge
18 Park is one of the most significant
19 developments we've seen in the last
20 25 years. The park has not just
21 added to the quality of life but it
22 is something people love. It's a one
23 of a kind amenity that needs to be
24 kept clean and safe for many years to
25 come.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA PARKER

2 I believe the housing plan is
3 the most stable way to generate
4 enough money for the park to be
5 sustained so it can be treasured --
6 so it can be a treasured part of
7 Brooklyn life forever. Thank you.

8 MS. HAYASHI: Barbara Parker
9 and then Carlo Seissura.

10 MS. PARKER: I'm not sure how
11 to -- Okay. Thank you.

12 I'm Barbara Parker. I am a
13 resident of Brooklyn Heights. I
14 would like to read something from a
15 publication of the Sierra Club.
16 Because it puts the case really
17 better than I can.

18 When the park was originally
19 approved in 2003 no one imagined how
20 it would be perverted 18 months later
21 into landscaping for six high rise
22 luxury condo towers. With this
23 change the City and state broke a
24 critical promise to build a park by
25 failing to designate this land as a

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA PARKER

2 bona fide park.

3 Brooklyn Bridge Park has no
4 protections from commercial
5 encroachments because the land is not
6 designated as park land. Deals have
7 been stuck with one developer or
8 another for several years now. And
9 this could go on indefinitely.

10 One community group, the
11 Brooklyn Heights Association,
12 recently filed the second law suit of
13 the privatization of public land.
14 This time over the commercial use of
15 the tobacco warehouse. However, when
16 Brooklyn Bridge Park became a real
17 estate development without any park
18 protections, this was exactly what
19 was likely to happen.

20 In addition the community park
21 plan which originally included
22 swimming pools, a recreation center,
23 playing fields, basketball courts,
24 and an ice rink was completely and
25 inexorably changed into a bike path

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA PARKER
2 with very expensive landscaping when
3 the state decided to put condo towers
4 inside the park borders. Not one
5 year round recreational features from
6 the original plan is included in the
7 current Brooklyn Bridge Park plan.

8 The City and state rejected --
9 (One minute warning issued.)
10 -- recreational features because
11 landscaping those luxury condos but
12 -- it does not.

13 Finally, while the community
14 committed to supporting annual park
15 costs they did not commit to nor
16 could they even conceive that the
17 park would also have to come up with
18 funds to build and rebuild itself
19 over 40 years. The part that was to
20 pay for park upkeep has become the
21 part that now must also pay to build
22 sewers and electrical and water
23 services for 1250 luxury condo units
24 and to rebuild itself over the next
25 four decades.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

2 Had the goal been to raise
3 funds to build and rebuild the park
4 the community would have continued to
5 build ideas that made good financial
6 sense. Now the park is saddled with
7 maintaining piers that can't even
8 hold a mature tree let alone a year
9 round recreational center or swimming
10 pool.

11 One of the most useable lands,
12 Upland at the Piers -- the
13 condo towers. And what I am
14 requesting is that the committee
15 consider reinstating these facilities
16 that were originally called for
17 because I think it's a travesty that
18 the real estate developers have been
19 privileged over the needs of the
20 park.

21 MS. HAYASHI: Carlos Scissora
22 and Tupper Thomas:

23 MR. SCISSORA: Thank you
24 everyone. My name is Carlos
25 Scissora. I'm Chief of Staff

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA
2 to Brooklyn Borough President,
3 Marty Markowitz. He was supposed to
4 be here tonight but couldn't. Before
5 I begin Marty asked me to give a warm
6 welcome to Brooklyn to our new HPD
7 commissioner, Commissioner Bombooh
8 (phonetic), and I hope I said that
9 right, I think I did. And I just
10 want to remind you that while you're
11 going to work on a lot of things --
12 this is not part of my three minutes,
13 by the way -- a lot of things in the
14 City -- people tell you, all projects
15 must happen in Brooklyn. So all the
16 affordable houses you build must
17 happen in Brooklyn.

18 Thank you all of you, first of
19 for taking this time. It's good to
20 see so many good friends up here. My
21 Sumerian buddy that we graduated with
22 many years ago, Paul.

23 This is an important issue and
24 it's great that there's passion from
25 all sides on this issue. Because

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA
2 that tells you what kind of people
3 are in Brooklyn. They are
4 passionate, they are not shy, they
5 tell it to you the way it is and I'm
6 going to try to tell you how it is on
7 behalf of Marty and our position.

8 As you know Brooklyn has close
9 to 2.6 million people. It's one of
10 the most densely populated urban
11 places in America. Most of the
12 people of Brooklyn don't have back
13 yards. They don't have swimming
14 pools. They don't have houses in the
15 Hamptons or upstate. They live in
16 apartments, they send their kids to
17 school. They commute to work on the
18 subway or the bus and they engage in
19 very little exercise or socializing
20 outside.

