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NEW YORK STATE
EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
-----X
PUBLIC HEARING

Re: Modified General Project Plan for the
Atlantic Yards Land Use Improvement and
Civic Project in Brooklyn, New York, and
The Sale of Certain Property in Connection
Therewith

(AFTERNOON SESSION)

-----X
Klitgord Auditorium
New York City
College of Technology
285 Jay Street
Brooklyn, New York
July 30, 2009
1:57 p.m.

B e f o r e:

EDWARD KRAMER, ESQ.,
The Hearing Officer

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626 RXR Plaza, Uniondale, New York 11556

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A P P E A R A N C E S:
For the Empire State Development Corporation:
Darren Bloch - Executive Vice President
Strategy Policy and Public Affairs
Warner Johnston - Vice President, Public
Affairs
Anita Laremont - General Counsel
Steve Matlin - Senior Counsel
Joseph Petillo - Senior Counsel
Rachel Shatz - Vice President Planning and
Environmental Review
Forest Taylor - Manager, Community and
Government Relations

ALSO PRESENT:
The Public
The Press
The Media

Kari L. Reed
Reporter

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12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

I N D E X O F S P E A K E R S

Speaker	Page
EDWARD KRAMER	277
STEVEN MATLIN	281
Empire State Development Corporation	
MATTHEW GARDELL	287
New York Marriott at Brooklyn Bridge	
RICHARD THORSEN	289
NYU Polytechnic Institute	
RICHARD BECKER	291
CEO, Brooklyn Hospital Center	
MICHAEL SCOTTO	293
ANTHONY WILLIAMSON	294
Local 79	
JOE GELO	295
Local 7	
SUSAN METZ	298
UFT	
JAMES CALDWELL	300
Brooklyn United for Innovative Local Development (BUILD)	
TARYN ELLIS	303
BUILD	

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3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Speaker	Page
MARIE LOUIS	304
BUILD	
SIMEON KITT	306
BUILD	
PAUL CIANCILLO	307
STEVEN CHESTNUT	308
BUILD	
MICHAEL WHITE	311
THOMAS GLEN	314
DOMINIC FRONCILLO	316
NIA Community Services Network	
BLEU LIVERPOOL	317
Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn	
NATALIA ORTIZ	318
BRIAN MCBREARTY	320
Sheetmetal workers, Local 28	
MANFREDO MEJIA	322
LEOLA HOLMES	322
MICHELLE CUNNINGHAM	324
BUILD	
DERRICK TAYLOR	325
Local 926	

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5	BUILD	
6	WILLIE SCOTT	330
7	JAMES HALL	331
8	Rebuild	
9	SETH HILL	332
10	Rebuild	
11	THOMAS BROWN	334
12	REV. BILLY MCINTOSH	335
13	WELDON JOHNSON	336
14	Rebuild	
15	DARNELL CANADA	338
16	Rebuild	
17	NAQUAN HARRIS	341
18	DANIEL ALSTON	341
19	KAREIFF MCDUFFIE	342
20	JAMELLE COLLINS	344
21	Rebuild	
22	CHRISTOPHER LEGREE	347
23	Hope Jaguar Football Program	
24	EUGENE MEYERS	350
25	Rebuild	

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 626 RXR Plaza, Uniondale, New York 11556

1		276
2	I N D E X O F S P E A K E R S	
3	SPEAKER	PAGE
4	STEVE LYNNAH	352
5	BETTY COOPER	354

6	Families United	
7	CARLTON SCREEN	359
8	Max Basketball	
9	CHANTAL LEWIS	361
10	BUILD	
11	HAKEEM JEFFRIES	362
12	New York State Assembly Member	
13	CARL KRUGER	366
14	New York State Senator	
15	RAUL ROTHBLATT	370
16	Central Brooklyn Independent Democrats	
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

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1 277
 2 P R O C E E D I N G S
 3 THE HEARING OFFICER: Could everyone
 4 please take their seats.
 5 Good afternoon, ladies and
 6 gentlemen. Welcome to Klitgord Auditorium of the
 7 New York City College of Technology for today's
 Page 6

8 public hearing. It is now just a little after two
 9 o'clock and we would like to get started.
 10 My name is Edward Kramer, and I am
 11 the hearing officer for this public hearing. This
 12 is a continuation of a public hearing that was
 13 commenced in this auditorium on July 29, 2009.
 14 This hearing is being conducted by the New York
 15 State Urban Development Corporation, doing business
 16 as Empire State Development Corporation or ESDC.
 17 The purpose of this public hearing
 18 is to:
 19 One, inform the public about the
 20 proposed Atlantic yards civic and land use project.
 21 Two, give all interested persons an
 22 opportunity to provide comments on the modified
 23 general project plan.
 24 And, three, give all interested
 25 persons an opportunity to comment on the essential

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1 278
 2 terms of the proposed real property conveyances
 3 with respect to the project.
 4 on July 29th the following
 5 documents were made part of this record of this
 6 public hearing.
 7 One, copies of the Public Notices
 8 for this hearing that appeared in the Daily News,

9 the New York Post, the Brooklyn Eagle and the Daily
 10 Challenge, together with affidavits of
 11 certifications of publication.
 12 And, two, the project's Modified
 13 General Project Plan.
 14 A stenographic transcript of this
 15 hearing will be made. If you have a written copy
 16 of your remarks, we would appreciate if you would
 17 leave a copy with the stenographer.
 18 The hearing break will be kept
 19 open following the conclusion of this hearing.
 20 Submission of initial written comments by the
 21 public and others are encouraged and should be sent
 22 by mail to Empire State Development Corporation,
 23 633 Third Avenue, 34th Floor, New York, New York
 24 10017, attention Steven Matlin, senior counsel. Or
 25 by e-mail to atlanticyards@empire.state.ny.us.

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1 279
 2 written and e-mailed comments will be accepted by
 3 ESDC's offices until 5:30 p.m. on August 31, 2009.
 4 All comments received prior to that time will be
 5 made part of ESDC's record of this proceeding and
 6 will be given the same weight as if spoken at this
 7 hearing. However, comments received after the
 8 close of business on August 31, 2009 at five-thirty
 9 p.m. will not be considered.
 10 The stenographer's transcript of
 Page 8

11 this hearing and a copy of any written comments of
12 statements which are submitted here today or later
13 filed with ESDC will be made available for review
14 during normal business hours at ESDC's New York
15 City offices, which, as I said, are at 633 Third
16 Avenue, Manhattan. Upon written request a record
17 of the hearing may also be purchased for the cost
18 of reproduction.

19 The purpose of this hearing is to
20 inform the public and solicit public comments. It
21 is not a question and answer session. It is
22 instead an opportunity for you to present your
23 views so that ESDC can consider them in making its
24 final determinations. It should be noted that ESDC
25 did have an informational question and answer

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1 280
2 session on July 22, 2009, that was separate and
3 apart from this hearing.

4 This hearing is being held
5 pursuant to a notice published on June 29, 2009 in
6 the Daily News, the New York Post, the Brooklyn
7 Eagle and the daily Challenge.

8 ESDC during the course of the
9 hearings yesterday and today will be represented by
10 the individuals as follows:

11 Darren Bloch, ESDC executive vice
Page 9

14 going to give a brief summary of the remarks that
15 were made at the beginning of the hearing on
16 yesterday.

17 The Modified General Project Plan
18 for the Atlantic Yards land use improvement and
19 civic project includes an 18,000 seat arena that
20 would serve as the home for a professional
21 basketball franchise, 16 buildings that would be
22 suitable for residential, office, retail and hotel
23 uses, an upgraded train yard for the Long Island
24 Railroad, and eight acres of open space. Under the
25 plan, the train yard would be covered with a

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1 282
2 platform, and up to six towers will be constructed
3 on top of the platform. The project when completed
4 will result in 6,000, up to 6,430 units of housing
5 and not less than 2,250 units of affordable
6 housing.

7 The proposed Modified General
8 Project Plan that is the subject of this hearing is
9 identical to the previous plan adopted in 2006 with
10 respect to the description of the project site and
11 what is actually going to be constructed on the
12 project site.

13 The project financing has changed
14 to allow that certain costs to be deferred. It's

12 president, strategy policy and public affairs;

13 Anita Larement, ESDC general

14 counsel;

15 Steve Matlin, ESDC Senior counsel;

16 Joseph Petillo, ESDC Senior

17 Counsel;

18 Rachel Shatz, ESDC Vice President

19 Planning and Environmental Review;

20 Forest Taylor, ESDC Manager,

21 Community and Governmental Relations;

22 Warner Johnston, ESDC Vice

23 President of Public Affairs.

24 Again, my name is Edward Kramer,

25 and I am the hearing officer for this public

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1 281

2 hearing. And I've been asked by ESDC to conduct
3 today's public hearing from two p.m. to five p.m.
4 and from six a.m. to eight p.m. The hearing is
5 being held pursuant to Section 6 and 16 of the New
6 York State Urban Development Corporation Act or UDC
7 Act. As I mentioned, this is a continuation of the
8 public hearing that was commenced in this
9 auditorium on July 29, 2009.

10 Now, Mr. Matlin will present an
11 overview of the proposed project and expected
12 transactions. Mr. Matlin.

13 MR. MATLIN: Thank you. I'm just
Page 10

15 now proposed that the site be acquired in two or
16 more stages. The first stage would include the
17 arena block, which includes Block 1118, 1119, and
18 1127, which will accommodate the arena, three
19 residential towers, and a commercial tower. Also
20 included in the first stage condemnation will be
21 block 1129, portions of Pacific Street, and two
22 parcels on the eastern portion of the site
23 identified as Block 1121, Lots 42 and 47. Those
24 parcels are essential for construction staging,
25 construction parking, parking for the arena, and

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1 283

2 the new Long Island Railroad yard.

3 We expect and look forward to the
4 first stage of condemnation later this year. The
5 remainder of the site would be acquired when
6 necessary for development of those parcels.

7 In addition, the Modified General
8 Project Plan now reflects that the MTA air rights
9 may be acquired in stages. Initially MTA will
10 transfer to ESDC the property rights necessary for
11 the development of the arena block, with the
12 balance of the MTA air rights to be transferred
13 over time, again, as and when necessary for the
14 development of the parcels which would be developed
15 in the MTA yard.

16 The project plan has also been
Page 12

17 modified to allow Forest City to defer providing
18 guarantees to the MTA for the new upgraded yard
19 until the commencement of construction of that
20 yard, which will be not later than 2012. However,
21 Forest City will be required to provide the MTA
22 with a substantial undertaking at the onset of the
23 project to ensure that the upgraded yard is timely
24 done.

