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
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
OPENING REMARKS

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

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

I would like to invite now my fellow colleagues on the dais, who include a few members of the committee on alternatives to housing and of the full board to introduce themselves that are here tonight,
OPENING REMARKS

starting at my right.

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

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

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

MS. MYER: Regina Myer, Brooklyn Bridge Park.

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

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: I am sorry. I am Kei Hayashi, I am with the consultant, Bay Area Economics.
OPENING REMARKS

MR. STEEL:  Perfect. Now, let me take a moment if I might, just to review the order of play for tonight's hearing. In March 2010, the City entered into a memorandum of understanding with Assembly member, Joan Millman, and State Senator Daniel Squandron. This MOU outlined a series of steps to be undertaken, to study park financing alternatives with regards to Pier 6 and John Street development sites.

In accordance with this MOU, Brooklyn Bridge Park retained Bay Area Economics; Ms. Hayashi is representing them, to conduct a park financing alternative study under the direction of the corporation's Committee on Alternatives to Housing.

Late last year, Brooklyn Bridge Park conducted two public hearings to allow "public input regarding alternative sources" of financing.

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

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

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

If it accepts the report this constitutes a recommendation to the full board to adopt the report. The full board then can accept, partially accept, or reject the recommendation.
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The purpose of tonight's session is to collect feedback from members of the public on the draft report and its discussion of alternative sources of financing to replace revenue from the Pier 6 and John Street development sites.

Kei Hayashi of Bay Area Economics will serve as the hearing chair and review the format and ground rules for tonight's hearing in just a moment. These ground rules are only to ensure that we take statements in an orderly fashion and that everyone who has attended tonight has the opportunity to speak on the record if should they wish to do so. We have retained for this evening a stenographer, so that we have a complete and accurate record of the proceedings.

Let me also emphasize this hearing is not the only opportunity to submit comments. Bay Area
OPENING REMARKS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

My purpose is to run the hearing in a fair and impartial manner.
OPENING REMARKS

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

Written comments on the draft report are requested and will continue to be received and considered by BAE and the CAH after conclusion of tonight's hearing until Monday, April 25. Please note that written comments, if any, should be sent by e-mail to bayareaeconomics@bbttestimony@bae1.com. And there is a slip of paper outside on the table with this information on it.

We will take a break at approximately 7:15 for about five minutes and then immediately resume.
OPENING REMARKS

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

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

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

And the last thing is, please
keep in mind that either in addition
OPENING REMARKS

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

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

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

So we will now begin the public testimony portion of the evening.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LORI RAPHAEL

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

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

The Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce supports the current self sustaining financing plan for Brooklyn Bridge Park. And we urge the committee on alternatives to retain this plan as the only option.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LORI RAPHAEL

that will ensure the completion of
the park without significant delay.

The current financing plan
received sufficient public review and
study during the project's
environmental review stage, and is
encapsulated in the general project
plan.

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

In fact, these commercial
sponsorships will add more private
residence to the park while producing
far less revenue, thereby increasing
pressure on the park's operator to
raise fees for public and
recreational use. The alternative,
with respect to the Watchtower
properties, generating revenue is
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LORI RAPHAEL

speculative and cannot be relied upon
to generate revenue in the near term.
Those properties are owned by a
private non-profit corporation that
has shown no sense of urgency to
sell. And the city has no standing
to incorporate tax revenues
associated with those sites into any
of its projections.

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

We cannot afford to lose a
reliable and steady stream of income
to maintain the park and we should
not jeopardize the completion of this
important public access to waterfront
recreation for all of our citizens.
Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: State Senator
PUBLIC COMMENTS - SENATOR SQUADRON

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

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

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

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

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

In terms of my own testimony and statement, BAE thanks you very much for a report that really does lay a lot of things out there. And I think we could quibble on the margins, on lots of them, but one of the strengths of the report is there are a lot of different pieces out there that we can look at. I don't
think that it's clear, you know, I don't think that any of us take exactly chapter and verse, this is the only way it could be done. I think what we see is some ideas in there; we see ranges of dollars; that's useful.

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

So it is -- I think you've been very impressive if you look at where we started a year ago, I think over the next weeks and months we're going to continue to work together to have
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY WEBSTER

a park that meets its potential. I think it's a great park for this community and for the City and for the world. You know, this Brooklyn Bridge Park is part of the greater parks, the central part to the center of the City, and without this part of it our community is not reaching its whole potential. And so with this kind of community support I know we will get there.

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

Thank you. Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

Nancy Webster and then Irene Janner.

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

Since 2004, the Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy has supported the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY WEBSTER

general project plan for Brooklyn Bridge Park, which calls for a limited amount of residential and commercial development to fully finance the maintenance and operations of the self sustaining Brooklyn Bridge Park.

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

Of the alternative studies, the conservancy believes that the careful and judicious use of private events, the exploration of sponsorship opportunities, and private philanthropy, and support of capital projects, and the metering of street level parking spaces holds the potential as revenue sources.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY WEBSTER

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

Here's why this discussion is so important tonight. Brooklyn Bridge Park isn't fully funded yet. The park still needs approximately 130 million dollars to complete its construction. The City of New York has said it will provide the capital dollars to build the rest of Brooklyn Bridge Park. But those dollars will
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY WEBSTER

flow only if the park has a viable
plan to fund its maintenance and
operations.

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

(One minute warning issued)

-- but not allocated is hanging in
the balance. We cannot afford to
walk away from that and lose the
promise of Brooklyn Bridge Park.

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

To that end, we call on the
Brooklyn Bridge Park Corporation, the
Mayor, and our local elected
officials to reach an agreement and
PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE JANNER

move forward now with a revenue plan that fully funds the beautiful, safe, and vibrant Brooklyn Bridge Park and to fully commit the remaining 130 million dollars in capital funds to complete the world class waterfront park this community has worked for over the past 25 years. Thank you.

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

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

Basically, I am speaking for myself. My own opinions have been informed by my activities as a community member involved in the planning of this park since 1986. First with the Brooklyn Heights Association that started the idea when the piers were announced to be disposable property. Later with the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE JANNER

Brooklyn Bridge Park Coalition, which has become the conservancy of which I am still a board member. And as a member of Community Board 2 since 1992, and I chaired the parks committee there for seven years. So with this background I am speaking for myself.

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

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

The park is not fully funded yet. After 25 years of effort that I
PUBLIC COMMENTS – IRENE JANNER

have helped in for the whole 25 years, we now have the political will by the City to actually complete the construction of this park.

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

There has been concerns expressed that --

(One minute warning issued)

-- that housing might privatize the park, but what housing we have had experience with, which is 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park, has not seemed to discourage people from 175 zip codes and in the thousands coming to the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY BOWE

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

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

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

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

MS. BOWE: Hi, I'm Nancy Bowe and I'm speaking on behalf of the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY BOWE

Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy.

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

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

Now, some have very understandably raised concerns that residential buildings adjacent to the park could privatize the park. And as Irene mentioned, we now have real data. 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park has
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY BOWE

been open longer than Pier 6 has and has no indication whatsoever that 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park, the building, is interfering with the children at Pier 6 playground or the many bikers, joggers, and walkers like me on the pathway. So we're fairly confident that that should give people comfort.