21 Among the five boroughs
22 Brooklyn has one of the least -- has
23 the least amount of park land per
24 capita and that's pretty scary --
25 Brooklyn's is park starved, we are in

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA
2 dire need of park space and I think
3 everyone agrees with that sentiment.
4 No matter if you live in Brooklyn
5 Heights or if you live in Sheep's
6 Head Bay, or if you live in Central
7 Brooklyn, or if you live anywhere in
8 this borough. And remember this park
9 is a borough park. It's a park for
10 everyone in Brooklyn, everyone in the
11 City, and all the tourists that come
12 in it. And we should be very proud
13 and I know we are. Many people have
14 been working very hard on this.
15 Residents from all over Brooklyn
16 Heights, Cobble Hill have spoken
17 about this. We just lost Bernie
18 Adams who had been very vocal on
19 building this park and I think we
20 should remember him tonight for a
21 minute.

22 There have been ups and downs
23 along the way. Many community
24 meetings and half-a-dozen plans.
25 It's a project that Marty has been

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA
2 very proud to support, both
3 publically, privately and with
4 capital funding and we will continue
5 to do that. This park brings
6 together diverse communities and
7 that's one of the best parts about
8 it. It brings together a very
9 diverse borough in one place.

10 Opening Pier 1 and 6 have been
11 great. I want to thank Regina Myer
12 with who has really gotten this park
13 off the ground. As Marty says, if
14 you want a job done you give it to a
15 woman. Regina, thank you for getting
16 it done.

17 And with the rest of the park
18 opening in the next few years we must
19 get it done. But what we must really
20 do is commit to a plan that will
21 protect this beautiful waterfront
22 oasis for generations to come.

23 When Governor Pataki and Mayor
24 Michael Bloomberg signed the
25 memorandum of understanding it stated

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

2 that Brooklyn Bridge Park will be a
3 self-sustaining institute. Which
4 clearly means that revenue must be
5 paid from the park itself to pay for
6 operations and maintenance.

7 To ensure that Brooklyn Bridge
8 Park is well maintained including
9 keeping the significant waterfront
10 infrastructure such as the piers,
11 pilings, and bulkheads in good repair
12 and that is the very important to
13 remember.

14 This is not just about a green
15 lawn. It's not just about beauty.
16 It's also about shoring up the
17 waterfront. And I think a lot of
18 people forget to mention that but we
19 don't, we remember that.

20 There must be a significant
21 source of revenue. Residential
22 development in combination with a
23 medium size hotel appears to be the
24 best fit as it preserves a large
25 amount of open space and compliments

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA
2 the park and surrounding
3 neighborhoods. This has been Marty's
4 position from day one and it
5 continues to be his position.

6 Of course there is an argument
7 and we understand it; that
8 residential buildings within or near
9 the park will impede access or
10 decrease the function of the park.
11 Yet throughout New York City there
12 are many examples of sizable
13 residential population in close
14 proximity to the park land.

15 The Brooklyn Heights Promenade
16 is one example. Rockefeller Park and
17 Battery Park City is another example.
18 And everything that's happening to
19 Greenpoint, Williamsburg waterfront,
20 the -- esplanade -- Red hook -- and
21 they have no impact on public access,
22 none whatsoever. People can still
23 get to the park. The park is an
24 inviting place for these communities
25 and for communities and residents

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - TUPPER THOMAS
2 that come from across the borough.

3 I again want to thank this
4 committee. You guys have done a
5 great job in exploring other forms of
6 revenue, however, the borough
7 president believes that the current
8 financing plan which includes
9 development sites are the only way to
10 get the park completed constructed
11 and maintained and available for all
12 our City particularly Brooklyn
13 Heights. Thank you all.

14 MS. HAYASHI: I think we're
15 with Tupper Thomas now and Jeffrey
16 Smith.

17 MS. THOMAS: Hi, I'm Tupper
18 Thomas. I'm the past administrator
19 and past president of the Park
20 Alliance having just put 30 years
21 into bringing back a park that
22 doesn't have the revenue to really
23 make it the great park that it should
24 be.

25 And the reality is that Olmsted

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - TUPPER THOMAS
2 and Vaux thought that when they built
3 this fabulous and magnificent
4 Prospect Park that all the taxes that
5 would be gained by having a wonderful
6 park there would go towards
7 maintaining that park. And it did
8 not and that park fell into terrible
9 repair.

10 Millions and millions and
11 millions of tax payer dollars have
12 had to go into now restoring that
13 park. And the private sector has to
14 raise money and all these grey hairs
15 will show you how hard it is to raise
16 private dollars for a public park.

17 If Olmsted and Vaux had
18 brilliantly designed Prospect Park as
19 this Brooklyn Bridge Park is designed
20 so that housing could have been
21 incorporated in a way that could have
22 provided the revenue, how much more
23 brilliant would that have been? And
24 across the country this is the new
25 method that is being used to design

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - TUPPER THOMAS

2 parks.

3 When you design them at that
4 time with their revenue stream in
5 place you guarantee that park will be
6 there for our great-great-great
7 grandchildren. Since my
8 grandchildren have already used the
9 Brooklyn Bridge Park I know that I
10 want it for my great-great
11 grandchildren to be available.

12 So to me this is the most
13 important thing. I think it's a
14 brilliant design and very much copies
15 many of the design concepts that were
16 developed in Prospect Park 150 years
17 ago. And the one big difference is
18 that there will be a great mechanism
19 to maintain this park in the future
20 and I think that is terribly
21 important.