25 ESDC intends to enter into various

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1 284
2 leases and other conveyances to implement the
3 project. A description of those prospective
4 dispositions are set forth in the legal notice for
5 this hearing. The legal notice, the Modified
6 General Project Plan, and a tech memo with respect
7 to the environmental review for the project are all
8 accessible on the ESDC website. And that site is
9 www.empire.state.ny.us/atlanticyards.
10 Thank you.
11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
12 Mr. Matlin.
13 The procedures to be followed at
14 this hearing are as follows. If you wish to speak,
15 please sign in at the table in the lobby if you
16 have not already done so. For your convenience and
17 information, slips of paper containing the

18 information on where to submit written comments,
19 how to obtain copies of both the Modified General
20 Project Plan and where project documents can be
21 viewed on ESDC's website are also available in the
22 lobby.

23 Because this is the last day of
24 the hearing, in order to give everyone an
25 opportunity to present their views, I will be

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1 285
2 giving priority to persons who did not speak on
3 wednesday during the first day of this public
4 hearing. After all first time speakers have
5 spoken, if there is time remaining at the end of
6 the session, those who previously spoke may speak
7 again.
8 I'd also request that the speakers
9 please keep their oral presentation to no more than
10 three minutes. There is a timer at the front.
11 When thirty seconds are left, there will be a tone,
12 and when your time is up there will be another
13 tone. Otherwise, presentations that run longer
14 than the allotted time may be concluded after all
15 the speakers have completed their remarks.
16 I will do my best to allow any
17 public officials to speak as quickly as I can upon
18 being notified of your arrival in the auditorium.
19 Otherwise, I will call the names of speakers

20 generally in the order in which they have signed in
21 and will try to alternate the speakers who are in
22 favor of the project with those who are against the
23 project.

24 In order to ensure an accurate
25 transcript and to enable all assembled today to

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1 286
2 hear your marks, I ask each speaker when called to
3 come up to the microphone at the front of the
4 auditorium and please clearly state your name and
5 address. If you are speaking on behalf of a group,
6 please identify that organization or entity and
7 state its address.
8 We will take a break in these
9 proceedings from five to six p.m. Anyone who has
10 signed in to make a statement who has not been
11 heard by five p.m. will be given priority to speak
12 when the hearing resumes at six p.m.
13 Finally, I want to remind you that
14 the purpose of this hearing is to afford you an
15 opportunity to make statements and comments about
16 the proposed project. This is not a question and
17 answer session. It is instead an opportunity for
18 you to present your views so that ESDC can consider
19 them in making its determinations.

20 Those of you in the audience

21 should keep in mind that those presenting their
22 views today may not be accustomed to speaking
23 before a large group, and I ask that you extend
24 them the courtesy of permitting them to speak
25 without interruption. And again, some of you will

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1 287
2 be in favor of the speaker's comments, some of you
3 will be against. Please do not interrupt the
4 speakers, and hold your thoughts, your applause,
5 your cheers, your boos until after they speak and
6 you'll have an opportunity to do so.
7 At this time I would like to ask
8 our first six speakers to approach the front of the
9 room and take seats, I guess right over there to
10 the right of this room. And then you will be
11 called. William Roosa. Matthew Gardell. Richard
12 Thorsen. Richard Becker. Anthony Williamson. And
13 Joe Geld, or Geller. And the first speaker will be
14 William Roosa. Is Mr. Roosa here?
15 (No response)
16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Then the
17 first speaker will be Matthew Gardell.
18 MR. GARDELL: Good afternoon. My
19 name is Matthew Gardell. And I'm presenting
20 testimony on behalf of Sam Ibrahim, general manager
21 of the New York Marriott at Brooklyn Bridge.

23 Brooklyn Bridge opened in downtown Brooklyn in 1998
24 after more than a decade of planning. It was the
25 first new, full service hotel in Brooklyn in more
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1 288
2 than fifty years, and immediately exceeded our
3 expectations. It has received awards for its high
4 occupancy levels and continues to be one of the
5 most highly rated hotels in the Marriott chain. In
6 2006 the new tower was built adjacent to the
7 original hotel, adding 280 new rooms to the
8 existing 376 rooms.

9 New York Marriott at the Brooklyn
10 Bridge supports the Atlantic Yards project for many
11 reasons, including the most obvious, which is that
12 a project of this type will be good for our
13 business. The project and the sports and
14 entertainment activity will generate a demand for
15 new room nights that can be satisfied by us and our
16 counterparts in the hospitality industry in
17 downtown Brooklyn. This means quality and
18 accessible jobs for Brooklynites, something the New
19 York Marriott at the Brooklyn Bridge has prided
20 ourselves on since its opening.

21 It will also help bolster
22 Brooklyn's position as a standalone destination,
23 something that I have worked closely with Borough

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1 290
2 been based in downtown Brooklyn. Our school is
3 arguably the metropolitan area's preeminent
4 resource in science, technology, research and
5 management education.

6 On behalf of our institution I am
7 pleased to take this opportunity to express support
8 for the Atlantic Yards project. In addition to the
9 tremendous economic boost this project will
10 deliver, valued at more than \$5 billion in new tax
11 revenues and some 25,000 construction and permanent
12 jobs, among many other benefits, Atlantic Yards
13 will also make a critical contribution to the urban
14 fabric of the community surrounding the NYU-Poly
15 campus.

16 Atlantic Yards will be a valuable
17 resource for students. It will provide many jobs,
18 many with jobs, others with internships, and a
19 place for all to experience events, athletics and
20 world class entertainment. We have no doubt that
21 the presence of Atlantic Yards will increase the
22 visibility of downtown Brooklyn, which would
23 clearly benefit NYU-Poly and other academic
24 institutions in the area.

25 Finally, the mixed income housing

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24 President Marty Markowitz and borough business
25 leaders to promote. We firmly believed that when
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1 289

2 we opened our hotel it said something optimistic
3 about the future of Brooklyn. There is no doubt
4 that the Atlantic Yards project will do the same.

5 I wish to call upon the Empire
6 State Development to take into account all the
7 potential economic benefits and all that this
8 project stands to deliver in improving the economic
9 and business climate here in Brooklyn. And in
10 doing so we ask the board of directors to approve
11 this project.

12 Thank you.

13 (Applause)

14 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,

15 Mr. Gardell.

16 The next speaker is Richard Thorsen.

17 MR. THORSEN: Good afternoon. My
18 name is Richard Thorsen, and I represent Polytech
19 Institute of New York University, located at
20 MetroTech Center.

21 NYU-Poly is the second oldest
22 private engineering school in the United States.
23 Among our graduates and faculty are Nobel
24 laureates, world class inventors, scientists and
25 successful entrepreneurs. For 155 years we have
Page 18

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1 291

2 that will be created by the project will give
3 NYU-Poly graduates expanded options to remain in
4 downtown Brooklyn, one of the most accessible
5 places in New York City.

6 we'd like to take this opportunity
7 to congratulate the wide range of public and
8 private interests that have come together to bring
9 Atlantic Yards to fruition. And we look forward to
10 the day when the NYU-Poly's community will have the
11 opportunity to play an active and engaged role in
12 the long term success of Atlantic Yards. On behalf
13 of Polytechnic Institute, I urge the approval of
14 this project.

15 Thank you very much.

16 (Applause)

17 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,

18 Mr. Thorsen.

19 The next speaker is Richard Becker.

20 DR. BECKER: Good afternoon. I am
21 Dr. Richard Becker, the president and CEO of the
22 Brooklyn Hospital Center, located at Dekalb Avenue
23 in Fort Greene, less than a block from beautiful
24 Fort Greene Park and a few blocks away from the
25 proposed Atlantic Yards site. Since the 1840s we

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1 292
 2 have served the community with the highest quality
 3 health care and will proudly continue to do so for
 4 future generations. During our greater than 160
 5 year history, we have seen our neighborhood and
 6 greater Brooklyn through some dramatic changes. I
 7 am here to urge the ESDC board of directors to vote
 8 in favor of the Atlantic Yards project.
 9 The economic development that will
 10 result from this project will have a tremendously
 11 positive impact for our hospital, Fort Greene,
 12 downtown Brooklyn and the borough as a whole.
 13 Thousands of much needed new jobs will be created.
 14 Thousands of new housing units will provide homes
 15 for families of all income levels, and Brooklyn
 16 will gain a new state of the art arena. This will
 17 not only serve as a valuable resource but will also
 18 allow over two million Brooklynites to root for our
 19 own professional sports team. I know that I am not
 20 alone in looking forward to walking to the new
 21 arena after work to cheer for the Brooklyn Nets.
 22 I ask you to consider the economic
 23 development impacts when you make your decision,
 24 and respectfully request that you vote in favor of
 25 this great project.

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Page 21

1 293
 2 Thank you.
 3 (Applause)
 4 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
 5 Dr. Becker.
 6 The next speaker will be Michael
 7 Scotto. Is Michael Scotto here?
 8 (No response)
 9 THE HEARING OFFICER: The next
 10 speaker will be Anthony Williamson.
 11 Michael Scotto?
 12 MR. SCOTTO: Good afternoon. My
 13 name is Michael Scotto. I'm a resident of Brooklyn
 14 for 39 years, and a union carpenter for 21. I'm a
 15 father with four children.
 16 Lately a little too much is being
 17 laid off. This Atlantic Yards project can possibly
 18 keep us working for a few years. Because
 19 carpenters need a certain amount of hours to keep
 20 up with their benefits. And lately I haven't been
 21 able to do that. So I urge all of you, we need to
 22 be working and keep working for some time. I hope
 23 you vote in favor of the project.
 24 Thank you.
 25 (Applause)
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Page 22

2 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
 3 Mr. Scotto.
 4 The next speaker is Anthony
 5 Williamson.
 6 MR. WILLIAMSON: Good afternoon. My
 7 name is Anthony Williamson. I am a resident of
 8 Brooklyn, and a member of the Laborers Local 79,
 9 the Mason Tenders.
 10 On behalf of the Mason Tenders
 11 Laborers Local 79 we want to support this project.
 12 We are fully supportive of this Atlantic Yards
 13 development, and we urge Empire State to vote in
 14 favor of this project. It is important that we get
 15 this kind of economic development so that we can
 16 have all economic activities in New York City,
 17 especially in Brooklyn.
 18 In this dire time of economic
 19 constraints, it's important that projects like
 20 these be of importance to our families. As a
 21 member of Laborers Local 79, we have got thousands
 22 of members who live in Brooklyn. And they're
 23 looking forward, especially in this community, are
 24 looking forward to work on these projects.
 25 As a minority, there are thousands
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1 295
 2 of minorities, members of this community who are
 Page 23

3 looking forward to working on this project. So
 4 it's important that all parties concerned vote in
 5 favor of this project.
 6 Thank you.
 7 (Applause)
 8 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
 9 Mr. Williamson.
 10 The next speaker is Joe Gelo.
 11 MS. METZ: Can we have one opposed?
 12 MR. GELO: There aren't any.
 13 THE HEARING OFFICER: The next
 14 speaker is Joe Gelo.
 15 MR. GELO: My name is Joe Gelo. I'm
 16 a resident of New York City, born and raised five
 17 generations. I'd like to say something about
 18 change and progress.
 19 It seemed to me yesterday that the
 20 change is going to affect a lot of people who live
 21 in these projects. Yesterday a 16 year old girl
 22 got up and spoke, and my heart went out to her.
 23 How would you like to walk out of your apartment
 24 and look both ways to see if you are safe to go to
 25 school. This is something that this change would
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1 296
 2 make.
 3 I'd also like to say, someone said
 4 something about the Gowanus Expressway. I
 Page 24

5 sympathize with the people that lost their homes by
6 the Gowanus Expressway. My heart goes out for
7 them. But the change was tremendous. Cars were
8 racing through Brooklyn, taking lives of children.
9 The Gowanus Expressway was a very important thing.