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

Now, we do believe that some of the revenue generating ideas, as has been mentioned by others, would actually privatize the park more than housing at its perimeter. By building retail stores or parking garages on what otherwise would be open space or as I re-mention charging fees for basketball courts
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NANCY BOWE

that are free at every other City park.

(One minute warning issued)

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

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

Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Doug
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DOUG BIVIANO

Biviano and then Irene Van Slyke.

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

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

From dollars in here -- one, from dollars the Committee on Alternative to Housing has already identified in their report; from dollars from the over three million square feet of Jehovah's Witness buildings adjacent to the park that were unexplored in this report and voted on in December to be
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DOUG BIVIANO

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

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

For design changes I would also emphasize more modest designs. For example, a pedestrian bridge from Squibb Park to Pier 1 seems unnecessary and would further blow the capital reserve requirements for its maintenance and would waste over
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DOUG BIVIANO

four million in capital that would be
used to complete the parks sooner
than later. In lieu of the bridge
you need a gradient plank ramp from
the southwest -- southeast corner of
Squibb, at the lowest elevation of
this retaining -- of the stone
retaining wall that is approximately
15 feet to the open space along the
-- The ramp can then be gradient to
the slope and switched back to the
existing gate.

By carefully marking,
crosswalks can be then placed.

(One minute warning issued)
The gate has lots of visual clearance
from the retaining wall on the blind
point where it starts curving. This
is an example of a more moderate
design for the park that should be
considered to save both capital
revenue and expenditures. Another
element would be minimizing the earth
work and fill -- expensive earth work
PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE VAN SLYKE

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

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

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

MS. VAN SLYKE: Hi, I'm Irene Van Slyke. I'm a member of the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE VAN SLYKE

Sierra Club. For the record both the New York City and New York State Sierra Club Chapters have long standing retributions opposing any plans for a future Brooklyn Bridge Park that incorporates residential buildings because it's incompatible with a public park.

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

A public park is a park in the democratic tradition of inviting and serving all peoples of the rainbow, from young to old, rich and poor, able bodied or challenged. And as for accountability, a public park you can complain to the parks department or elected officials. Not so for this park. It's not really a park.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE VAN SLYKE

even though everyone continues to
call it that. In the future we see a
lack of accountability because of the
corporate structure rather than the
public one.

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

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

They could not even consider
PILOTS or payment in lieu of taxes as
tax revenue as tax exempt once
Federal properties are sold to new
tax payers only. The CAH looked at
PUBLIC COMMENTS - IRENE VAN SLYKE

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

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

(One minute warning issued)

-- satisfy the sustainability
requirement even though it calls for
four million dollars in extra taxes
from people who live in proximity of
the park.

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

Unexplored were the
possibilities of repurposing of the
360 Berman Building to increase revue
of this commercial entity. By the
way, the apartments remain empty even
though there's daily extensive
marketing for people to buy those
PUBLIC COMMENTS - T. K. SMALL

apartments. There's mention of a community plan for Pier 6 that would create a destination for visitors and community alike.

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

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

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

I don't really believe some the language in the draft report so far. The idea not including a bigger park improvement district I think is
PUBLIC COMMENTS - T. K. SMALL

something serious. I think that there's something that needs to be explored further. Basic numbers are wrong.

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

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

I think that we have all find ourselves -- into sort of a mandatory make a decision now, you know, the sky is falling, you know. We've
PUBLIC COMMENTS - T. K. SMALL

created this sense of urgency that I really feel is dividing the community. You know, you are either pro or con, yes or no.

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

(One minute warning issued)

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

Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. John Watts and then Meredith Leslie.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOHN WATTS

MR. WATTS: I'm John Watts. I've been interested in this park for a long time. I live on Pierrepont Place. I just want to make a strong plea for action but beforehand I would like to just remember about four milestones that have come through since I got involved in '85, I think.

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

Well, we finally ended up with the Port Authority Plan, which if any of you remember it was just looked like somebody planted towers out
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOHN WATTS

there. It was about ten percent
grass and the rest of it was housing.
And we went to a meeting where we had
to choose between those different
plans, and one or the other long
timers stood up and said, hey, let's
have another plan. That's how that
thing ended. And maybe we should do
something else with it. And so that
led to more talk.

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

Bob knew all of it by heart.
All the first square foot rents from
the house for concessions, housing
and various things. It was quite
clear that we had to have
multi-storied buildings and the ones
that are all ready in the park, as it
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOHN WATTS

turned out over time it's also quite
clear we need multi-story buildings.

But I'd like to emphasis is the
ones that we are talking about

tonight are less than one percent --

(One minute warning issued)

-- of the land area of the park. And
we had accepted all along that we had
to have some commercial operations
because the park had to carry itself.

So I urge everyone not to run the
risk of losing the third of the park
that's not even promised, or the even
greater portion that's not yet
allocated.

And let's get this very fine
plan which came in over the last five
years we've worked by probably the
best landscape and park planning
architect in the country and get that
going. Because I don't think any
of -- I don't think any of the things
that have been proposed has great big
chunks could solve the problem.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - MEREDITH LESLIE

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

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

Meredith Leslie and Neely Cather.

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

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

We would like to thank the Brooklyn Bridge Park Committee on Alternatives to Housing for their effort to solicit public input and applaud the BAE for its thoughtful and thorough report. BAE's examination of potential alternatives
PUBLIC COMMENTS - MEREDITH LESLIE

to housing in the park provides a number of options that could divert funding sources.

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

In April 2010, New Yorkers for Park published Supporting Our Parks: A Guide to Alternative Revenue Strategies. This report examines almost 30 strategies that have been used for generate revenue for City, state, and Federal parks across the country. The different models employ
PUBLIC COMMENTS - MEREDITH LESLIE

a mix of commercial, residential, and cultural revenue programs as well as a varied tax structure that generates funding for parks.

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

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

A park improvement district could provide a reliable steady
PUBLIC COMMENTS - MEREDITH LESLIE

stream of revenue to the park and while having no negative impact on the physical park experience. The creation of metered parking along --

(One minute warning issued)

-- street is a low cost alternative that could be implemented quickly and have little impact on the park experience as well.

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

The fee based recreation option concerns us as the central mission to ensure equitable services across the City. The pay to play model prices out the city's most vulnerable population and raises troubling
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NEELY CATHER

issues of privatization in public parks. We urge the committee to avoid this alternative.

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

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

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

MS. CATHER: I'm Neely and actually I signed up accidently.

MS. HAYASHI: Would you like to
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JIM LIMA

make a comment?

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

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

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

MR. LIMA: Good evening. My
name is James Lima; I'm a partner
with HRNA advisors for real estate
and we came out as advisors. The
firm has been very involved in
working through planning and
implementation conditions for the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JIM LIMA

park for more than a decade.