22 (One minute warning issued.)

23 MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

24 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

25 Jeffrey Smith and then

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JEFFREY SMITH

2 Barbara Brookhardt.

3 MR. SMITH: Well, my name is
4 Jeffrey Smith and I'm a long term
5 resident of Brooklyn Heights. I have
6 watched the development to this park
7 for many, many years. I have had
8 interminable position papers and
9 various reports read to me and I have
10 read them for many, many years.

11 Much of what I'm hearing
12 tonight is very, very disturbing for
13 the reverse reason. One of the
14 reasons -- there is antipathy, open
15 hostility, and serious questions in
16 the Brooklyn Heights area is because
17 of the lack of visibility. If you
18 are going to have apartment
19 corporation, believe me I deal with
20 the Federal reserve and deal with a
21 bunch of NGO's that actually make
22 policy in this country, I know how
23 much lack of visibility there is.

24 A lot of this is just like
25 Egyptian -- the same thing happens

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JEFFREY SMITH
2 with a high degree of those private
3 corporations. They quickly descend
4 into self-justifying, very rookie
5 existence firms that basically don't
6 have an idea what's going to happen.

7 As far as the park is
8 concerned, look, you have to pay not
9 only for the park, but you have to
10 pay for ripple effects. What are you
11 proposing? You're proposing dragging
12 hundreds of thousands of people
13 around Brooklyn Heights and through
14 Brooklyn Heights during the summer.

15 Now, who's going to pay for the
16 security problems in this. Look,
17 every park in this area over the last
18 30 years has become a very
19 significant security burden to this
20 area. Brooklyn Heights is a target
21 community. It's not like surrounding
22 communities. We know we're targets.

23 Now you are saying that you're
24 going to put all these people through
25 the area also. It's based on the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JEFFREY SMITH
2 fiction that everybody's an
3 interchangeable widget. Not true.
4 There are people who that have --
5 those in Brooklyn Heights. More than
6 -- there, okay. Or they're there and
7 they're locked inside. It depends on
8 their lifestyle.

9 What type of people you are
10 dealing with? Okay. You need to
11 know the amount of people we're
12 dealing with, what it's really going
13 to cost our community, how many more
14 cops, more fire, more EMS are we
15 going to get as a result of this
16 park. If you're not going to pay
17 that or show some revenue stream for
18 that, for the ripple effects, then
19 you're thinning out my security.

20 Do you think I like that? Or
21 the Brooklyn Heights -- listen it may
22 not be PC to say it, but let me tell
23 you how people really are here in
24 Brooklyn Heights really view this
25 park. They're really very suspicion.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA BROOKHARDT

2 Thank you.

3 MS. HAYASHI: Thanks you.

4 Barbara Brookhardt and then

5 Wids de la Cour.

6 MS. BROOKHARDT: Good evening.

7 On behalf of the Carroll Gardens

8 Neighborhood Association we would

9 like to thank Senator Dan Squadron

10 and assembly member Joan Millman for

11 agreeing to fund a study on the

12 alternatives to housing in the

13 Brooklyn Bridge Park.

14 We believe that a diverse

15 source of revenues and we're very

16 happy that you have put forth a

17 stream of revenue that is diverse

18 rather than relying totally and

19 solely on housing. We think that

20 the -- that the consultant's report

21 showed that there are many diverse

22 opportunities for alternative funding

23 and I'm going to send out an official

24 report to go into detail about some

25 of my -- some of these opportunities.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA BROOKHARDT

2 The Carroll Gardens Neighborhood
3 Association wants this committee to
4 further study putting a seasonal air
5 structure bubble as on Pier 5 as
6 suggested by Senator Daniel Squadron
7 so that there can be year round
8 athletic activities in the park
9 including soccer for the children of
10 Brooklyn.

11 The downtown neighborhood has
12 been asking for recreation facility
13 in Brooklyn Bridge Park for years.
14 We think that a bubble would be a
15 constant effective alternative to a
16 traditional brick and block or steel
17 shell permanent structure and allow
18 for outdoor activities on Piers 5 in
19 the summer and covered for fee
20 activities in the -- in the winter.

21 Currently our neighborhood
22 children have to travel a great
23 distance to use such a facility. We
24 think that a vendor with a long term
25 lease could be responsible for the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA BROOKHARDT

2 cost of construction and operating
3 such a facility over the winter and a
4 fee paid by the operator would
5 provide revenue for the park.

6 12,000 people now live in
7 downtown up from a mere 400 residents
8 in 2000. It may be the fastest
9 growing community in the country.
10 There's a 2.9000 percent increase
11 during the same time when the
12 population of the City grew overall
13 about five percent.

14 (One minute warning issued.)
15 And add 10,000 residents that plan to
16 live in Atlantic Yards next -- over
17 the 20 years.

18 As a result downtown Brooklyn
19 will need more recreation space in
20 the next 25 years. Considering this
21 increase in the population. To use
22 public property in Brooklyn Bridge
23 Park to build luxury end housing to
24 self-finance the park would be short
25 sided when directly across the street

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA BROOKHARDT
2 are commercial buildings that
3 currently pay no taxes and will be
4 sold and converted to luxury lofts in
5 the near future that can pay half the
6 maintenance of the park.