10 I'd also like to say that change
11 made a difference in everyone's life in this city.
12 If a few have to suffer, and many may move on and
13 with a better life and have a better quality of
14 life in this city, then I'm for it. Therefore, I
15 support this project.

16 I understand 200 families will be
17 taken out of those projects. Kids were here
18 yesterday expressing their failings. They're our
19 future. This project is our future. Let's not let
20 a few people who are going to, I feel sorry for
21 them, life does go on. The change in their life is
22 that they're going to move from one nice place that
23 they made nice, and move to another. The change is
24 going to bring a price, it's going to be
25 tremendous. They're not going to have to walk

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1 297
2 outside their doors, they're going to have cameras,
3 they're going to have someone to protect them. A
4 better life, a better life for New Yorkers, whether
5 you're from Brooklyn or whatever. I live in every
Page 25

6 borough, I love every one of them. Five
7 generations in New York City. And without progress
8 and without change, nothing happens for the people
9 in these projects.

10 I remember Manhattan Bridge. It
11 was the most beautiful apartment ever. It came off
12 the bottom, two grand staircases. You had two
13 columns in the end. They had to go. Nobody could
14 get on the bridge. Progress once again improved
15 the lives of many. And this project shall improve
16 the lives of many, and let's go for it.

17 Thank you.
18 (Applause)

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Gelo.

21 Is William Roosa here?
22 (No response)

23 THE HEARING OFFICER: The next
24 several speakers, and you might as well take seats
25 right over there to my left, that would be Susan

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1 298
2 Metz, James Caldwell, Taryn Ellis, Marie Louis,
3 Simeon Kitt. Please take seats over there.
4 It has been brought to my
5 attention that I misstated the e-mail address of
6 where additional submissions can be sent. The
7 correct address is
Page 26

8 atlanticyards@empire.state.ny.us. Thank you.
9 And the next speaker is Susan
10 Metz.

11 MS. METZ: Good afternoon. I'd
12 like to share a vision of playing fields for
13 baseball, soccer, hockey; courts for basketball and
14 tennis; and lots of swimming pools, both indoors
15 and outdoors. Open to the public. We play with
16 our pals, we play with the kids. We form teams and
17 leagues to compete. We learn to lose and to win.
18 We work up a sweat and an appetite, and we sleep
19 deep. We stay healthy, trim and fit. That's my
20 vision of sports in Brooklyn.

21 work in Brooklyn. Maintaining
22 streets and bridges, repairing buildings,
23 installing solar panels and insulation. And lots
24 of caring jobs. Caring for children, the sick or
25 confused, elders and animals. Jobs creating our

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1 299
2 culture and making our environment beautiful. A
3 democratic workplace with clear contractual
4 guarantees of benefits and a grievance procedure to
5 resolve disputes.
6 what about housing in Brooklyn?
7 My vision. Apartments at 25 percent of the family
8 income. Each person with her or his own room. No
Page 27

9 one living on the streets, and no empty apartments
10 waiting for the wealthy. Those, and that is my
11 vision for a humane democratic society, in which I
12 feel government and other leaders of enterprises
13 should serve. To work with us to achieve a long,
14 healthy and fulfilling life for each individual, in
15 a community that is beautiful and sustainable and
16 encourages the widest possible participation.

17 Unfortunately, implementing the
18 Forest City Ratner Atlantic Yards plan will not
19 help us to realize this vision. And that's why I
20 oppose any public money going into a private profit
21 making development. This is, I'm seized with
22 indignation that Forest City Ratner has hijacked
23 the symbol of hoops, jobs and housing, which is
24 something we struggle for together.

25 It seems that ESDC will approve

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1 300
2 anything. There were no answers as to exactly what
3 the cost benefit analysis or the design would be,
4 because I attended the informational. It's we hope
5 for this, we plan this, we expect that. I don't
6 trust these people. The jobs that were promised in
7 MetroTech didn't show up, and the Atlantic Yards
8 malls are ugly.
9 Thank you.
10 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
Page 28

11 Ms. Metz.

12 The next speaker is James

13 Caldwell.

14 MR. CALDWELL: Good afternoon.

15 First I'd like to thank Jesus Christ for having
16 this opportunity to be here today, and I thank ESDC
17 for holding this hearing.

18 You know, the first thing I'd like
19 to say is that my father, my brother, and myself
20 all served our country, our military. I
21 particularly served for 16 years. And one of the
22 things you learn in the military is it truly is
23 diversified, and you really, you know, you see life
24 in a different form. You know, but when I came out
25 of the service and came back to Brooklyn, we found

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1 301
2 that, you know, that we still lived in a segregated
3 neighborhood. It was hard for us to get jobs, it
4 was very, you know, very difficult.

5 Then along came Forest City Ratner
6 to the community and entered into an agreement.
7 And, you know, a lot of people say I have
8 criticized, saying that we didn't get a chance, the
9 work that he's doing is just dealing with those
10 black organizations and all that nonsense. The
11 point of the matter is is that, you know, it made

14 unlike the lady just said before me that there
15 wasn't no jobs in MetroTech, you know, the project
16 hasn't even started yet and we have been able to
17 put in the past year and a half over 200 people to
18 work. That's because yes, you do give us money,
19 and I'm not ashamed to stand here and say that.
20 What are you supposed to do, work for free? How
21 are you going to take care of your families if you
22 work for free?

23 I've worked already for the past
24 twelve years in the 77th Precinct community
25 council, one of the best precinct community

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1 303
2 councils in the City of New York. And we do have
3 volunteering. We do it for free. So, you know, so
4 we have to be compensated somewhere along the line.

5 We thank Forest City Ratner for
6 standing up and working with all people, contrary
7 to what people say it's just black folk, with all
8 people in the community. And a lot of people just
9 did not want to be a part of it. So I'm happy to
10 stand here and say yes, 200 blacks and whites are
11 working because of Mr. Ratner's standing up and
12 saying we have a community benefit for you, and
13 yes, you know, yes, we are providing for it.

THE HEARING OFFICER: Thanks.

12 me realize that wow, here's someone that's really
13 trying to work with us like, you know, like the
14 military did, everybody being equal and having an
15 opportunity to advance. And that's what freedom is
16 all about.

17 But I want to say is that generally
18 in our neighborhood when developers come in our
19 community, black men stand on the corner and try to
20 figure out what they are building and don't even
21 have a clue what they are building. At least we
22 are afforded the opportunity to be at the table, to
23 sit down and work with people coming in our
24 neighborhood.

25 And a lot of people seem to think

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1 302
2 that well, it's only black folk they're dealing
3 with. But you need to come to 485 Hudson Avenue
4 and see that that diversity that I talked about in
5 the military also applies in our office there at
6 485 Hudson Avenue. People come in looking for
7 jobs, both union jobs, color do not make a
8 difference. I just want everybody to know that.
9 Just the fact that we fought for freedom.

10 Mr. Ratner, I've often said and
11 I've been criticized for it, he's like an angel
12 sent from God. To me that's what I see, because we
13 have been able to give people jobs. You know,
Page 30

15 MR. CALDWELL: Thank you very much.
16 (Applause)

17 THE HEARING OFFICER: The next
18 speaker is Taryn Ellis. Good afternoon.

19 MS. ELLIS: Good afternoon. My name
20 is Taryn Ellis. And I'm the employer outreach and
21 services coordinator for the BUILD organization.

22 This project creates a win-win
23 situation for New York City as a whole. Why?
24 Because it brings much needed jobs, revenue,
25 housing, and community recreation. As an employer

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1 304
2 outreach and services coordinator at BUILD, I'm
3 responsible for establishing and building
4 relationships with corporate businesses, small
5 businesses, contractors, retailers, food service
6 providers and hotels, just to name a few, within
7 this business project, within this business hub, as
8 well as within the community.

9 I am here to ensure job placement
10 so that New Yorkers can see a great benefit from
11 attaining these jobs and actually get the jobs that
12 they were promised. So I implore you all to stand
13 up, speak up and support this and approve this
14 initiative.

15 Thank you.

16 (Applause)

17 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.

18 Ellis.

19 The next speaker is Marie Louis.

20 MS. LOUIS: Good afternoon. I would
21 like to thank Jesus Christ for the opportunity to
22 talk to you today, and to ESDC for the opportunity
23 to comment on this project.

24 I was born and raised close to the
25 project site here in Brooklyn. I'm also the chief
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1 305
2 operating officer for BUILD. I'm the appointed
3 member of Community Board 8, the board in which
4 over 60 percent of the project is situated.

5 The project site has been an
6 eyesore and economic dead zone for decades, as one
7 who has lived there. Atlantic Yards is a huge
8 investment that will bring much needed economic
9 vitality to the immediate area in Brooklyn at
10 large. More important to the community is that
11 there is a community benefit to bring it in place
12 to help many who have been and are struggling in
13 the community to connect to many of the economic
14 benefits of the project. Particularly jobs,
15 business opportunities and affordable housing.

16 When the project was first
17 revealed in 2004 and approved in December of 2006,
Page 33

18 the larger economy was stronger, but many from
19 marginalized constituencies in the surrounding
20 community in Brooklyn was in dire need of the
21 benefits engendered in this project. In today's
22 weakened economy, the project is needed more than
23 ever.

24 I continue to support this dynamic
25 and exciting project, and it's because it's much

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1 306
2 needed. I support, as does BUILD support the
3 modifications requested to the project plan as they
4 promote the realization of the project itself,
5 making sure that it's able to happen in this
6 turbulent economy, as well as being able to make
7 it, realize it and make it happen, despite the
8 numerous rounds of litigation that the project has
9 endured and won.

10 And so again, on behalf of BUILD
11 and myself as a born and raised Brooklyn-ite, I
12 urge you to support the modifications to this plan
13 so that this project can move forward and become
14 real.