And I am speaking on behalf the firm first to commend the BAE for creative, thoughtful, and innovative ideas to supplement long term operating revenues for the park. But to caution that, history shows that in America many of the parks that working on in an advisory role we are pretty good at coming up with the capital first costs of the park and are almost always delinquent in planning for the future sustainability of the operations and maintenance to ensure the quality and the character of those parks are preserved.

So, I think while there are a number of interesting options to supplement I can also speak from my experience as the founding presidents of companies I own, preservation and education corporations with very similar mandates -- that's closer to
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JIM LIMA

many of you.

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

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

(One minute warning issued)
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JIM LIMA

-- a vibrant and safer park. And I think it's important to note also that the corporation will control these sites long term.

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

William Russell then Kate Collignon.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - WILLIAM RUSSELL

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

It's not shocking that the park got started based on funding that maybe was a bit short sighted. Low and behold it seems that we've run out of money to finish the park.

It is also not shocking that what seems to be occurring, although I have to confess there are not copies of the MOU up there, I haven't had a chance to study it and I don't have full details of what the park improvement district is but, it seems to me that what is occurring is we're now out of money. How do we find the money? And so what seems to be one of the ideas is to charge more taxes
PUBLIC COMMENTS - WILLIAM RUSSELL

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

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

I haven't checked but I don't
think that the residents along
5th Avenue who live in very nice
areas that freely enjoy the benefits
of Central Park haven't been paying a
PUBLIC COMMENTS - WILLIAM RUSSELL

special assessment because they
happen to live next to Central park.
If I'm wrong about that please let me
know. But I do believe the
department should be funded by the
public at large if the public at
large wants to enjoy it.

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

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

Otherwise, if you want the
public to enjoy it, and tourist and
other folks, then increase the value
of the park to the City, then let's
pubically fund it. Thank you so
much.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

MS. HAYASHI: Kate Collignon
and then Matt Hopkins.

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

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

MALE SPEAKER: Mike's not
arrived.

MS. HAYASHI: Okay.

MS. COLLIGNON: My name is Kate
Collignon.

MALE SPEAKER: You must be very
close.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Is that
better?

2ND FEMALE SPEAKER: No.

MS. COLLIGNON: My name is Kate
Collignon. I'm a member of the
Brooklyn Bridge Park Community
Advisory Council. I'm also a --
Park resident. And I am a former
employee of the New York City
Development Corporation and was --
involved in the negotiating agreement
PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

that allowed 360 Park Berman to
become part of park boundary and
contribute revenue towards park
operations.

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

That said, there are ways to
address the concerns that have been
raised by the community, by other
community members about the
residential and still find a way to
support park operations at the level
we all want. Moving forward we
should fully explore those and I
applaud the Committee on Alternative
to Housing and their consultant for
doing so.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

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

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

As I mentioned I remain supportive of exploring every alternative and I know one that has been generated outside the report is
PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

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

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

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

On the ground lease, they're permitted in Brooklyn Bridge Park thanks to special state legislation but I'm not familiar with examples.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - KATE COLLIGNON

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

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

In sum -- the approach is certainly to explore every opportunity but it's also important that we resolve this process and not get caught up in too many political
PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATT HOPKINS

debates. Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Matt

Hopkins and then Chris Tepper.

MR. HOPKINS: Sorry. My name

is Matt Hopkins. I spoke on this

before so this is not going to be all

that dissimilar to my last comments

but I'm here to speak in support of

the current financing plan for

Brooklyn Bridge Park or the existing

financing plan and to urge the

committee to move forward to ensure

the park is completed without delay.

I'm a lifelong Brooklynite,

born and raised in Park Slope and I

went to school two blocks away from

here at St. Anne's. So I spent a

good portion of my life enjoy both

Prospect Park and Kent and Plaza Park

one of which I think pales in

comparison, obviously to Brooklyn

Bridge Park. Because of this I'm

acutely aware of the great need for

public spaces like Brooklyn Bridge
PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATT HOPKINS

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

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

The -- plan is aimed at minimizing the development footprint within the park while simultaneously recognizing that waterfront parks are expensive to maintain and cannot be operated without some alternative source of capital. The proposed housing and limited hotel uses on site are compatible with the park and would provide ancillary spaces like
PUBLIC COMMENTS - MATT HOPKINS

restrooms and restaurants for park users. Furthermore, while others will argue the plan is a push to privatize the park it really has no basis in this example based on the minimal size of the development footprint as well as the fact that the plan is already, in some respect, in action with maintenance and upkeep funds that are contributed from 1 Brooklyn Bridge Park without a conflict.

My final point is simply that the current financial plan is not subject to unforeseen government budget cycles and ensures the park will be adequately maintained and continue to offer the fantastic amenities that make it a real -- (One minute warning issued) -- gem on the Brooklyn Waterfront.

The last thing that I just wanted to say which is off from my written statements, is that in the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRISTOPHER TEPPER

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

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

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

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

I'm already on the record as
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRISTOPHER TEPPER

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

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

One of them was already brought up by the speaker who spoke two people before me, Kate Collignon. I think that alternative that we -- that's been asked -- is the most about the Watchtower property is a
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRISTOPHER TEPPER

real one.

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

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

It's been projected that that
would be between 111 and
approximately 450 dollars per person
per year. That is four more meals
that they're not eating out in the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRISTOPHER TEPPER

City of New York creating sales tax, generating other jobs and economic activity in the City. So, I don't think that that actually meets the spirit of the fact that you're not taking away revenue that would have already been generated for the general fund.

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

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

So I don't think that's
PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I continue to believe that we
can develop an operating budget
strategy that would create the
revenue needed to match the cost of
upkeep and maintenance for the entire
PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

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

FEMALE SPEAKER: Thank you.

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

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

Therefore, I believe that this fee can be substantially raised. And
by that same logic I believe that we could increase the revenue generated by event fees. In 2010 the park raised 145,000 dollars in events. That income at an average per event would be 2,500 dollars. I believe that Brooklyn Bridge Park is a special enough backdrop that event organizers would be willing to pay a premium for an event there. And with substantially more space available for events once the park is built out, the estimate of 288,000 dollars per year I believe is too conservative and ought to be looked at again.

With regard to parking, to me the estimate of 438,000 dollars per year seems that what could actually be achieved. One needs to look at Manhattan where below 96th street many meters are currently charging 3 dollars per hour for on street parking.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

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

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

With regard to the PID idea, the Park Improvement District, I think that this idea ought to be explored further. Personally, would I have a problem paying an increased assessment for Brooklyn Bridge Park if I owned a home in the catchment area where I saw an increase in my assessed value due to the park being there? No, personally I would not. Obviously -- or -- I don't -- I'm not a home owner in that area.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

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

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

This is a -- it's an amazingly propitious opportunity in terms of what -- what can be raised upon the sale of those properties as part of a -- the taxes that could result of it. We're looking at 26 properties.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - COUNCILMAN LEVIN

that Watchtower owns, none of which
are paying taxes to the City coffers.
And with that type of opportunity the
9 million dollars that you need to
raise to bridge the gap in terms of
our operating budget and maintenance
budget per year is a drop in that
bucket. And I think that, again, its
a tremendous opportunity. I think we
really should be -- ought to be
really looking at it seriously and
from a broader City perspective
because this again is -- is, you
know if you look at the just the
opportunity of space in downtown
Brooklyn and if -- if in fact,
what -- what we're hearing is true
that the Jehovah's Witnesses are
planning on moving out of Brooklyn,
again its something that could be
incorporated and fill a whole lot of
needs beyond just the park here.
But -- but it could certainly address
the situation. So, with that I think
thank you very much and have a great
night. Thanks.