7 I know Mr. Lohan (phonetic)
8 said that the corporation maintains
9 that this doesn't -- this does not
10 meet the threshold of the memorandum
11 of understanding for the park to be
12 self sufficient. But when the City
13 and state originally decided that the
14 former Witness building at 360 Berman
15 Street should become part of the park
16 that it would pay -- and -- and --
17 and -- and to the Brooklyn Bridge
18 Park, well --

19 MS. HAYASHI: Excuse me, Ms.
20 Brookhardt, can you submit your
21 testimony in writing; do we have a
22 copy of that?

23 MS. BROOKHARDT: You can have
24 this and you can have my attachment.

25 MS. HAYASHI: Okay, thank you

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - WIDS DE LE COUR

2 very much. We have Wid de la Cour
3 next and then Barbara Charton.

4 MS. HAYASHI: Okay. We're
5 going to take these two speakers and
6 then we're going to take a break.

7 MR. DE LE COUR: Hi, I'm Wids
8 de le Cour, I live in Willowtown.
9 And I just want to support housing in
10 the park. Parks are always surround
11 by housing at the edges. This is
12 good planning and -- design principle
13 because it keeps eyes on the park.

14 Here in this park the edges are
15 really the entrances where the
16 housing makes more sense. In
17 addition housing makes a smaller
18 footprint to generate the required
19 money than any other income source.
20 And it is only around the entrances
21 that you're going to have to have
22 this.

23 In short, I'm in favor of
24 housing in the entrance of the park.
25 This -- this is a great world class

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA CHARTON
2 facility for the park in a unique
3 location. It would be a shame to
4 build a lesser park because we don't
5 have any money to maintain this
6 fantastic facility.

7 I'd also like to reiterate
8 what Tupper said about the great --
9 the parks you have designed if we're
10 willing to maintain it -- you won't
11 have to do all the work she's had to
12 do. Thanks a lot.

13 MS. HAYASHI: Okay, thank you.
14 Is Barbara here? Then we'll take a
15 couple of minutes.

16 MS. CHARTON: I'm Barbara
17 Charton and I have been opposed to
18 the idea of housing in the park on a
19 number of points.

20 One; this park is supposedly
21 costing 16 million dollars. That
22 number is a fantasy. It is a fantasy
23 based on the piers are rotting and
24 falling apart. I watched those piers
25 being constructed in the 50's. They

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA CHARTON

2 were -- used to be called forks now
3 earmarked for our last Republican
4 representative, Frank Dorn.

5 Those piers will out last us
6 all.

7 There's nothing wrong with the
8 piers so this huge sum of money,
9 4,000 dollars -- 4 million dollars a
10 year pads the budget to maintain
11 them. Really where is that going?

12 Security. We don't have a
13 police force? Not only do we have a
14 police force we have park police who
15 are entitled to do everything a cop
16 can do except carry a gun. Why
17 another 2 1/2 million dollars for
18 that?

19 Utilities to support
20 buildings. I know a little but about
21 engineering. I would like to see a
22 31 story building on that tiny
23 footprint. It ain't going stand.
24 Therefore this whole idea of the
25 teeny weeny footprint is a crock.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA CHARTON

2 Excuse me, it is unsupportable.

3 So the whole idea that the
4 land is being given over to housing
5 and the park part of this project,
6 which is still a housing project, is
7 on the piers merely makes it that
8 much more horrible. A similar sized
9 park in Manhattan, same acreage, has
10 been budgeted at about five million.
11 That is what had this should cost.

12 (One minute warning issued.)

13 The increased sum is merely
14 there to justify housing. A crap
15 shoot if there ever was one. If you
16 have paid attention to the housing
17 market as I have the last 60 years,
18 it's a roller coaster. Have you
19 noticed how many empty luxury
20 buildings there are around this
21 neighborhood now, in this fabulous
22 recovery we are enduring? It isn't
23 going to change.

24 Then there's the highway.

25 That is being rebuilt because it's

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN
2 going to fall down soon. People are
3 really going to come and give you
4 millions of dollars for an apartments
5 where they're in the middle of a
6 construction site. Dream on.

7 MS. HAYASHI: We're going to
8 take a couple minutes break. Then we
9 have a few more speakers.

10 (Whereupon, a short recess was
11 taken.)

12 MS. GOODMAN: Okay. We need to
13 find a way to fund the park without
14 additional luxury housing inside the
15 park. Shall we look at them?

16 Parking: Over 1100 spaces are
17 available in close proximity to the
18 park including the 300-whatever --360
19 permits including the hundreds of
20 spaces given, basically, to Robert A.
21 Levine. And there are three
22 spaces -- there's 80 spaces along
23 Furman Street. There are also
24 adjacent areas nearby, many of them
25 City owned, that could be used for

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN

2 parking without building any
3 structures inside the parks.

4 Events, including ones
5 requiring only a tent, to be held
6 from time to time in the park so long
7 as they do not disrupt the park
8 activities. The occasional movie
9 shoot that happens, not all the time,
10 probably you have heard all ready
11 that Steven Spielberg paid three
12 hundred -- \$300 for a movie shoot in
13 Brooklyn Ridge Park. That's absurd.
14 Brooklyn Ridge Park makes so many of
15 its own rules, they can make their
16 own prices for Brooklyn Bridge Park
17 movie shoots. It would seem to me to
18 all make sense.