15 Thank you.
16 (Applause)
17 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.
18 Louis.

19 The next speaker is Simeon Kitt.
Page 34

20 MR. KITT: Good evening. I just
21 wanted to say that for 50 years I've been a member
22 of this community, and I've seen people come and
23 go. I'm a member from -- I can say myself I don't
24 have any titles, okay. I'm not being shifty in any
25 kind of way.

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1 307
2 I just want to say that Forest City
3 Ratner is a unique, a unique European, let's put it
4 that way. And you got other developers coming to
5 my community saying they are going to build. I
6 don't see any of them here. I don't see them here
7 being bogged down in all kinds of court cases.
8 Forest City Ratner is a unique breed. I would like
9 to say that they're more ambitious than most, all
10 right. I say give them an opportunity and give us
11 an opportunity, because I've never seen Europeans
12 like that.

13 Thank you very much.
14 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
15 Mr. Kitt.
16 The next group of speakers is
17 going to come to the front, my left, your right.
18 Darrell Greevy, Paul Ciancillo, Steven Chestnut.
19 The first speaker is Darryl
20 Greevy. Is Darryl Greevy here?
Page 35

21 THE HEARING OFFICER: Then the next
22 speaker is Paul Ciancillo.
23 MR. CIANCILLO: How you doing. Paul
24 Ciancillo.

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1 308
2 I feel this is a good thing. I'm a
3 union member, Local 7. And not only for the union,
4 but for everybody in the community. It gives us a
5 job, make money, people in the neighborhood make
6 money. Little kids, newborns growing up, they need
7 to play sports, stay active, stay off the street.
8 It's a positive thing. We're all for it, the
9 union.

10 Hopefully they can come together
11 just like the union does, the community come
12 together to an agreement and say yes, it's a good
13 thing. You know, it's not a bad thing. Nobody is
14 trying to, you know, mess up this neighborhood.
15 It's only making it better by upgrading it
16 look-wise better, and that's it, you know.

17 Thank you.
18 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
19 Mr. Ciancillo.
20 The next speaker is Steven Chestnut.
21 MR. CHESTNUT: Good afternoon,
22 everyone. My name is Steven Chestnut. And I'm a
Page 36

23 member from BUILD organization.

24 And, you know, what's so

25 understanding, so powerful about this whole

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1 309
2 Atlantic Yards project is that it can provide an
3 opportunity. See, I come from an experience where
4 many people need opportunity to change their lives.
5 You know, there are many factors that cause people
6 to do certain things, you know, on the front.
7 Things like there's homelessness, there's crime,
8 there's unemployment. These are some of the
9 factors that create certain attitudes called crime
10 engendered attitudes, because those are known as
11 crime factors. But this Atlantic Yards addresses
12 them, and in a unique way because it brings
13 opportunity. It enables one who may not experience
14 being awake or may not have had a hand in the
15 community a chance or an opportunity to come help
16 rebuild it, you know.

17 So I understand there could be
18 modifications to the project right now, and I'm in
19 support of that, and I hope you all can be in
20 support of it too. Because not only will it
21 provide opportunity so people can rebuild their
22 lives, and fathers could be better fathers and
23 mothers could be better mothers and children go a

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1 311
2 Yards project. And all the things that I work for,
3 Brooklyn United for Innovative Local Development,
4 we support. So on the whole I just hope that you
5 all can, you know, support this project and let it
6 go forward so people may get an opportunity and
7 have a better chance to have better lives for
8 themselves.

9 Thank you.

10 (Applause)

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chestnut.

13 Is there anyone else at the
14 hearing who would like to make a statement? Sir,
15 would you step up? Please state your name and
16 address for the record.

17 MR. WHITE: Michael White, Notice
18 of New York. I made a statement yesterday, I was
19 cut off, and I believe the rules are that if no one
20 else is making a statement then other people who
21 were cut off --

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: You're up.
23 Well, wait a second. No one was cut off. Everyone
24 was given three minutes to speak. Now, you're up
25 there now, so go right ahead.

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Page 39

24 better way. I'm talking about them going to

25 prison. Those in prison who are on their way back

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1 310
2 to the general society, that coming back to the
3 community that want to make a difference, that want
4 to be better fathers and parents to their children,
5 need opportunity.
6 Forest Ratner, that's a good thing
7 to bring this type of project here. And I don't
8 think people are going to be against it, but they
9 are and that's how it is, but that's their life.
10 But for those with God who know, who know that
11 these things are good and just, who know that these
12 will provide opportunities to make the community
13 more viable, you all must stand up, you all must
14 know that it's right, and you all must speak with
15 everything within you all in support of the
16 Atlantic Yards project because our children, those
17 youngsters over there that are sitting around,
18 they're observing. If they're going to college
19 they wonder, what am I going to do when I get out,
20 I mean where is my next direction. You know, the
21 arena, you know, to bring the Nets arena to
22 Brooklyn, and I love sports, but the opportunity to
23 create jobs, to create affordable housing, you
24 know, it's what we want to work with.

25 You know, I support the Atlantic
Page 38

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1 312
2 MR. WHITE: All right. I'm a --
3 Michael White, Notice of New York. I'm a lawyer,
4 urban planner, and I have a lot of experience
5 working for government, which I did development
6 plans such as these, which I did for more than a
7 quarter century in legal departments and agencies
8 that essentially did projects like this. My
9 testimony from yesterday is on the web.
10 Today I thought I'd talk about the
11 story of the little boy who was ten in the cookie
12 jar. Most of you should know this. The boy
13 reaches into a cookie jar. He is able to take out
14 cookies like anyone else, but he wants all of the
15 cookies. He takes his hand and tries to grab all
16 the cookies and pull all the cookies out, and
17 because of that he cannot get his hand through the
18 narrow rim of the jar, and is never able to have
19 any cookies.

20 This is Forest City Ratner. What
21 are the many, many cookies that Mr. Ratner wants to
22 pull out of this cookie jar? Twenty-two acres of
23 property without any bid. A 30 plus acre monopoly
24 on Brooklyn. And then donate a few -- and windfall
25 from it. Extreme unprecedented density. A lower

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Page 40

1 313
 2 capacity rail yard for the Long Island Railroad,
 3 the MTA, sidestepping proper process and ULURP.
 4 Override of local zoning. A bait and switch that
 5 ends with value engineering, which is you're only
 6 saving the developer money. Outrageously bad
 7 design and super blocking. No real commitment to
 8 provide affordable housing.
 9 I spoke to Berger Lewis yesterday.
 10 And I don't know, anyone earning at \$38,000 to
 11 \$48,000 is not going to be provided housing in this
 12 development. I asked some of the people standing
 13 outside what their incomes were. They said they
 14 were lower. Well, then those units are being
 15 provided by the tax code. If Acorn didn't
 16 negotiate those units, they would have been
 17 provided anyway by this developer.
 18 If you go through the higher income,
 19 you're talking about apartments that are going to
 20 be rented for 3,000 a month, 2,300 a month, 1,500 a
 21 month. These are units that the market will be
 22 providing anyway. This is what Acorn hoped and
 23 negotiated, and basically negotiated that Forest
 24 City Ratner would give absolutely nothing. That's
 25 another cookie out of the cookie jar.

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1 314
 2 I can keep going down the list, but
 3 I seem to be down to four seconds and the list of
 4 cookies that he wants to pull out of the cookie jar
 5 is much too long.
 6 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
 7 Mr. white.
 8 (Applause)
 9 THE HEARING OFFICER: Is there
 10 anyone else at the hearing who would like to make a
 11 statement?
 12 Please step up. Anyone else who
 13 would like to make a statement at this hearing,
 14 please sign in in the lobby first. That would make
 15 things much easier. Go right to the lobby and sign
 16 in and we'll have your card and we can move
 17 forward.
 18 Sir, please state your name and
 19 address.
 20 MR. GLEN: My name is Thomas Glen,
 21 and I live in Clinton Hills, downtown.
 22 THE HEARING OFFICER: How do you
 23 spell your last name?
 24 MR. GLEN: Glen.
 25 THE HEARING OFFICER: Glen.

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2 Please continue.
 3 MR. GLEN: I'm here to say that I
 4 support Atlantic Yards. And I live in this
 5 community for over 43 years, and all I see is
 6 crime. I see people being killed. I've seen every
 7 time we walk to these jobs being turned down. And
 8 things got to change. I no longer want to see
 9 these things happen to us. I mean, unemployment is
 10 over 70 percent in these houses that we live in,
 11 and we can't get these jobs. I see these people
 12 from different states coming to get these jobs, and
 13 they can work and feed their families, and we
 14 can't. Every time we come to these jobs, we get
 15 turned down. Things got to change.
 16 Atlantic Yards is going to provide
 17 that for us, and we hope you vote for it. And not
 18 only are they willing to do that, but it would also
 19 uplift the community. Brooklyn needs a new
 20 footprint, and I'm all for it.
 21 (Applause)
 22 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
 23 Mr. Glen.
 24 Please sign up in the black.
 25 A VOICE: I did.

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1 316
 2 THE HEARING OFFICER: You did, okay.

3 You will be called.
 4 A VOICE: Okay.
 5 THE HEARING OFFICER: The next six
 6 speakers, please take a seat to my left. Dominick
 7 Froncillo, Bleu Liverpool, Natalia Ortiz, Brian
 8 McBrearty, Manfredo Mejia, and Leola Holmes. And
 9 the first speaker will be Dominick Froncillo.
 10 MR. FRONCILLO: Good afternoon,
 11 everyone. My name is Dominic Froncillo and I am
 12 representing NIA Community Services Network. On
 13 behalf of the NIA we surely support the Atlantic
 14 Yards project, and request that all approvals be
 15 granted to allow the start of the project.
 16 NIA Community Services Network is a
 17 non profit organization that is dedicated to
 18 addressing the broad spectrum of issues that impact
 19 youth, families, and those who need assistance
 20 throughout diverse and underserved neighborhoods of
 21 Brooklyn by providing services to thousands of
 22 local businesses each year, and afterschool
 23 programs, cultural arts and recreation programs,
 24 summer day camps, community assistance and referral
 25 services, senior support programs, youth and family

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2 counseling awareness projects and community events.
 3 NIA helps to educate and strengthen these families
 4 and community members, improve neighborhoods, and

5 ensure a better quality of life for all.
6 We believe the Atlantic Yards
7 project will be an economic engine for Brooklyn and
8 New York City and the State, generating billions of
9 dollars in new tax revenues over the next 30 years,
10 and creating a net positive fiscal impact in excess
11 of one billion dollars. It will bring jobs,
12 housing and a great many to Brooklyn for years to
13 come. Let's move forward now by having no further
14 delays to the project, so Brooklyn can welcome the
15 Nets to the borough by 2011.