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

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

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

    We suggest that they be
redesigned as intricle parts of the
park. They provide good
possibilities for a far more
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN BANKSON

appropriate and inviting gateway then
two bulky condo towers that many
people do not seem to realize are a
real possibility.

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

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

In our view, the draft report
in and of itself underscores the real
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN BANKSON

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

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

(One minute warning issued)

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

We urge that the report go forward to the park's board for adoption and implementation. Some
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN BANKSON

say that the first alternative, a park improvement district, is dead on arrival. We disagree. Nearly all of Willowtown is within the boundaries of the conceptual PID. Our residents, we are confident, would fully support it and gladly pay the new tax of assessments of a little more than one dollar a day.

Such an assessment is simply a fair exchange for the value of the park adds to our neighborhood and to our houses. Let's be democratic and put the matter up for a vote.

Furthermore the PID boundaries of delineage -- they have expanded to include all of Brooklyn Heights and Vinegar Hill as well as go into Cobble Hill.

We see a great and timely opportunity in the expected disposition of the Watchtower properties and call on the political will to cull the necessary strengths
to make this happen. Here again, we have buildings as the source of needed funding. But these buildings front --

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

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

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

(Recess.)

MS. HAYASHI: Ian Riley is now at the microphone so if we can go ahead and get started. And this is just to be mindful of everyone's time and to give everyone an opportunity to speak. So thank you Ian, if you can state your affiliation and then we can get started.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - IAN RILEY

MR. RILEY: My name is Ian Riley --

MALE SPEAKER: Use the microphone.

MR. RILEY: My name's Ian Riley I'm representing the New York Building Congress and I'll be reading the testimony of Richard T. Anderson, the president of the New York Building Congress.

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

Having built this park it is now our duty as its stewards to
PUBLIC COMMENTS - IAN RILEY

ensure that it remains a first class attraction to millions of visitors to the City and beyond. Brooklyn Bridge Park in close partnership with the City and state has completed another study scrutinizing revenue generating options necessary to maintain the park and the underwater infrastructure that supports this.

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

Number one, residential structures adjacent to the park will create a critical mass, that will assure a safe environment within the park district and create important
PUBLIC COMMENTS - NORMAN COX

24/7 use to anchor the western edge of Brooklyn Heights.

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

Norman Cox is next and then Ken Baer.

MR. COX: Hello. My name is Norman Cox. I'm representing the Columbia Waterfront Neighborhood Association. A few comments on the BAE report, the last section in one
of the appendixes is recorded a comparison of eight other parks around the country and the world.

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

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

I think this is quite an extraordinary plan. We have what is proposed to be a great public amenity
yet it is proposed to fund it almost entirely from fairly risky private sources. It seems to me that if is --

MS. HAYASHI: I apologize.

Maybe you should turn that mic off.

Sorry about that.

MR. COX: It seems to me that if this is to be a truly public amenity that the public has an obligation to support it. And if the public really wants this I'm sure that means can be found. To my mind the PID is one of the more interesting opportunities. I feel that the boundaries of the PID or someone arbitrary. I think it could be expanded considerably with some logic. Also I think that the opportunities presented by the Watchtower properties are very -- are very important and they should be looked at carefully and more --

(One minute warning issued.)
PUBLIC COMMENTS - KEN BAER

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

MS. HAYASHI: Ken Baer and then David Kramer.

Excuse me, could you wait just one second.

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

A park is not a place to reside. The worst thing that could happen to the Brooklyn Bridge Park would be construction of additional residential buildings. Public access to the park is of paramount importance and more high rises would serve as an unwelcoming obstacle to
PUBLIC COMMENTS - KEN BAER

enjoying this public amenity.

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

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

Under no circumstances should the operating budget be loaded with
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAVID KRAMER

expenditures related capital
facilities. And maintenance budget
must be brought done to the level of
other parks.

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: David Kramer and
then Fred Kent.

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

I have no pride of authorship
in the original DIS having had
nothing to do with the financial
analysis of the park plan. But as I
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAVID KRAMER

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

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

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

That's right in the middle of February there's going to be a cash spewing basketball playing profit center day after day. And if you think about it and compare to other
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAVID KRAMER

basketball courts in the City or
around the world, you know. Visitors
are going to come to our park in ten
years and they're never going
notice the 15 story building hugging
Berman Street and paying for the park
but they will say can you believe
they're charging $25 for a
basketball court?

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

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

We at the conservancy -- I'm
on the board -- have been in the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAVID KRAMER

fundraising business for a while and people want contribute to programs, to -- to program associates not to fund people picking up trash and mowing the lawn. It's just not --

(One minute warning issued.)

-- a particularly compelling ask to say to a donor well yeah, we had a way to pay for the park but we'd rather you write the check.

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

I think that would some updated tax projections along with a few of the BAE ideas such as parking
PUBLIC COMMENTS - FRED KENT

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

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

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

I have now the pleasure of, I
PUBLIC COMMENTS - FRED KENT

love working on waterfronts. We are now working on Abu Dhabi on the biggest known project in the world and Perth Australian, I'll be working there in May. Annapolis, Nassau in the Bahamas not Nassau right around here and Buffalo.

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

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

And what happened is it was totally turned upside down. And yesterday and the day before 350 people came talking about
PUBLIC COMMENTS - FRED KENT

collaboration between the community
and the creative people in the
community and the Erie Canal
Development Corporation to work
together to create a destination on
their waterfront.

There are three committees and
instead of the top down committee
heads of one person -- seven people
deciding the outcomes there are now
120 people that are working together
to create a great destination.

There's a 125 million dollars in the
Empire State Development Corporation.
They -- the community thinks they can
match that. Both in labor and
financing to help bring that
waterfront back to what it was in
the 1850's.

So my recommendation for how to
take this -- and the big words in
Buffalo are lighter, quicker,
cheaper. How can we do a whole bunch
of short term high energy type of
PUBLIC COMMENTS - FRED KENT

activities that can be brought onto the waterfront and experiment -- we'll have 300 jobs in Buffalo this summer. There are no jobs in this plan in the future. There are no -- like a market. If you put a market -- Island has a market. There's a 125 dollars a square foot that is -- the leases that the vendors pay in that market.

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

And then take Pier 6, where if you've ever heard of a stupider idea than a perched wetland I would like to know what that is. Remember a
PUBLIC COMMENTS - SANDY BALBOZA

Perched wetland is something that is above the water and cost an enormous amount of money. Put the community plan that they did on that Pier and you will get the kind of revenue and support from the community that you don't have now.

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

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

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

2ND MALE VOICE: Pick it up.