19 Other residents meet the state
20 criteria for studies and yet they
21 were not studied. What about the
22 real estate transfer tax? It was
23 successfully used in East Hampton --
24 and you can see that every real
25 estate transaction goes through and

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN
2 goes into buying more park land and
3 other states and in East Hampton; why
4 want can't we do that here? That
5 would be a very small tax for
6 everyone.

7 And then Jehovah's Witnesses
8 Facility. Why -- they meet the
9 criteria yet they're not studied.
10 But we're looking at a mission square
11 feet directly adjacent to the park
12 yet not within its borders; and two
13 million in close proximity. Why
14 can't we consider this? Why can't we
15 wait and work on this and see what
16 happens. We have an advocate on City
17 Council, in some cases I've heard, to
18 make sure this passes and it isn't so
19 arduous as everyone says.

20 We can have more recreation
21 without the new buildings. For
22 instance, the ice rink in Bryant Park
23 in six weeks in the depth of winter
24 made over a million dollars in
25 concession funds alone. You don't

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN
2 pay to skate, you pay for skate
3 rental, you pay for ice cream, you a
4 Christmas thing someplace else.
5 That's a different kind of park that
6 a lot of money can be made creatively
7 in these ways and no one seems to
8 really want to think about it.

9 Ironically, on page 34 of the
10 Annual Reporter, there's discussions
11 of the risks of bringing more people
12 to the park. The park must be an
13 active destination. That's what it
14 needs to be. Look at us now. We
15 have all these people giving all
16 these creative ideas that deserve to
17 be seriously considered. Parking,
18 the Jehovah's Witnesses Building,
19 concessions, all of these other ideas
20 that we could be looking at.

21 Let's not lose this
22 opportunity. We're damning
23 everything with fake praise. We have
24 this chance to get a real active
25 destination park. Not necessarily

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN

2 world class even, but for Brooklyn
3 and for the City, and we are messing
4 it up right now. We were all 11
5 once, let's not be 11 again.

6 Thank you.

7 MS. HAYASHI: Next we have
8 Joanne Simon and Diane Buxbaum. I
9 think Diane was just here.

10 DIANE BUXBAUM: I'm here. Is
11 Joanne --

12 MS. HAYASHI: Oh, is Joanne
13 here? Okay, then.

14 PATTI HAGAN: You didn't call
15 on me.

16 MS. HAYASHI: What's your name?

17 PATTI HAGAN: I was number
18 forty --

19 MS. HAYASHI: We only have five
20 more people anyway.

21 PATTI HAGAN: Okay.

22 MS. HAYASHI: Do you want to go
23 ahead?

24 Let's go with Joanne and
25 Diane.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOANNE SIMON

2 JOANNE SIMON: I'm going to --
3 I'm not going read everything because
4 I just don't know what to do with --
5 probably a little tedious but, I do
6 want to share a few thoughts and then
7 primarily my thoughts are more about
8 process in some record, than some of
9 the specific ideas that people have
10 all ready addressed.

11 But I would look to share some
12 disappointments that I have that --
13 the message that has been
14 communicated by the BA in their
15 report, is that there's no viable
16 alternative. Because the results are
17 sort of pre-ordained by the
18 restrictions that were set at the
19 beginning of the process.

20 If the purpose of the process
21 is to transparently and objectively
22 evaluate alternatives to housing, so
23 as to address the public's concerns
24 and put to rest the speculation on
25 both sides of the dialogue. The

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOANNE SIMON
2 upshot of that process has fallen
3 short. The BAU report raised, yet
4 again, concerns that the results were
5 engineered to show a predetermined
6 outcome.

7 Assuming that that is not the
8 case, the report dispels that notion.
9 If the City choose thereafter to
10 restrict the income derived from new
11 sources, for example, this property
12 is not all ready on the tax roll. It
13 would have been preferable for that
14 to have been decided after the study.

15 As it is now, it feels like
16 it's any viable alternative was sort
17 of duped from the start. That the
18 die has been cast leaving people
19 feeling frustrated and unconvinced.
20 I thought that this process was going
21 to help convince people that the
22 information we had what was solid,
23 that the estimates were valid. If in
24 fact there were alternatives that we
25 actually openly and transparently

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOANNE SIMON

2 really evaluated those. And
3 unfortunately, that we have gotten
4 there yet.

5 But I don't think that the
6 effort needs to end here. I think
7 that there some suggestions that have
8 been made including the possibility
9 of using the Watchtower buildings
10 that are across the street from the
11 site to be renovated to the hotel for
12 example and that is being proposed
13 across the street. And then
14 something that I know the parks
15 community has suggested and it is
16 something that bares closer look.

17 I understand that we can't
18 appear to give other people matches
19 but I think that if we look at this
20 more creatively we may be able to
21 find a way to get together with the
22 Jehovah's Witnesses and make a big
23 difference in how we are funding this
24 park. Thank you.