16 Thank you.

17 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
18 Mr. Froncillo.

19 I request everyone to either turn
20 off their cell phones or PDAs or put them on
21 vibrate or silence.

22 The next speaker is Bleu Liverpool.

23 MS. LIVERPOOL: Good afternoon. I'm
24 Bleu Liverpool. I work at Friendly Grill and Bar,
25 which is located at 45 Main Street. I've also

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1 318
2 lived at Fort Greene for my entire life, which is
3 26 years, so that's my life.

4 I'm just here in opposition of
5 this Goliath like project, which I mean defeats

8 due to that area that could help benefit the New
9 York City residents or whatever. But I can say
10 that black people should really look at it, even
11 though I hear, who just spoke -- I don't think that
12 that professor who was from that university meant
13 just that the college people should leave their,
14 like, schools and go to work in an arena. They
15 could be talking about summer jobs, they could be
16 talking about anything.

17 As for change, change is needed
18 because living where I've lived all my life, it
19 ain't all that good. And as I got older I saw it
20 evolve. It's really what you make of it. So take
21 from it what's good, don't take what's bad. But
22 I'm for it because it presents opportunity. Other
23 than that if it doesn't work out then that's what
24 you make of it, it's done. So take from it what
25 you can.

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1 320
2 And so then that's about it.

3 (Applause)

4 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.
5 Ortiz.

6 The next speaker is Brian McBrearty.

7 MR. MCBREARTY: Thank you. My name
8 is Brian McBrearty. I'm a full time officer in the

6 completely the underdog. I know I heard the
7 gentleman say that it does change. I'm into
8 change, but I'm just thinking that there is --
9 There's is a way to go about it, but it doesn't
10 mean it has to be such a huge amount, just taking
11 up so much. I think it's irrational.

12 Another gentleman said that think
13 about the children getting out of college. I don't
14 think those jobs are for -- I don't think that's my
15 goal that when I get out of my university that I'm
16 going to go work in a stadium. And I think these
17 are filled with illusions of grandeur, and I think
18 that the majority have bought into it. And I'm not
19 here just for myself obviously, I'm just here to
20 help Community Board 7, and I strongly oppose it.
21 And I pray to God.

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.
23 Liverpool.

24 The next speaker is Natalia Ortiz.

25 MS. ORTIZ: Good afternoon,

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1 319
2 everyone. I've been a resident in Brooklyn my
3 whole life, which is 21 years. And I live next to
4 this lot.

5 And if this arena could open
6 opportunities and bring good change, then I'm all
7 for it. But there are other things that could be
Page 46

9 Sheetmetal workers Local Union 28. I represent the
10 unions in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Staten
11 Island.

12 And, as everyone knows, all the
13 affiliated trades at this time could use the work.
14 The private sector is drying up. From what I know,
15 there is an underground economy where a lot of
16 builders and developers are exploiting workers so
17 they don't have benefits. And Mr. Ratner and his
18 company has always done everything union building
19 trades, where there is revenue to the State and to
20 the City, and workers have their paychecks, they
21 have benefits. There's a quality of life issue.

22 And I feel this would be a good
23 project. Look at MetroTech and look at how
24 Brooklyn slowly in the past years is now expanding.
25 And just think about it. If Mr. Ratner didn't

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1 321
2 develop MetroTech, remember what Brooklyn was like.

3 And I'm not a resident of
4 Brooklyn, and I am compassionate, I understand
5 about residents who live here. But I think it's
6 good for the State. And I came here respectfully
7 today to represent my members who are looking for
8 good jobs, and I came here respectfully to ask
9 Empire State Development Corporation to seriously
10 consider and move forward on this project. I think
Page 48

11 it's a win-win for the community benefits going in,
12 and the MTA with the new entrances to the subways,
13 the fixing up of the Long Island Railroad for
14 commuters.

15 And I am partial to having the
16 sports arena come back to Brooklyn. And I've been
17 a Net fan since Dr. Jay played on Long Island a
18 long time ago, and but anyway that's my personal
19 feeling.

20 But as a union officer, full time
21 capacity, I have a job to do and I represent my
22 members. And all the union supports this gentleman
23 because everything is done right, there's no
24 problems. And we feel it's a good thing and it is
25 money generated for revenue, as I stated earlier.

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1 322
2 Thank you very much.
3 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
4 Mr. McBrearty.
5 The next speaker is Manfredo Mejia.
6 MR. MEJIA: Good afternoon, ladies
7 and gentlemen. I live in Brooklyn for 30 years. I
8 have seven children. Five boys in Brooklyn.
9 My brothers and sisters, this is a
10 key point in New York. We need to open this for
11 us. We need to demand more jobs. We don't need
Page 49

14 opportunity. And here it is, five years have went
15 by and this project has not began. There's a
16 problem. And there's a great big problem in
17 Brooklyn that people need to take notice of it.

18 You also had on Flushing Avenue a
19 studio was built to actually do filming. They
20 spent \$5 billion there. How much of that actually
21 came back into the community? Who received a job?
22 But we're wasting the time shooting down a sore
23 eye, Atlantic terminal for trains, as opposed to
24 trying to find housing and jobs that is so
25 desperately needed.

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1 324
2 I'm an advocate for this project,
3 and I speak for almost 90 percent of the residents
4 that have not been to this place. So if you want
5 to talk about eminent domain, look over into Fort
6 Greene and tell me what was offered to those people
7 that actually got displaced. The people who had to
8 move from off of Green Street was offered \$1.2
9 million, and with that kind of dollars I can live
10 almost anywhere. I'm not displaced.
11 (Applause)
12 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.
13 Holmes.
14 The next several speakers, if
Page 51

12 any more homeless. We need to get the system
13 booming. Please, the union support the community,
14 the -- (unintelligible). They're going to give all
15 the benefits to everybody in the union. They're
16 doing it, opening the door to everybody, don't
17 discriminate against nobody (unintelligible).

(Applause)

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Mejia.

The next speaker is Leola Holmes.

22 MS. HOLMES: Good afternoon. My
23 name is Leola Holmes, and I'm a resident of
24 Brooklyn for 50 years. My parents migrated from
25 South Carolina and I moved right into the heart of

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1 323
2 this project. Atlantic Avenue has been a sore eye
3 for many, many years.
4 What I don't understand is how is
5 it you have an \$18 billion project that is going on
6 right here no more than two blocks away, I heard no
7 one oppose that project, that project had offered
8 nothing to any of the surrounding communities.
9 Construction is going on, buildings have been
10 built, people have moved in. No one from the
11 community have gotten any jobs.
12 Here you have someone who actually
13 reached out to the community and gave them an
Page 50

15 they'll take seats to my left, Michelle Cunningham,
16 Derrick Taylor, Chantal or Chantaz Desdunes, Willie
17 Scott, James Hall, and Seth Hill. And the first
18 speaker is Michelle Cunningham.

19 MS. CUNNINGHAM: Hello, everyone.
20 My name is Michelle Cunningham. And I am a
21 supporter of the Atlantic Yards project. It is one
22 of the few projects with minorities vastly in mind,
23 which is the only reason we are here today.

24 According to the developers and
25 supporters of this project, this is an opportunity

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1 325
2 to provide jobs, centers, retail space, and
3 entertainment for low income people. Which is
4 something the high-rises being built as we speak
5 for condominiums and retail space on Flatbush
6 Extension has failed to do. Did they receive any
7 opposition? Those of you who oppose this project
8 have made some valid points, but not enough for
9 opposition. If the project plan is incomplete,
10 help finish it. And if the numbers of anticipated
11 jobs decrease, help that number remain the same.
12 Acorn and BUILD has been two
13 organizations that has helped people obtain
14 affordable housing and jobs, long before this
15 project. And I truly believe they will work hard
16 to make this project keep their name strong. So I
Page 52

17 hope everyone reconsiders supporting this project.
18 Thank you.
19 (Applause)
20 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.
21 Cunningham.
22 The next speaker is Derrick Taylor.
23 MR. TAYLOR: Good day, good day. My
24 name is Derrick Taylor. I'm a union carpenter,
25 926.

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1 326
2 Listen, I can understand all these
3 people oppose this project. We've built, on Third
4 Avenue we built bridges. Right over on Church
5 Street we built a post office. I can't see much
6 opposition towards that. I'm with the union. I
7 don't see them opposing all those nine huge
8 apartments that is going on right here in
9 the neighborhood.
10 (Applause)
11 MR. TAYLOR: I don't see that. You
12 understand. I don't see -- I don't mind if you
13 oppose the project, but listen, show me your
14 alternative. You paying me what they are paying
15 me, I will join you. You understand what I'm
16 saying. You're not paying us anything. You're not
17 giving us anything back. You're talking about oh,
Page 53

20 is offering, you know, take the place of you. If
21 everybody opposed everything, we wouldn't have
22 nothing.
23 (Applause)
24 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
25 Mr. Taylor.

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1 328
2 The next speaker is Chantal
3 Desdunes.
4 MS. DESDUNES: Chantal.
5 THE HEARING OFFICER: I'm sure
6 you'll correct me.
7 MS. DESDUNES: It's all right.
8 Chantal. Thank you.
9 Good afternoon, everyone. My name
10 is Chantal Desdunes. I've been a resident of
11 Brooklyn for the past 37 years. I've raised two
12 kids, both in college. And I can understand that
13 people are against this project. But I am for it.
14 I'm also program director at BUILD.
15 And believe you me, the people who oppose this
16 project, their realities are completely different
17 from our realities. Where I come from, every day
18 is dozens of people coming in daily looking for a
19 position, looking for an opportunity to work, to
20 pay their bills, to pay their rent. It's a
Page 55

18 you have to move and stuff like that. That's no
19 problem. If my house was there right now, where
20 you got to move, trust me, I'd tell them mail me my
21 check. You understand what I'm saying, because the
22 money they're offering you to move is much more
23 than if you got to stay. What are you complaining
24 about. You treating us --
25 Let me show you this, right. I'm

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1 327
2 from Chili land. They have crab, you know, like
3 crab. But listen to this. You put two crab in a
4 bucket, none of them going to get out. You know
5 what, each one is going to keep putting the another
6 one down. You know it. We got to let one out.
7 You understand what I'm saying? We got to let one
8 out for somebody else to eat. You understand?
9 Recognize that problem right now, let them out.
10 You understand?
11 Right over there, on DeKalb, 80
12 DeKalb, every week I've been working there for the
13 last six months. My paycheck is on time. You
14 understand.
15 We got a lot of people out of work.
16 What are you going to do about them? What are you
17 going to do? You can't say nothing because you're
18 not offering anything. If you're not offering
19 anything you need to step aside, let somebody that
Page 54

21 difference between being homeless and having your
22 children go hungry.
23 Yes, I do understand every project,
24 and I do know every project has its pros and cons,
25 positives and negatives. However, those whimsical

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1 329
2 excuses that you've been making for the past five
3 years have got to stop. Let me explain something
4 to you. When you have people coming in, these
5 women who's willing to take a nine dollar and fifty
6 cent job because she does not want to be homeless,
7 that's reality.
8 Now, if you are talking about
9 environmental, about this project not being
10 environmentally sustainable, I don't see anyone
11 from Manhattan running away the densities, I don't
12 see them. But the examples in there about a 1.3,
13 1.5 million, they got money, they're not running
14 away. That's, to me it's a small -- they have so
15 many excuses for this project not to go on when we,
16 the majority of people living in Brooklyn really
17 need this project.
18 This is not funny. This is serious
19 business. You need -- if you need to
20 environmentally be correct, I'll have to tell you
21 that Montana is very nice this time of year.
22 Furthermore, if you want to join, there are a few
Page 56

23 whales in the ocean with your name on it.