Take it out of the -- can you take it out?

MS. BALBOZA: Can you hear me?

MALE VOICE: Yeah.

MS. BALBOZA: Okay. I'm Sandy Balboza, president of the Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association, AABA.

It is unfortunate that the consultants BAE did not meet with community members before the draft
PUBLIC COMMENTS - SANDY BALBOZA

study was completed. That dialog
would have been formed this better
results. It is the community which
will make the park a destination and
a success, not high rises, roads, and
nonfunctional landscaping.

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

Skipping that.

We can build a less expensive
park by eliminating costly park
features which are expensive to
build, operate, and maintain. For
PUBLIC COMMENTS - SANDY BALBOZA

example the perched wetlands which Fred just mentioned, planed for Pier 6 are expensive to build and maintain; not useable, not revenue producing. A simple open space would allow for revenue producing events, pop-ups, concessions, and seasonal markets.

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

A well designed, well --

(One minute warning issued.)
PUBLIC COMMENTS - SANDY BALBOZA

-- maintained park is a great amenity. Property owners will realize measurable gains in higher rental rates, tenant retention, and increased property values. A PID must be approved by simple majority of property owners within a fixed unit of geographic boundary.

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: That was it.

That was all.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROY SLOANE

MS. BALBOZA: That was it.

MS. HAYASHI: Yes.

MS. BALBOZA: Oh, oh.

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

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

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

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

that would be opposed. So it's really disingenuous and self serving to say that it is not privatized.

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

It's an immense set of roads.

I mean they are lost. Kids are not going to play on them, there will be no ball games there, you will not hear music there, it really deprives us of the value of the park.

The BAE report conclusively demonstrates that there are significant untapped funding sources but in my opinion in virtually every case important revenue sources were not investigated or were minimized.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROY SLOANE

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

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

They do not recommend monetizing any of the --

(One minute warning issued.)

-- over 1000 spots that are in the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROY SLOANE

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

Now, let me just say I have a few rules of my own. I will never approve a park until it actually serves the children, the young adults, and all the people of Cobble Road. I will never approve of a plan until it activates economically Atlantic Avenue and Columbia Street. And I am happy to support a PID on the day that every single -- that PID includes every single person in New York and I will never support housing until there is a high rise in Prospect Park, Central Park, also in front of Commissioner Benepe's house, and commercial revenue generating source in every single in New York state. Thank you very much.
MS. HAYASHI: Ethan Kent and then Ben Crane.

MR. KENT: All right, thanks.

I'm Ethan Kent. I'm the vice-president of Projects for Public Spaces. We're a not-for-profit planning for -- advocates -- non-profit educational advocacy and technical assistance -- I've been lucky enough to work around the world on several waterfronts and have to tell you that almost all waterfront processes have a lot of contention in them.

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

I've actually become creative because of looking at these types of issues. In looking how do we more
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ETHAN KENT

creatively fund and create
destinations that drive economic
activity, create cultural amenities,
become the faces of our boroughs.

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

So I think there's a
misunderstanding about the
relationship between housing and
parks. Housing in and of itself --
in and of itself is not a problem.
It's the -- it's the way into this
park and the way the housing is
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ETHAN KENT

significantly changed the park and --

since it's been introduced.

The -- it's the design of the

park that is the extremely

privatizing. Its -- its single

use -- the way it precludes evolution

of the park over time is the problem

that's going to make it the most

expensive and costly to the City.

And it's the way that it is going to

preclude it from really realizing the

potential of this incredible location

on the waterfront.

The issue that HRNA mentioned,

that housing generates activity in

park. We don't actually find that,

there's a little bit of a myth about

on that, the eyes on the -- it is --

how it's actually evolved is

potential usage, it actually varies

but -- the footfall of walking.

The eyes on the street issue is

actually, that's what prevents

activity. We did a training course
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ETHAN KENT

in Vancouver Canada --

(One minute warning issued.)

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

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

So we recommend this; This might have been a cheaper idea. It once was the -- what the corporation
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BEN CRANE

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

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

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

MALE SPEAKER: Except yourself.

MR. CRANE: Well, I'm not sure about that. There's only one important thing that sticks out for me. I've been going to these things for 26 years and I've heard it all by now. And what I would like to say is this is an opportune moment to actually do something.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROBERT ELMES

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

Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

Robert Elmes and then Jane Kojima.

MR. ELMES: Thank you very much to the committee. My name is Robert Elmes. I'm the director of Galapagos Art Space we're at 16 Main
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ROBERT ELMES

Street in Dumbo. We're a 250 person cultural venue. We do theater, dance, performance, et cetera. We also began Dumbo Kite Flying Society for kids and it's a program that we run the first month -- the first Saturday of every month in Brooklyn Bridge Park.

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

We think it would help us to draw residents -- or audiences to Dumbo and their economic impact would be felt in our neighborhood and we think that is important as well. The
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JANE KOJIMA

next meeting of the Kite Flying Society is this Saturday at
10:00 a.m. and you all invited.

Thank you.

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

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

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

The current financing plan should move forward not only to avoid the inevitable delays associated with new funding structures but because the added population occupying the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JANE KOJIMA

promised buildings lining the edge of
the park as my building does will add
life and safety 12 months of the year
not just the slowest months.

The maintenance of the park is
an obvious concern of those living
next to it. The required funds can
be provided under the current plan
while the alternatives are
speculative subjects to uncertain
market conditions and possibly
destructive to the park by
introducing excessive
commercialization.

The Watchtower option relies on
re zoning. Actions that have been
extremely contentious on other
projects and all in order to create
luxury housing within a stone's throw
of where the current plan proposes
housing. It doesn't make sense.

Taxing locally for a regional
park seems to place the burden on the
wrong folks. The vast majority of
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ALEXANDRIA SICA

the users will come from outside the proposed incremental tax district.
This is a City park not a local park.

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: Alexandria Sica

and Clint Padgitt.

MS. SICA: Thank you. My name is Alexandria Sica. I'm the executive director of the Dumbo Improvement District. We're an organization that supports the small
PUBLIC COMMENTS - ALEXANDRIA SICA

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

Brooklyn Bridge Park is a transformative space and we look forward to the continued progress and support the existing general project plan. In my role at the DIB we work closely Dumbo retail and cultural community and their businesses are really looking forward to enjoying this amenity and the traffic that it brings to the neighborhood is a vibrant addition to the neighborhood and the local economy.

What -- what's important to the businesses is that it's a well maintained access. And the report indicates that a number of the options that were looked at don't meet the requirement that the housing plan would put forth. And so we ask that -- that we move forward with the general plan as it is.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CLINT PADGITT

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

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

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

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

And I understand from the plans I've seen that one of the buildings is supposed to be 31 stories high. And I wonder if people who support
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CLINT PADGITT

housing there realize how tall such a
building is. And if you're
interested in urban planning or
historic preservation you would not
want a building that tall. There has
to be a solution that provides
alternative funding but does not
require a building of that size.

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Next
we have Mike Rafsky and Tony Manheim.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - TONY MANHEIM

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

Tony Manheim and Chris Havens.