25 I forgot to say I'm speaking

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DIANE BUXBAUM
2 for the Brooklyn Bridge Park Defense
3 Fund of which I'm a member -- I'm
4 just very angry that we waited so
5 long -- and that -- I'm speaking to
6 -- City Parks committee board member
7 and I'm also -- association director.
8 Thank you.

9 DIANE BUXBAUM: My name is
10 Diane Buxbaum, I'm a resident of
11 Carroll Gardens and also Conservation
12 Chair for the New York City group of
13 the Sierra Club, which by the way,
14 has opposed housing since it was
15 first proposed and has been active as
16 I have been in there -- and many
17 others -- in the original planning of
18 this park for years and years and
19 years, and feel like we have been
20 totally ignored. Much of which --

21 I have -- I have a question.
22 Is what I have written here going to
23 be part of the record or is just
24 what's being said that you record?
25 Which is it going to be?

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DIANE BUXBAUM

2 MS. HAYASHI: If you submit
3 that, it will be --

4 DIANE BUXBAUM: Okay, then I'm
5 not going to repeat what had has been
6 said over, and over, and over again.
7 I will get to the housing, a little
8 bit and also to that fact I laughed
9 when -- when I realized that, you
10 know, Steven Spielberg paid \$300.
11 How ridiculous is that? I guess he
12 couldn't afford any more or maybe
13 somebody did have the wisdom to
14 request more.

15 And one of the things that we
16 will talk about events, we need to
17 have -- the idea -- apparently -- you
18 need a permanent structure -- in
19 thinking about Bryant Park, they do
20 fashion week every year and they have
21 no permanent structure. Temporary
22 structures and they bring in wealth
23 of money. You don't need permanent
24 structures in parks to do events.
25 You can do them with temporary

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DIANE BUXBAUM
2 structures and make a large income.

3 The parking spaces as you've
4 already heard, I don't have to
5 repeat, there are many more available
6 and the calculations are totally
7 incorrect. With the revenue from 120
8 spaces where you could make six
9 million dollars a year.

10 The most important thing is
11 what had has been said again and this
12 I must say; we need to look at the
13 three million square feet of the
14 Jehovah's Witnesses building. We
15 need to see that we can use those
16 revenues and turn them over and we do
17 not need to have private parking in
18 the park. This is a travesty to take
19 this out to make this a garden. The
20 park would become a garden for the
21 wealthy. Somebody mentioned the
22 privatized police force, who ever
23 heard of that?

24 Please, let's move forward.
25 Let's build this park. We have

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CAROLINE McCARTHEY

2 waited a long time. We need it and
3 we need it without private housing.

4 Thank you.

5 MS. HAYASHI: Next we have
6 Caroline McCarthy and Patti Hagen.

7 CAROLINE McCARTHEY: My name is
8 Caroline McCarthy. I am a
9 neighborhood -- neighborhood
10 resident, an avid park user. I'm a
11 -- consultant with HR&A Advisors, but
12 I'm here today as a part of this.
13 And I'd like to speak out in support
14 of the original plan that uses --
15 operations and maintenance.

16 We've all seen a significant
17 and positive impact --

18 MR. LOWIN: Excuse me. Excuse
19 me. We can't hear you, come over
20 here.

21 CAROLINE MC CARTHEY: We've all
22 seen the significant and positive
23 impact that the park has had the
24 Brooklyn Waterfront and adjacent
25 neighborhoods in over the year ago

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CAROLINE McCARTHEY

2 and we're all excited to see what
3 else it can be. But the dedicated
4 revenue, of course, is really
5 critical to maintaining the park at
6 the quality of level issued when it
7 opened.

8 The report on alternatives did
9 an excellent job in evaluating other
10 options for raising revenue. I have
11 worked -- for -- report for
12 waterfront -- it shows how
13 challenging it is to raise revenues
14 through concessions, through
15 commercialization; that will change
16 the face of the park as we know it so
17 far and as it could be in the future.

18 It's worth while for some of
19 the ideas, but I think housing should
20 be maintained as the basis. The
21 process of the proposals are
22 interesting, but, one, its uncertain
23 what the timing would be, its
24 uncertain what the financing
25 structure could be, and also that

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - CAROLINE McCARTHEY

2 would take revenue that will join the
3 tax rolls away from other needs in
4 New York City and in Brooklyn in
5 terms of schools and other government
6 purses.

7 Housing in the park would not
8 be interested and it would be a lot
9 more changes in the affluence of the
10 park to fund than if it was allowed
11 to say open for all to enjoy.

12 Before I moved to Brooklyn I
13 lived in Battery Park City and we can
14 see from that example that there are
15 public spaces in New York City that
16 there is housing and there's still
17 open for residents, for tourists, for
18 people from around the City to come
19 and use. I think that's possible at
20 Brooklyn Bridge Park.

21 And also Battery Park City
22 showed that concessions are
23 challenging. It has ice skating
24 rink, it has been difficult to
25 maintain because there's not enough

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - PATTY HAGEN
2 revenue. Housing would provide a
3 base for revenues to support the
4 park. There also is currently is a
5 shortage of housing in New York City
6 on fiducial housing development on
7 the East side that would support that
8 overall policy objective.