24 But please don't stop people from

25 getting the opportunities to work. Work is good.

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1 330
2 Development is good. If we didn't have
3 opportunities, if we didn't have development, we
4 wouldn't have Manhattan, we wouldn't have Madison
5 Square Garden.

6 I know you are snubbing your nose
7 at those seven dollar and fifty cent jobs. But
8 believe you me, we do need these jobs because we
9 have kids in college right now, we need to pay
10 their tuition, and they welcome these jobs. Please
11 stop those whimsical excuses. Let's get on with
12 this. We are willing to work.

13 Thank you.
14 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.
15 Desdunes.

16 The next speaker is Willie Scott.
17 DR. SCOTT: Good afternoon. Thank
18 you for allowing me to speak today. I am
19 Dr. Willie Scott. I live at Glen Hill. I've lived
20 here for approximately twenty years. I am here to
21 speak in favor of the Atlantic Yards project.

22 The organization has made some
23 excellent concessions and the community agreement,
Page 57

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1 332
2 Now, you all look at people in the
3 cookie jar as a bad seed. But if you look at my
4 past and you look at what I've done since the paper
5 trail I did since then, I've been to college, two
6 separate colleges. My daughter is in John Jay. My
7 other daughter is waiting to get educated. And I'm
8 trying to take care of my family.

9 The cookie jar is dead. I paid my
10 time for that. I've been out fifteen years and I
11 ain't done nothing but positive things. I've got
12 many skills and certifications. And I need work
13 and my people need work. And that's all. We need
14 that project.

15 (Applause)
16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Hall.

18 The next speaker is Seth Hill.
19 MR. HILL: Good afternoon. My name
20 is Seth Hill and I'm in job development for
21 Rebuild.

22 I hear all this opposition about
23 Forest City Ratner, Atlantic Yards. And while all
24 this is happening for the past five years, there's
25 a lot of bodies falling in the streets of this

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Page 59

24 but even before all that, I know the organization.

25 They have taken care of over 150 people that suffer

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1 331
2 from developmental disabilities. They have taken
3 them to their training arena, taught them how to
4 play ball, taught by professional coaches. They
5 have allowed them to associate and to come to the
6 Nets arena to different games. They have taken
7 care of them on many different levels.

8 I know this organization. I know
9 Mr. Ratner, and I am here to let you know that we
10 are able to speak to the organization, we are able
11 to work with the organization. So I am asking you
12 to please support the arena.

13 Thank you.
14 (Applause)

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
16 Dr. Scott.

17 The next speaker is James Hall.

18 MR. HALL: Hello. My name is James
19 Hall, and I represent Greenville Atlantic Yards C.
20 And I'm one of those brothers who got his hand
21 caught in the cookie jar, and I ain't taking a
22 couple, I took the whole jar. And I am 51 years
23 old, in tiptop shape and ready for work. And I
24 need work. And all my brothers need work. And
25 people are trying to stop this project.
Page 58

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1 333
2 immediate area. They deployed a police station
3 across the street from the projects. And you have
4 a gentleman or gentlemen and ladies who came saying
5 oh, stop Atlantic Yards. Perhaps just maybe had
6 you all let this project go forth, one of those
7 poor dead individuals might have had a job.

8 wouldn't have had a reason to hang out all night
9 and be out there getting in the middle. He could
10 have had a job. Maybe the killer or one of the
11 killers or the alleged killers would have had a
12 job, would have had a reason to go home and go to
13 bed with his family, his wife and his children,
14 looking forward to taking care of his family, his
15 wife and his children.

16 understand, if you're not walking
17 this road and these paths down the streets around
18 Atlantic Yards and living and starving the way we
19 doing and needing these jobs, we don't have an
20 argument about you're obstructing my view if you
21 build a stadium across the street from me. Or you
22 can't do it in the school zone.

23 I want a job. You don't want to
24 walk out of a new building like you all just see
25 people hanging out on the corner. You know why

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Page 60

1 334
2 they hanging out on the corner? They don't have
3 nothing to do. If you give them a job, maybe they
4 got a chance.

5 Thank you.
6 (Applause)

7 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
8 Mr. Hill.

9 The next several speakers, if you
10 will take seats to my left, Thomas Brown, Reverend
11 Billy McIntosh, Weldon Johnson, Darneil Canada,
12 Naquan Harris, and Daniel Alston.

13 The first speaker is Thomas Brown.
14 MR. BROWN: Good afternoon. The
15 first thing I want to say is thank you God, thank
16 this gentleman right here for giving us an
17 opportunity to help myself.

18 For so many years of my life been
19 about meditation. And I wonder why, because I
20 can't get why it's the people that's not in the
21 middle of the crisis that we go through that always
22 say no. Try waking up in your house because you
23 couldn't pay the lights, they turned them out. Try
24 feeding your daughter something, but you can't
25 because you ain't got no gas. Then you wonder why

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1 335
2 it don't get done. I couldn't feed my children.
3 But we are going to go somewhere else with that.

4 But today for my journey and for
5 what I've got to say taught me other things about
6 the spirit. Working. We got a lot of hungry
7 people out there. And for you all who haven't been
8 in Brooklyn, try coming around to find out why we
9 hungry. Because we can't get work. Now people try
10 to give us the chance to get the opportunity to get
11 some work, and people talk about oh, don't build
12 that, they might run over my poodle. Well, we
13 ain't got poodles in Brooklyn. We ain't got
14 poodles in Brownsville. So we don't know about you
15 all poodles next to the stadium. But I know one
16 thing, we need work.

17 Thank you.
18 (Applause)

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
20 Mr. Brown.

21 The next speaker is Reverend Billy
22 McIntosh.

23 REV. MCINTOSH: Greetings, ladies
24 and gentlemen. I am for the project because but
25 for the grace of God go I or you. I would like to

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2 see people at work. I would like to see people get
3 along together. It's almost impossible when you
4 are in need. I know that. And they're not asking
5 for a hand out, they're asking for work.

6 (Applause)

7 REV. MCINTOSH: Let's get moving.
8 Let's get moving. It's not going to be perfect.
9 Nothing is perfect. But hallelujah for the lamb of
10 God. Hallelujah if you call God by another name.
11 But one day we shall give an account. I'm not
12 talking about now. We shall answer to a higher
13 authority.

14 I'm for it. Let it happen in the
15 name of God. Amen.

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
17 Reverend McIntosh.

18 The next speaker is Weldon
19 Johnson.

20 MR. JOHNSON: How you all doing,
21 man. I ain't really got a lot to say. I've been
22 out of work for almost two years. I met this guy
23 name Justice and Bolo and Peter about two weeks
24 ago. The first chance, man, I had at an
25 opportunity to get a real job and I can put bread

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1 337
2 on my table in the last two weeks since I've been

3 there with them. And I am really looking forward
4 to bringing other people in to do that.

5 Yeah, I've been upstate. I'm
6 American. I'm born right here in Brooklyn, New
7 York at Methodist Hospital. My brother was born in
8 Brooklyn Hospital over here. I'm just trying to
9 say that my mother, my father, they're all
10 American, they're born right here in New York.

11 I ain't got no health insurance.
12 I'm 44 years old. I've been in jail. Got a degree
13 in jail. Came home. I got two kids. My
14 daughter's teeth is messed up from drinking a lot
15 of juice and milk. I ain't got insurance to pay
16 for no dental. Rebuild give me the opportunity to
17 get a good job, paying me a decent wage, between
18 ten and twelve dollars an hour.

19 The people holding this Atlantic
20 Yards right here, that ain't going to help, man.
21 Give us a chance, give us an opportunity, a chance
22 to do something with our lives so our kids have an
23 opportunity.

24 (Applause)
25 (Inaudible)

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2 MR. JOHNSON: Let's keep up the good
3 work, man, because our community needs people like
4 us to keep doing it, man. Thank you.

5 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
6 Mr. Johnson.
7 The next speaker is Darnell Canada.
8 MR. CANADA: I'm Darnell Canada.
9 I'm so glad that the brothers from my organization
10 already spoke, because they're out there trying to
11 find employment for people who are hard to employ,
12 for people who were formerly incarcerated, for
13 people who are homeless. We're getting training,
14 and we are doing it and we are doing it out of our
15 own pocket. We don't get no state, no city, no
16 federal funding. We do this. And I guarantee you,
17 if you look at our statistics, we put more people
18 to work than people who get millions of dollars.
19 And you know why, we do it from here.

20 (Applause)

21 MR. CANADA: And then somebody else
22 comes, somebody comes that has it and says I want
23 to give it back. They say we're going to give you
24 the opportunity to get trained yourself and we'll
25 give you the opportunity to not starve.

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1 339
2 And then people who are worried
3 about shadows, worried about traffic and worried
4 about these, these things because they're able to
5 feed themselves. So they have idle time to worry
Page 65

6 about these things that are insignificant to a
7 person who worries about the basic needs; food,
8 clothing and shelter. Because these are the type
9 of people that I have to deal with every day,
10 people who have to worry about the basic needs.
11 And they call this union man who
12 wants to be here and he said he wants to do the
13 union work. Yeah, I get jobs, fifteen dollars an
14 hour. Let me talk about union jobs here. Fifteen
15 dollars an hour, wow. They're talking about if you
16 work six months you can invest in the business and
17 move out of the working industry. You're talking
18 about real live money. But then people want to go
19 against it. Let me tell you something. He's
20 talking about power. And how we define power is
21 people working for economic reality. And Forest
22 City Ratner, Mr. Ratner is helping us work towards
23 that community benefit.