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

A while later it was changed where the park had to raise the funds on site to maintain the site on which the park sits. Very different order of magnitude. That's why we have a budget now set at five million which is what we think it would have been
PUBLIC COMMENTS - TONY MANHEIM

of 16 million.

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

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

They're countless other
PUBLIC COMMENTS - TONY MANHEIM

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

(One minute warning issued.)

-- in dominion 2. I'm going to skip over that but this is available, a couple copies are available.

And touch on the Jehovah's Witnesses prospect. There's been a gross, rejection of a gross of Jehovah's Witnesses property, gross misunderstanding in two respects.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - TONY MANHEIM

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

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

There's nothing wrong with the Plaza Hotel model of building luxury housing along 5th Avenue along side of Central Park West and not inside
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRIS HAVENS

the park. Thank you.

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

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

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

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

Collectively though, the alternatives proposed are not
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRIS HAVENS

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

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

But let me -- let's talk about numbers. If you took the 40 plus
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRIS HAVENS

bars -- the 40 bars and restaurants on Smith Street. And assuming they were paying ten thousand a month in rent, which not all of them do, but just assume they were. 40 bars and restaurants. If you took all that rent and put 40 saloons in the park you would cover less than one third of the maintenance budget.

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

(One minute warning issued.)

If you want to turn it into an alcohol mall like Bourbon Street in Enola (phonetic), its fun for me but that's not a park.

Watchtower. The Watchtower Clock property under discussion is occupied. It is not on the sale market. I know that for a fact. The Watchtower organization owns three,
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CHRIS HAVENS
three ready to go development sites
in Dumbo as well as four nearly
vacant commercial buildings on
Sand Street and a mostly vacant hotel
on Montague. Those are selling
first. The clock property is
irrelevant.

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

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you. Tom
Monsocohen and then Reed Kennedy.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - REED KENNEDY

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

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

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

And I think -- while I think a very vocal local opposition -- it's important and everybody should have the opportunity to speak their voice.

I think again, this is larger
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LUCY KOTEEN

opportunity for the City. It's a
larger opportunity for kids. It's a
larger opportunity for families.

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

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

Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you also.

Lucy Koteen and then Paul Thompson.

Is Paul here?

MS. KOTEEN: Hi, my name is
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LUCY KOTEEN

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

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

It was only after the current administration had reconfigured the park that grossly inflated the maintenance demands of the park and designed on that no longer represents the founding principles of the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LUCY KOTEEN

Brooklyn Bridge Park that it was determined that luxury housing had to be embraced as a funding mechanism for this park.

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

If this had been the deal back in 1984 or again in 2001, the community would certainly have recommended a different plan for the piers. As it stands now these deal is unseemly. This project need to eliminate the duplicative bureaucracies of the entity and the conservancy and the park should be
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LUCY KOTEEN

placed under the management of New York City Park System.

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

(One minute warning issued.)

In addition they have all developed their government agreements.

Through event fees, food concessions, film studio fees, parking fees, corporate sponsorships, private donations, facility rentals and other programs they have all found ways to pay for their parks. It is frustrating to realize that one of the world centers of creativity and so little imagination has been
PUBLIC COMMENTS - PAUL THOMPSON

activated to consider ways to finance this park.

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

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

MR. THOMPSON: Good evening.

My name is Paul Thompson. I'm the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - PAUL THOMPSON

founding principle of the Urban Assembly School of Music and Art which is a public high school. We are on Flatbush Avenue Extension just west of Tiller (phonetic). So we are literally at the mouth of the Manhattan Bridge.

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

So we would simply ask that the committee adopt a plan that would enable us to use the park and all the fantastic planning that they have as soon as possible. So that we can continue to do the things that we do with our students which is show them the world which is really other than
PUBLIC COMMENTS - PAUL THOMPSON

t heir home so that they can dream and
hopefully plan for a better future.

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

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

And I think there is certainly
a lesson in physics where fine friend
talked about perched wetlands. I
PUBLIC COMMENTS - GLEN MARKMAN

wasn't really familiar with that part of the plan but I think I'm going to bring that back to one of my science teachers so that we can understand what that means and whether that really happens in nature.

(One minute warning issued.)

Thank you very much.

MS. HAYASHI: Glen Markman and Barbara Parker.

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

I believe the housing plan is the most stable way to generate enough money for the park to be sustained so it can be treasured — so it can be a treasured part of Brooklyn life forever. Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Barbara Parker and then Carlo Seissura.

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

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

When the park was originally approved in 2003 no one imagined how it would be perverted 18 months later into landscaping for six high rise luxury condo towers. With this change the City and state broke a critical promise to build a park by failing to designate this land as a
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA PARKER

bona fide park.

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

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

In addition the community park plan which originally included swimming pools, a recreation center, playing fields, basketball courts, and an ice rink was completely and inexorably changed into a bike path.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA PARKER

with very expensive landscaping when the state decided to put condo towers inside the park boarders. Not one year round recreational features from the original plan is included in the current Brooklyn Bridge Park plan.

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

Finally, while the community committed to supporting annual park costs they did not commit to nor could they even conceive that the park would also have to come up with funds to build and rebuild itself over 40 years. The part that was to pay for park upkeep has become the part that now must also pay to build sewers and electrical and water services for 1250 luxury condo units and to rebuild itself over the next four decades.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: Carlos Scissora and Tupper Thomas:

MR. SCISSORA: Thank you everyone. My name is Carlos Scissora. I'm Chief of Staff
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

to Brooklyn Borough President,
Marty Markowitz. He was supposed to
be here tonight but couldn't. Before
I begin Marty asked me to give a warm
welcome to Brooklyn to our new HPD
commissioner, Commissioner Bombooah
(phonetic), and I hope I said that
right, I think I did. And I just
want to remind you that while you're
going to work on a lot of things --
this is not part of my three minutes,
by the way -- a lot of things in the
City -- people tell you, all projects
must happen in Brooklyn. So all the
affordable houses you build must
happen in Brooklyn.

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

This is an important issue and
it's great that there's passion from
all sides on this issue. Because
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

that tells you what kind of people
are in Brooklyn. They are
passionate, they are not shy, they
tell it to you the way it is and I'm
going to try to tell you how it is on
behalf of Marty and our position.

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

Among the five boroughs
Brooklyn has one of the least -- has
the least amount of park land per
capita and that's pretty scary --
Brooklyn's is park starved, we are in
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

dire need of park space and I think everyone agrees with that sentiment. No matter if you live in Brooklyn Heights or if you live in Sheep's Head Bay, or if you live in Central Brooklyn, or if you live anywhere in this borough. And remember this park is a borough park. It's a park for everyone in Brooklyn, everyone in the City, and all the tourists that come in it. And we should be very proud and I know we are. Many people have been working very hard on this. Residents from all over Brooklyn Heights, Cobble Hill have spoken about this. We just lost Bernie Adams who had been very vocal on building this park and I think we should remember him tonight for a minute.