9 I think that maximizing the
10 revenue within the park's boundaries
11 to support the park is really the
12 only approach that makes sense in
13 today's constraining -- Thank you
14 very much and thank you very much to
15 the committee.

16 MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. We
17 now have Patty Hagan next and Aaron
18 Deen (Phonetic).

19 PATTY HAGAN: Good evening
20 committee and Alternative to Housing
21 for Brooklyn Bridge Park. Thank for
22 holding another listening session. I
23 am Patty Hagan from the Prospect
24 Heights Action Coalition; a 32 year
25 resident of 117 St. Marks Ave,

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - PATTY HAGEN
2 Prospect Heights; incorrectly
3 identified as the "Atlantic jihade --
4 section of Brooklyn" by the New York
5 City Times today.

6 I have read through the BAE
7 study of alternatives to housing for
8 the funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park
9 Operations draft report. Right off
10 the bat I learned that my main
11 alternative funding idea, to reduce
12 the apparently sacrosanct sky-high
13 16.1 million dollar operating budget
14 by reducing the extremely conflict
15 landscape design installation
16 designed by Michael VanValkenburgh,
17 "did not pass the first threshold
18 parameter."

19 How extraordinary. We're
20 living through a prolonged recession,
21 New York City and New York State have
22 forced government agencies to reduce
23 their operating budgets but not
24 Brooklyn Bridge Park.

25 Operating budget reductions.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - PATTY HAGEN
2 "Operating budget reductions" was
3 branded among the "potential
4 alternative revenue sources
5 eliminated by the CAH from further
6 consideration. The very idea of
7 Brooklyn Bridge Park operating budget
8 reductions flunked "the first
9 threshold parameters." Never even
10 got to the "evaluative parameter."

11 Why is the hyper inflated
12 operating budget of 16.1 million
13 dollars set in stone? A 16.1 million
14 operating budget is not required
15 which is clear by referring back to
16 the 3 to 9 million sustainable
17 operating budget that was attained in
18 the community developed sustained in
19 the community development 2001 master
20 plan which was supported by Mayor
21 Bloomberg, Governor Pataki and the
22 community. Shamefully, the economic
23 development corporation never
24 bothered to study the communities to
25 our 2001 master plan.

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - PATTY HAGEN

2 A 16.1 million dollar operating
3 budget is not at "fundamental
4 principle" of Brooklyn Bridge Park it
5 is merely a phony public private
6 partnership pretext for ESPC the EDC
7 to deal in their developer cronies.
8 How on earth can reduction of the BBD
9 operating budget be among the "topics
10 outside of the scope of the CAH and
11 this report?

12 It seems obvious that deflation
13 of the 16.1 million BBD operating
14 budget is the bedrock of the starting
15 point for thinking of alternatives to
16 housing in Brooklyn Bridge Park. It
17 is not too late for the BBP CAH to
18 start thinking outside the BBP first
19 threshold parameters box.

20 By the way, nine years ago when
21 the memorandum of understanding filed
22 between the state of New York --

23 (One minute warning issued.)

24 I've waited a long time -- and
25 the City of New York regarding the

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LINDA DE ROSA

2 Brooklyn Bridge Park regard --

3 KEI HAYASHI: Let her read it.

4 PATTY HAGAN: -- was signed --
5 I'm almost done -- BBP with 67 acres
6 of land, why was it inflated to 85
7 acres, 20 acres, 24 percent now
8 described as maritime, under or in
9 water. Was the acreage creep allowed
10 so that 4 million dollars could be
11 added to the untouchable BBP
12 operating budget? Because to
13 maintain 12,000 deteriorating piles,
14 let them rot.

15 KEI HAYASHI: The next person
16 is Aaron Dean (phonetic) and then
17 Linda de Rosa. Is Aaron Dean here?
18 Okay, Linda de Rosa and then Dan
19 Wiley.

20 LINDA DE ROSA: Hi, I'm
21 Linda de Rosa, I'm the vice-president
22 of the Wilmington Association and
23 member of the Brooklyn Bridge Park
24 Defense Fund. And I'm reading a
25 statement for Carolyn Konheim

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LINDA DE ROSA
2 (Phonetic) who could not be here this
3 evening. And she says I want this
4 statement to focus on the best
5 practice case study and appendix B of
6 the BAA draft report.

7 What this site and this study
8 have in common is instructive. All
9 have several sources of funding park
10 operations. These include BID,
11 parking revenues; develop
12 contributions, sustainable revenues
13 from concessions and event fees. Two
14 of the eight plans -- two of the
15 eight plans would have the capital
16 reserve funds for endowments for
17 capital improvements as needed. One
18 of them is counting on using the
19 interest from a capital fund.

20 None proposed for up front
21 funding of full replacement cost.
22 None appear to have even considered
23 residential development in the park
24 or housing as a source of funding.
25 In the few cases where there is

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - LINDA DE ROSA
2 housing it is part of the large scale
3 development entirely separate and
4 does not issue it upon park land.
5 Reliance on housing to cover inflated
6 capital replacement cost is
7 definitely not best practice and is
8 entirely unwarranted in the case of
9 multiple funding sources that are in
10 the BAA report.