24 Let me say something. I am not a
25 signer on the community benefit agreement. But I
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1 340
2 sure was the first in the project for it and talked
3 about it and said that it should happen. I come
4 from Fort Greene. I lived in the projects. I
5 ain't no genius, but I know what needs to happen.
6 I'm no professor. But you don't got to be a genius
7 to know people got to eat, have to have a roof over
Page 66

8 their head, have to have food and clothing. You
9 ain't got to be no genius.
10 So you see these guys. These
11 guys, all these guys are all over Brooklyn out
12 every day looking for a job. Every day. They go
13 to training programs that we put together. And we
14 get people to help us train them, people that gave
15 us jobs. They trained us in safety, they trained
16 us in everything you need to be on a construction
17 job. Then we get electricians coming in, get some
18 basic training in electrical, get some basic
19 training in plumbing. They're not getting paid for
20 it, they just come to do it because they know we
21 need it.

22 All I'm saying is support this
23 project you all.

24 (Applause)

25 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,

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1 341
2 Mr. Canada.
3 The next speaker is Naquan Harris.
4 Is Naquan Harris here?
5 MR. HARRIS: Good afternoon. My
6 grandmother is 50 years old and hasn't had a job
7 since she was 16. So I have three things to say.
8 Stop talking, let people get an opportunity and a
Page 67

9 better life, and let them build the project here
10 and now.

11 Thank you.

12 (Applause)

13 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
14 Mr. Harris.

15 I'd like to remind all the speakers
16 to please state your name and address when you come
17 to the podium.

18 The next speaker is Daniel Alston.

19 MR. ALSTON: Good afternoon. I'm
20 Daniel Alston. I'm a 44 year old active class A
21 barber. I've been born in Brooklyn Hospital.

22 This project has been going on
23 for -- this thing has been talked about for quite a
24 long time. And there's a whole lot of people just
25 like myself that's struggling and that's eager to

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1 342
2 get this project going on. You see the agreements
3 is already down. Let's get the sign on this dotted
4 line and get this thing happening because, like
5 myself, we all need money, we need to feed our
6 families. God bless us all.
7 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
8 Mr. Alston.
9 The next speaker is Kareiff
10 McDuffie. I note that Mr. McDuffie spoke
Page 68

11 yesterday, but you're free to speak again.

12 MR. MCDUFFIE: My name is Kareiff
13 McDuffie. I represent Radical Brooklyn. I also
14 represent Rebuild.

15 After 120 months in federally
16 incarcerated and after seeing here so many doors
17 slammed in my face, the people at Rebuild gave me
18 the opportunity and a chance, a second shot at
19 being a productive citizen. Me, I've walked, my
20 first week at Rebuild I walked 27 blocks every day
21 to get on that van with my man Justin right there I
22 love so much, just for an opportunity, because that
23 was the only people that gave me hope and
24 opportunity to feed my family.

25 Now, we questioned some of the

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1 343
2 people that opposed this outside yesterday, and the
3 guy told me he had no place to walk his dog. Now,
4 that's crazy to me when my people don't have food,
5 clothing and shelter for their babies. While we
6 sit around and suffer, the girl, I guess she went
7 and left, she spoke about she's from Fort Greene
8 and how she opposed it. Four people were slain at
9 Fort Greene that she didn't bring up. That is a
10 tragedy to me because the people look like me. And
11 I don't hate myself, I love my people. So I don't

14 people qualified to work every day, and only one
15 gets a chance, and we ain't paying for nothing, we
16 just want to work.

17 (Applause)

18 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
19 Mr. McDuffie.

20 The next speakers, if they can come
21 to the front, are Jamelle Collins and Christopher
22 Legree. And Mr. Collins, you can come right to the
23 podium.

24 MR. COLLINS: Hello. First of all,
25 let me tell you I'm from Brownsville, that's number

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1 345
2 one. Jamelle Collins is my name. You know what
3 I'm saying.
4 So I'm going to say it like this
5 man. I'm a four time felon. Each time I came
6 home, you know what I'm saying. I'm 30 years of
7 age, that's number one. Each time I came -- I got
8 a nine year old son, Tim. And each time I came
9 home I went to Wendy's, I went to Micky D's, I did
10 that. You know what I'm saying. But it's kind of
11 complicated when you got a nine year old that's
12 walking past Toys R Us and saying daddy, I want
13 this. And you know what I got to do, I got to bend
14 down and I got to look in his eyes and say daddy

12 understand how can she oppose something that this
13 community benefit agreement is giving us a chance
14 where we could, you know, not just union people,
15 where minority owned businesses can come inside
16 this place and work alongside union people and get
17 unionized. Nobody else is coming up with that.
18 Nobody else came up with a better agreement than
19 that.

(Applause)

20
21 MR. MCDUFFIE: Everybody was talking
22 this and that. We working side by side with the
23 union to make us safe and build a good place and
24 help the community at the same time. What's better
25 than that?

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1 344
2 And the same people that's arguing,
3 they all from Fifth Avenue, Fourth Avenue. You
4 have Mexicans working non labor jobs dying and not
5 being reported. They are not fighting you. They
6 building all these people. You got Mexicans dying
7 right down the block from you. And you coming up
8 here fighting someone who wants to give you 17,000
9 jobs, when there is over 300 jobs on Fifth Avenue
10 where Mexicans are dying every day. The Department
11 of Labor is fighting the people every day, don't
12 even have a OSHA card, not qualified.

13 I travel with two vans full of
Page 70

15 can't afford it right now. And you know what's
16 crazy about that, it's the domino effect. Because
17 if I can't afford it for him, well, guess what,
18 somebody else is going to afford it for him,
19 because it's my kid, you know what I am saying.
20 I'm going to give them a role, I'm going to sell
21 door to door and then out of town.

22 Now I'm trying to change. I mean, I
23 just came home, I've been gone the past five years,
24 I came home June 15th. I'm here to say about
25 Rebuild -- people are speaking up against the

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1 346
2 community. How are you going to speak up against
3 something that you live in? That's number one.
4 Give their family, their friends, all their
5 brothers, their children, these people you got to
6 train with us, you know what I am saying. So you
7 speak up against us, we've been known for
8 retaliation since the beginning of time, slavery
9 days, you know what I am saying.

10 But I'm going to give to you a
11 role. I got this, this thing here, all different
12 types of jobs and all this. I went to all these
13 interviews, and I didn't get hired, you know what I
14 mean? It's complicated right now. Rebuild,
15 rebuild, rebuild, regroup. Rebuild me so I can
16 rebuild my family. You get it. It's complicated,
Page 72

17 man.

18 (Applause)

19 MR. COLLINS: Real short, I ain't
20 know nothing about this until my brother told me
21 about it. I was laying back, man, making phone
22 calls for job interviews. So he get the phone, he
23 said listen, they got this thing there jumping off
24 on Jay Street, so I'm like oh, brilliant. until I
25 get here and I'm listening and I'm like Rebuild,

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1 347
2 what are they talking about, you know, because I
3 don't know nothing about them, I'm from the hood up
4 the street. So then I'm listening. But I do read
5 and I am aware that I'm broke, we know broke when
6 we know broke. So it's about getting on my feet
7 right now.

8 So I then hear someone called his
9 name and speaking up and wanting to change and you
10 know, getting a job. And he said it yesterday. I
11 wish I would have been there, because I would have
12 been right behind them when they met right at the
13 podium, you know what I'm saying. we the same
14 people, you know what I'm saying, we had to work in
15 the sunshine because you couldn't go through in the
16 sun because of you all melanin, you get cancer.
17 Now because I'm saying you needed us, you know,

20 with depression if you are talking about over 50
21 percent unemployed. This project can provide
22 17,000 jobs. Let's think of 17,000 families that
23 could be affected in a positive way by being
24 employed.

25 The basis of our community is the

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1 349
2 family. And I know if you've been here the last
3 couple of days, you constantly hear about people
4 getting work, people getting work. But if you look
5 under, the bottom line is, it affects our children
6 also.

7 So sometimes when we have
8 opposition to these type of issues, we have to look
9 at the bigger picture. The children are our
10 future. And if they don't have stability in their
11 own homes with dad going to work and can provide
12 for them, what type of child is going to grow up in
13 that household. So it's a bigger issue than just I
14 don't want it, I want it.

15 I believe we need to look at our
16 community as a whole, get these men working, get
17 the proper training. I worked out of MCA for 19
18 years at Con Edison, and everything is training and
19 everything is safety. And I know Rebuild, and I
20 know Rebuild has made a certain effort to get their

18 bottom line, man, help me rebuild. Well, rebuild,
19 see, you said I'm coming now.

20 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
21 Mr. Collins.

22 The next speaker is Christopher
23 Legree.

24 MR. LEGREE: How you doing. My name
25 is Chris Legree. I'm also from Brownsville. I

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1 348
2 have a youth program at Brownsville that serves
3 over 300 kids a year. It's called the Hope Jaguar
4 Football Program. It's a mentor program and
5 athletic program.

6 The main people that I deal with,
7 and young ladies and our children in the group,
8 they are from families that are in despair. And
9 the despair is rooted from unemployment. When a
10 man or a head of a household can't provide for his
11 family, it does something to his spirit right away.
12 It also does something to the household, the
13 overall look on the future and tomorrow. I deal
14 with this every day.

15 If you look in today's society,
16 today there's almost 50 percent of black men in
17 this city are unemployed. In the Great Depression
18 I think it was something like 30 percent. So we
19 are calling this a recession, we are already mixed

21 men properly trained so when work does come, they
22 are capable of qualifying to do the job.

23 Opportunity is what it's all about.
24 I think these men deserve the opportunity. This
25 country was built off opportunity. This country

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1 350
2 was built off labor. So why should we at this
3 point in this critical time that we live in look
4 the other way and say now we don't need 17,000 new
5 jobs. Yes, we do. And I pray and I fight with you
6 that you get employed and that you get trained and
7 that you do build our community up.

8 Thank you.

9 (Applause)

10 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
11 Mr. Legree.

12 The next two speakers will come to
13 the front of the room. Eugene Myers and Steve
14 Lynah.

15 The next speaker is Eugene Myers.

16 MR. MYERS: Thank you.

17 THE HEARING OFFICER: You're
18 welcome.

19 MR. MYERS: Thank you.

20 REBUILD is for real. I'm standing
21 up here, I am living proof. I get my first check
22 tomorrow.

23 (Applause)

24 MR. MEYERS: Let me tell you

25 something. I'm 53 years old. And you can take me

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1 351
2 to any site, I'll do it all.

3 I would like to really thank
4 Justin and Brother D. And all the rest of my family
5 out there. When I came aboard, the van that I came
6 aboard on, there was a couple of vans that we had,
7 and all the people that was on the vans with me,
8 the majority of them are working right now. Let
9 nobody, and I mean that from the bottom of my
10 heart, I love all of you all man.