There have been ups and downs along the way. Many community meetings and half-a-dozen plans. It's a project that Marty has been
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

very proud to support, both
publically, privately and with
capital funding and we will continue
to do that. This park brings
together diverse communities and
that's one of the best parts about
it. It brings together a very
diverse borough in one place.

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

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

When Governor Pataki and Mayor
Michael Bloomberg signed the
memorandum of understanding it stated
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

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

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

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

There must be a significant source of revenue. Residential development in combination with a medium size hotel appears to be the best fit as it preserves a large amount of open space and compliments
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CARLOS SCISSORA

the park and surrounding neighborhoods. This has been Marty's position from day one and it continues to be his position.

Of course there is an argument and we understand it; that residential buildings within or near the park will impede access or decrease the function of the park.

Yet throughout New York City there are many examples of sizable residential population in close proximity to the park land.

The Brooklyn Heights Promenade is one example. Rockefeller Park and Battery Park City is another example. And everything that's happening to Greenpoint, Williamsburg waterfront, the -- esplanade -- Red hook -- and they have no impact on public access, none whatsoever. People can still get to the park. The park is an inviting place for these communities and for communities and residents.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - TUPPER THOMAS

that come from across the borough.

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

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

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

And the reality is that Olmsted
PUBLIC COMMENTS - TUPPER THOMAS

and Vaux thought that when they built
this fabulous and magnificent
Prospect Park that all the taxes that
would be gained by having a wonderful
park there would go towards
maintaining that park. And it did
not and that park fell into terrible
repair.

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

    If Olmsted and Vaux had
brilliantly designed Prospect Park as
this Brooklyn Bridge Park is designed
so that housing could have been
incorporated in a way that could have
provided the revenue, how much more
brilliant would that have been? And
across the country this is the new
method that is being used to design
PUBLIC COMMENTS - TUPPER THOMAS

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

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

(One minute warning issued.)

MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Thank you.

Jeffrey Smith and then
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JEFFREY SMITH

Barbara Brookhardt.

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

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

A lot of this is just like Egyptian -- the same thing happens
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JEFFREY SMITH

with a high degree of those private
corporations. They quickly descend
into self-justifying, very rookie
existence firms that basically don't
have an idea what's going to happen.

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

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

Now you are saying that you're
going to put all these people through
the area also. It's based on the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JEFFREY SMITH

fiction that everybody's an
interchangeable widget. Not true.
There are people who that have --
those in Brooklyn Heights. More than
-- there, okay. Or they're there and
they're locked inside. It depends on
their lifestyle.

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

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

Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Thanks you.

Barbara Brookhardt and then

Wids de la Cour.

MS. BROOKHARDT: Good evening.

On behalf of the Carroll Gardens
Neighborhood Association we would
like to thank Senator Dan Squadron
and assembly member Joan Millman for
agreeing to fund a study on the
alternatives to housing in the
Brooklyn Bridge Park.

We believe that a diverse
source of revenues and we're very
happy that you have put forth a
stream of revenue that is diverse
rather than relying totally and
solely on housing. We think that
the -- that the consultant's report
showed that there are many diverse
opportunities for alternative funding
and I'm going to send out an official
report to go into detail about some
of my -- some of these opportunities.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA BROOKHARDT

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

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

Currently our neighborhood children have to travel a great distance to use such a facility. We think that a vendor with a long term lease could be responsible for the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA BROOKHARDT

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

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

(One minute warning issued.)

And add 10,000 residents that plan to live in Atlantic Yards next -- over the 20 years.

As a result downtown Brooklyn will need more recreation space in the next 25 years. Considering this increase in the population. To use public property in Brooklyn Bridge Park to build luxury end housing to self-finance the park would be short sided when directly across the street.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA BROOKHARDT

are commercial buildings that
currently pay no taxes and will be
sold and converted to luxury lofts in
the near future that can pay half the
maintenance of the park.

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

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

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

MS. HAYASHI: Okay, thank you
PUBLIC COMMENTS - WIDS DE LE COUR
very much. We have Wid de la Cour
next and then Barbara Charton.

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

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

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

In short, I'm in favor of
housing in the entrance of the park.
This -- this is a great world class
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA CHARTON

facility for the park in a unique location. It would be a shame to build a lesser park because we don't have any money to maintain this fantastic facility.

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

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

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

One; this park is supposedly costing 16 million dollars. That number is a fantasy. It is a fantasy based on the piers are rotting and falling apart. I watched those piers being constructed in the 50's. They
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA CHARTON

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

Those piers will out last us
all.

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

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

Utilities to support
buildings. I know a little but about
engineering. I would like to see a
31 story building on that tiny
footprint. It ain't going stand.
Therefore this whole idea of the
teeny weeny footprint is a crock.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - BARBARA CHARTON

Excuse me, it is unsupportable.

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

(One minute warning issued.)

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

Then there's the highway.

That is being rebuilt because it's
PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN

going to fall down soon. People are
really going to come and give you
millions of dollars for an apartments
where they're in the middle of a
construction site. Dream on.

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

(Whereupon, a short recess was
taken.)

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

Parking: Over 1100 spaces are
available in close proximity to the
park including the 300-whatever --360
permits including the hundreds of
spaces given, basically, to Robert A.
Levine. And there are three
spaces -- there's 80 spaces along
Furman Street. There are also
adjacent areas nearby, many of them
City owned, that could be used for
PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN

parking without building any
structures inside the parks.

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

Other residents meet the state
criteria for studies and yet they
were not studied. What about the
real estate transfer tax? It was
successfully used in East Hampton --
and you can see that every real
estate transaction goes through and
PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN

goes into buying more park land and
other states and in East Hampton; why
want can't we do that here? That
would be a very small tax for
everyone.

And then Jehovah's Witnesses
Facility. Why -- they meet the
criteria yet they're not studied.

But we're looking at a mission square
feet directly adjacent to the park
yet not within its borders; and two
million in close proximity. Why
can't we consider this? Why can't we
wait and work on this and see what
happens. We have an advocate on City
Council, in some cases I've heard, to
make sure this passes and it isn't so
arduous as everyone says.

We can have more recreation
without the new buildings. For
instance, the ice rink in Bryant Park
in six weeks in the depth of winter
made over a million dollars in
concession funds alone. You don't
PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN

pay to skate, you pay for skate rental, you pay for ice cream, you a Christmas thing someplace else. That's a different kind of park that a lot of money can be made creatively in these ways and no one seems to really want to think about it.

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

Let's not lose this opportunity. We're damning everything with fake praise. We have this chance to get a real active destination park. Not necessarily
PUBLIC COMMENTS - GOODMAN

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

Thank you.

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

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

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

PATTI HAGAN: You didn't call
on me.

MS. HAYASHI: What's your name?

PATTI HAGAN: I was number
forty --

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

PATTI HAGAN: Okay.

MS. HAYASHI: Do you want to go
ahead?

Let's go with Joanne and
Diane.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOANNE SIMON

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

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

If the purpose of the process
is to transparently and objectively
evaluate alternatives to housing, so
as to address the public's concerns
and put to rest the speculation on
both sides of the dialogue. The
PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOANNE SIMON

upshot of that process has fallen short. The BAU report raised, yet again, concerns that the results were engineered to show a predetermined outcome.