11 Again, I want to also finish
12 the statement that Ben Bankson, the
13 president of the Wilmington
14 Association, started earlier this
15 evening and he says that the days we
16 hear much about budget cuts from
17 elected officials, how about doing
18 some cutting in the pack plan that in
19 turn can bring down the maintenance
20 costs to a level sustainable through
21 alternatives.

22 Presently no funding is in
23 place to carry out the plans for
24 Pier 3. It is last on the
25 construction site. Why not simply

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY
2 eliminate it? Leaving it only as
3 pilings has been interestingly been
4 done at the southern corner of
5 Pier 1. To free up more of the
6 waterfront might make Brooklyn Bridge
7 Park even more of a world class park.

8 Many people have worked hard
9 for years to push for park on our
10 closed off waterfront. Sharing ideas
11 and critiques at many endless
12 meetings. But that the park is at
13 last coming into being is thrilling
14 gift to all of us which we are deeply
15 grateful for. Let us make sure that
16 pass along to our future generations
17 the best possible waterfront park in
18 this magnificent public space without
19 housing. Thank you.

20 KEI HAYASHI: I just want to
21 read the names of those -- Dan?

22 DAN WILEY: Yes.

23 KEI HAYASHI: Okay, Dan is
24 here.

25 DAN WILEY: Hi, friends. I'm

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY

2 Dan Wiley, Community Coordinator for
3 Congresswoman Velazquez. I've been
4 here to listen. I'm not here to make
5 an official statement for the
6 congressman at this event but have
7 been listen for last ten years since
8 I've been working for the
9 congresswoman. And also just to note
10 the congresswoman is the only elected
11 official that has an appointee on the
12 board of Brooklyn Bridge Park. That
13 has brought resources to the park
14 like the million dollars to the
15 transportation act that studies and
16 also got about 15 million dollars for
17 Brooklyn Waterfront Greenway that
18 helps increase that is -- Brooklyn
19 Bridge Park and funding for youth
20 activities, signs, and other kinds of
21 programs in the park.

22 I didn't want to make a
23 quick -- I couldn't resist -- having
24 sat through the whole thing, and also
25 having worked in Prospect Park for

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY

2 ten years before starting work for
3 the congresswoman in 2000 -- to have
4 kind of a response to Tupper Thomas'
5 point -- just as a historical, for
6 the record, because I think it was
7 interesting -- is Prospect Park, when
8 it was originally built by Vaux and
9 Olmsted, I'll say it in that order,
10 they learned from their mistakes in
11 Manhattan.

12 And the mistake in Manhattan
13 was to have this very large park
14 that's caught up by these transverse
15 roads and has these big institutions
16 like the museum and other things
17 encroach on the park. So what they
18 did when they first bought the
19 property to build Prospect Park they
20 originally had parcels on plaiting
21 both sides of Flatbush Avenue. So
22 you had parcel parts west to Flatbush
23 and then you also had Flatbush over
24 to Washington.

25 So when Olmsted and Vaux looked

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY

2 at it, they said let's don't make the
3 same mistake we did in Manhattan. We
4 don't want to put all these things --
5 we don't want to be a magnet for all
6 those other things we don't want.
7 They are going to want -- they are
8 going to want all this other stuff.
9 So let's find more property to the
10 south -- build --- get an extra
11 60-acre of -- which is the flat part
12 of the park to the south, and not
13 have the other side of Flatbush
14 Avenue be in the park. And that
15 would then take in all those things,
16 those culture kind of things like
17 those botanic gardens and have
18 that -- those things be there and not
19 and the park.

20 So I think that's kind of an
21 interesting point. I think Olmsted
22 and Voux wouldn't have actually
23 wanted to have the housing. Of
24 course I'm not saying what that means
25 for Brooklyn Bridge Park theirs is a

1 PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY
2 romantic idea of the pastoral parks.
3 They actually didn't want these
4 structures. They wanted berms and
5 things to mask off the adjacent
6 housing.

7 I don't think they
8 anticipated some of the bigger high
9 rise buildings that you can now see
10 popping out over the trees. They
11 want to have the have the feeling of
12 you're in a never ending landscape.

13 So, they can play grand on
14 these piles of -- construction which
15 I think Olmsted and Vaux would
16 want --

17 (One minute warning issued.)
18 -- if it was built adjacent to
19 the park -- outside of the park. So
20 I although I love comfort and I think
21 it's great that we could have had the
22 alliance -- generating the funds for
23 positive park to bring it back.

24 Thank you.

25 KEI HAYASHI: I'm just going to

1 CLOSING REMARKS

2 read the names of the individuals who
3 called before, but were not here:
4 Vincent Joseph.

5 MALE SPEAKER: Nope, he left.

6 KEI HAYASHI: Tom Marchelcon
7 (phonetic); Mike Braskey (phonetic);
8 and then Aaron Dean.

9 All right, I want to thank
10 everyone and I wish all a good
11 evening.

12 (Whereupon, at 8:00 p.m., the
13 above matter concluded.)

14
15

16 I, KERRIANNA MARASHAJ , a
17 Notary Public for and within the
18 State of New York, do hereby certify
19 that the above is a correct
20 transcription of my stenographic
21 notes.

22
23

24 _____
KERRIANNA MARASHAJ

25

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