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

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

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PUBLIC COMMENTS - JOANNE SIMON

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

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

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

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

DIANE BUXBAUM: My name is Diane Buxbaum, I'm a resident of Carroll Gardens and also Conservation Chair for the New York City group of the Sierra Club, which by the way, has opposed housing since it was first proposed and has been active as I have been in there -- and many others -- in the original planning of this park for years and years and years, and feel like we have been totally ignored. Much of which --
I have -- I have a question.
Is what I have written here going to be part of the record or is just what's being said that you record?
Which is it going to be?
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DIANE BUXBAUM

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

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

And one of the things that we will talk about events, we need to have -- the idea -- apparently -- you need a permanent structure -- in thinking about Bryant Park, they do fashion week every year and they have no permanent structure. Temporary structures and they bring in wealth of money. You don't need permanent structures in parks to do events.

You can do them with temporary
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DIANE BUXBAUM

structures and make a large income.

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

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

Please, let's move forward.

Let's build this park. We have
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CAROLINE McCARTHEY

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

Thank you.

MS. HAYASHI: Next we have Caroline McCarthey and Patti Hagen.

CAROLINE MCCARTHEY: My name is Caroline McCarthey. I am a neighborhood -- neighborhood resident, an avid park user. I'm a -- consultant with HR&A Advisors, but I'm here today as a part of this. And I'd like to speak out in support of the original plan that uses -- operations and maintenance.

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

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

CAROLINE MC CARTHEY: We've all seen the significant and positive impact that the park has had the Brooklyn Waterfront and adjacent neighborhoods in over the year ago
and we're all excited to see what else it can be. But the dedicated revenue, of course, is really critical to maintaining the park at the quality of level issued when it opened.

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

It's worth while for some of the ideas, but I think housing should be maintained as the basis. The process of the proposals are interesting, but, one, its uncertain what the timing would be, its uncertain what the financing structure could be, and also that
PUBLIC COMMENTS - CAROLINE McCARTHEY

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

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

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

And also Battery Park City
showed that concessions are
challenging. It has ice skating
rink, it has been difficult to
maintain because there's not enough
PUBLIC COMMENTS - PATTY HAGEN

revenue. Housing would provide a base for revenues to support the park. There also is currently is a shortage of housing in New York City on fiducial housing development on the East side that would support that overall policy objective.

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

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

PATTY HAGAN: Good evening committee and Alternative to Housing for Brooklyn Bridge Park. Thank for holding another listening session. I am Patty Hagan from the Prospect Heights Action Coalition; a 32 year resident of 117 St. Marks Ave,
PUBLIC COMMENTS - PATTY HAGEN

Prospect Heights; incorrectly identified as the "Atlantic jihade -- section of Brooklyn" by the New York City Times today.

I have read through the BAE study of alternatives to housing for the funding of Brooklyn Bridge Park Operations draft report. Right off the bat I learned that my main alternative funding idea, to reduce the apparently sacrosanct sky-high 16.1 million dollar operating budget by reducing the extremely conflict landscape design installation designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh, "did not pass the first threshold parameter."

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

Operating budget reductions.
OPERATING BUDGET REDUCTIONS was branded among the "potential alternative revenue sources eliminated by the CAH from further consideration. The very idea of Brooklyn Bridge Park operating budget reductions flunked "the first threshold parameters." Never even got to the "evaluative parameter."

Why is the hyper inflated operating budget of 16.1 million dollars set in stone? A 16.1 million operating budget is not required which is clear by referring back to the 3 to 9 million sustainable operating budget that was attained in the community developed sustained in the community development 2001 master plan which was supported by Mayor Bloomberg, Governor Pataki and the community. Shamefully, the economic development corporation never bothered to study the communities to our 2001 master plan.
PUBLIC COMMENTS - PATTY HAGEN

A 16.1 million dollar operating budget is not at "fundamental principle" of Brooklyn Bridge Park it is merely a phony public private partnership pretext for ESPC the EDC to deal in their developer cronies.

How on earth can reduction of the BBD operating budget be among the "topics outside of the scope of the CAH and this report?"

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

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

(One minute warning issued.)

I've waited a long time -- and

the City of New York regarding the
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LINDA DE ROSA

Brooklyn Bridge Park regard --

KEI HAYASHI: Let her read it.

PATTY HAGAN: -- was signed --

I'm almost done -- BBP with 67 acres

of land, why was it inflated to 85

acres, 20 acres, 24 percent now

described as maritime, under or in

water. Was the acreage creep allowed

so that 4 million dollars could be

added to the untouchable BBP

operating budget? Because to

maintain 12,000 deteriorating piles,

let them rot.

KEI HAYASHI: The next person

is Aaron Dean (phonetic) and then

Linda de Rosa. Is Aaron Dean here?

Okay, Linda de Rosa and then Dan

Wiley.

LINDA DE ROSA: Hi, I'm

Linda de Rosa, I'm the vice-president

of the Wilmington Association and

member of the Brooklyn Bridge Park

Defense Fund. And I'm reading a

statement for Carolyn Konheim
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LINDA DE ROSA

(Phonetic) who could not be here this evening. And she says I want this statement to focus on the best practice case study and appendix B of the BAA draft report.

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

None proposed for up front funding of full replacement cost. None appear to have even considered residential development in the park or housing as a source of funding.

In the few cases where there is
PUBLIC COMMENTS - LINDA DE ROSA

housing it is part of the large scale development entirely separate and does not issue it upon park land.

Reliance on housing to cover inflated capital replacement cost is definitely not best practice and is entirely unwarranted in the case of multiple funding sources that are in the BAA report.

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

Presently no funding is in place to carry out the plans for Pier 3. It is last on the construction site. Why not simply
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY

eliminate it? Leaving it only as pilings has been interestingly been done at the southern corner of Pier 1. To free up more of the waterfront might make Brooklyn Bridge Park even more of a world class park.

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

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

DAN WILEY: Yes.

KEI HAYASHI: Okay, Dan is here.

DAN WILEY: Hi, friends. I'm
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY

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

I didn't want to make a quick -- I couldn't resist -- having sat through the whole thing, and also having worked in Prospect Park for
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY

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

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

So when Olmsted and Vaux looked
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY

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

So I think that's kind of an interesting point. I think Olmsted and Voux wouldn't have actually wanted to have the housing. Of course I'm not saying what that means for Brooklyn Bridge Park theirs is a
PUBLIC COMMENTS - DAN WILEY

romantic idea of the pastoral parks. They actually didn't want these structures. They wanted berms and things to mask off the adjacent housing.

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

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

(One minute warning issued.)

-- if it was built adjacent to the park -- outside of the park. So I although I love comfort and I think it's great that we could have had the alliance -- generating the funds for positive park to bring it back.

Thank you.

KEI HAYASHI: I'm just going to...
CLOSING REMARKS

read the names of the individuals who
called before, but were not here:

Vincent Joseph.

MALE SPEAKER: Nope, he left.

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

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

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

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

____________________________
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