11 I haven't worked in a long time.
12 All I used to do, and I've been in Brooklyn 53
13 years. Fifty-three years I've been in Brooklyn,
14 92355. When I was born, a lot of you all wasn't
15 even around. You hear me. In and out of the
16 penitentiary like a lot of brothers. But I changed
17 my life around. I left all the drugs and
18 everything alone. I worked out, got my body back
19 together, got me a nice little job, and I'm happy
20 and I am going to be with Rebuild from now on.

21 Thank you very much.

22 (Applause)

23 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
Page 77

24 Mr. Myers.

25 The next speaker is Steve Lynah.

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1 352

2 MR. LYNNAH: Good afternoon,
3 everybody.

4 First of all, I would like to thank
5 God for giving me this opportunity to be up here
6 and be amongst brothers that is really hungry and
7 eager to learn and get an opportunity to oppose
8 (sic) the project right here so we can go to work
9 and we can be productive to society and that we can
10 live for our families and we can support our young
11 ones. But for those who think that something is
12 going to fall out of that sky and say here it is on
13 a silver platter or a gold platter, it's not going
14 to happen. It's up to us to do it all, and that's
15 what we are doing. We are doing it all, we are
16 putting all our foot work in.

17 I'd like to thank Justice, I'd like
18 to thank the ones behind Justice. And not only
19 that, the men that are there each and every day
20 that comes out and put their best foot forward.
21 That's we need. We need brothers and sisters to be
22 able to take that stand, take that initiative, to
23 grow with Rebuild. That's what it's about, growing
24 and learning.

25 Thank you.
Page 78

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1 353

2 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you for
3 your comments, Mr. Lynah.

4 MR. LYNNAH: Thank you.

5 THE HEARING OFFICER: Is there
6 anyone else in this hearing who would like to make
7 a statement?

8 (No response)

9 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the record
10 reflect that no one answered that question. The
11 time is now 3:37. At this time we will go off the
12 record. We will stay here until five p.m. in case
13 further speakers should appear, and we'll reconvene
14 again at six p.m. to receive public comments. In
15 other words, if any speakers appear between now and
16 five p.m., we will accommodate them. And we are
17 now off the record.

18 (At 3:37 p.m., the proceedings were
19 temporarily recessed.)

20 (At 3:40 p.m., the proceedings
21 resumed as follows)

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: It is 3:40.
23 We are going back on the record. The next speaker
24 is Betty Cooper.

25 Ms. Cooper, go to the podium right

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Page 79

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1 354

2 over there. Please state your name and address and
3 say whatever you have to.

4 MS. COOPER: Good evening or good
5 afternoon. My name is Betty Cooper. I live at 175
6 Adelphi Street in Brooklyn in the Fort Greene
7 community.

8 I've never spoken at one of these
9 things before. Ms. Green just called me a few
10 weeks ago and asked me to say something about
11 Mr. Ratner and for what he's done for us, to take
12 the opportunity to come and give a few words. I've
13 never spoken to you, but to whomever, I'd like to
14 provide them. Okay.

15 Ratner has done so much for our
16 organization. My organization is called, our
17 organization is called Families United. We work
18 for the children in the community, Fort Greene,
19 Bed-Stuy, Brownsville, the communities out in
20 Brooklyn, here in Brooklyn. We teach double dutch
21 and we also teach basketball and we have academic
22 components for the youth.

23 We started this program as an
24 alternative, a positive alternative to encourage
25 our people to come to school, those that weren't

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Page 80

1 355
 2 attending on a regular basis and those who have
 3 really problems in classes. We wanted to give them
 4 something to try to make them feel good about
 5 themselves. So we introduced double dutch as a
 6 positive alternative. And we had afterschool
 7 programs, but they could not attend ours unless
 8 they attended school. And they have to actually do
 9 their homework and help to improve their grades.
 10 Well, after about six months we
 11 found that those kids that hadn't been attending
 12 school more than once a week was coming to school
 13 every day. And not only that, at the end of the
 14 year we found out that those that were not going to
 15 get promoted were actually promoted. And over the
 16 span of two, three, four years those kids that were
 17 on the verge of being dropped out or being kicked
 18 out of school were now going on into high school,
 19 and over 80 percent of our children that we work
 20 with go on to college.

21 Mr. Ratner came to us, well, we sort
 22 of ran into him a couple of years ago, about three
 23 years ago. Because we used to take our kids to
 24 double dutch competitions in the summertime where
 25 they competed against all double dutch teams in the

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1 356
 2 world. But we had to struggle to get them there
 3 because we could not get any help from anybody in
 4 the community. So we wrote to politicians, we
 5 wrote to assembly people, we wrote to everybody to
 6 help us get these kids or to give us --
 7 (Bell rings)
 8 THE HEARING OFFICER: You have time.
 9 MS. COOPER: Oh, okay. That if they
 10 would give us a hundred dollars, two hundred
 11 dollars. But the cost to get them there is so
 12 high. We had to pay over a hundred dollars per
 13 child for registration alone. We have to pay for
 14 their hotel expenses. We have to pay for the team,
 15 we had to charter our own bus to get them there.
 16 And it's going door to door, banging on the doors,
 17 selling cakes, selling pies, taking junk, and
 18 anything that you could do to try and get those
 19 kids there.
 20 For years we got maybe, oh, maybe
 21 three teams. But after Mr. Ratner came on the
 22 scene, he actually gave us enough money to not
 23 only -- to not only get all of our teams there, but
 24 he chartered the -- he paid for the buses to get
 25 our teams down there. He paid for our hotel

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2 expenses. Excuse me. He paid our registration
 3 fees. And we were able to take 30 kids that year
 4 that Mr. Ratner helped us out. And we are ever so
 5 grateful to him because if it was not for him, we
 6 could not get these kids there.

7 And I don't know whether you
 8 realize, but if you take care of children, you will
 9 have greater adults. These kids have become
 10 leaders. The kids that we work with, the double
 11 dutch and the basketball, they are leaders. A lot
 12 of them went on to the NBA. Most of them, like I
 13 said, went to college. And they're coming back now
 14 to give back to the young people the way we gave to
 15 them. Because it meant so much to them.

16 I guess I'm out of time, but I just
 17 want you to know that Mr. Ratner have done a lot
 18 for residents. Even this year he helped us go on
 19 to the world again. He gave us \$15,000. And
 20 that's nothing to spit at, because without that our
 21 kids could not have gotten there again. We were
 22 able to get uniforms. We used to get tacky
 23 uniforms, we'd go to the 99 cent store to buy
 24 stuff. And but now with him helping us with it,
 25 shorts and T-shirts alike, we would get warm-up

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1 358
 2 sets. We didn't have to look at other kids and

3 envy them because we didn't have them.
 4 THE HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Cooper,
 5 could you finish up?
 6 MS. COOPER: Excuse me?
 7 THE HEARING OFFICER: Could you
 8 finish up?
 9 MS. COOPER: Okay, I'll finish up,
 10 and I'm sorry to take so long. Like I said, I
 11 never spoke before.
 12 Thank you so much. But I just
 13 wanted to tell you Mr. Ratner is a great person.
 14 Thank you.
 15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.
 16 Cooper.
 17 The time is now 3:55. Is there
 18 anyone else in the hearing who would like to make a
 19 statement?
 20 (No response)
 21 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
 22 record reflect that no one answered that question.
 23 At this time we will again go off the record. We
 24 will stay here until five p.m. in case further
 25 speakers should appear, and we will convene again

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2 at six p.m. to receive public comments.
 3 (At 3:55 p.m., the proceedings
 4 were temporarily recessed)

5 (At 4:07 p.m. the proceedings

6 resumed.)

7 THE HEARING OFFICER: It's 4:07, we
8 are back on the record. The next speaker will be
9 Carlton Screen.

10 MR. SCREEN: Good afternoon. My
11 name is Carlton Screen. I'm here as a
12 representative of Max Basketball. I'm the
13 executive director here in Brooklyn and I'm here to
14 say that I'm in favor of the Atlantic Yards
15 project. It's a very important project, not only
16 for workers and affordable housing, but I'm here to
17 speak for the youth in Brooklyn. I'm here as a
18 representative. I'm a former basketball player, I
19 played professionally, I had a couple of MBA
20 tryouts. And I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't
21 for youth development in the sport of basketball.

22 Okay, I was also a good student, I
23 graduated from Xaverian High School, Bay Ridge. I
24 went on to receive an athletic scholarship at
25 Providence College. I played for Rick Pitino. We

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1 360

2 also played in the Final Four my freshman year.
3 Upon graduating I had a couple of MBA tryouts with
4 the Golden State warriors and the New York knicks.

5 Okay, I'm here as a representative
Page 85

8 Mr. Screen.

9 The next speaker is Chantel Lewis.

10 MS. LEWIS: Good morning. My
11 Chantel Lewis. I am here representing the BUILD
12 organization, and I am in favor of the Atlantic
13 yards project.

14 I also just want to say that the
15 last gentleman just mentioned for the youth. Just
16 this morning I witnessed a young 14 year old get
17 hit by a car right in front of my office. And what
18 I believe this project will bring to Brooklyn,
19 along with of course the jobs and the affordable
20 housing, will be the possibility of youth programs
21 that may take place within the arena, which will
22 help get the youth off the street. Aside from
23 that, I had a customer in recently who was killed
24 on the streets of Brooklyn unfortunately. Again,
25 if there were more programs that we would be able

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1 362

2 to bring to Brooklyn to help keep our youth off the
3 street, it would be a big advantage to Brooklyn.
4 And that's all I have to say.

5 Thank you.

6 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you, Ms.

7 Lewis.

8 Is there anyone else here at the

6 of what is, excuse me, of how important it is for
7 our youth to have something to look forward to and
8 look up to for their future. I was here yesterday
9 and I heard a lot of testimony from people a little
10 older and had different issues. I'm here to
11 advocate for the youth in Brooklyn, okay. I'm
12 giving back. I'm also a teacher in the Board of
13 Ed. I've been a teacher for ten years, and I've
14 been dealing with the youth in Brooklyn for over
15 fifteen years. Okay.

16 So I think this project is very,
17 very important. Not only for the adults who spoke
18 yesterday, but I'm here to speak for the young kids
19 that are coming up in Brooklyn to have something to
20 look forward to in their future. Okay. I just
21 took about 25 kids from my program up to Providence
22 College, where I graduated. It was a great
23 experience for them to see the world outside of
24 Brooklyn, okay. And Forest City Ratner is working
25 closely with my program to support us in our

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1 361

2 endeavors. So I'm here to advocate for the
3 Atlantic Yards project, and I encourage everyone
4 else to come up and speak and also to vote when the
5 time is necessary.

6 Thank you for your time.

7 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
Page 86

9 hearing who would like to make a statement?

10 (No response)

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the record
12 reflect that no one answered that question and it
13 is now 13 after four. At this time we will go off
14 the record. We will stay here until five p.m. in
15 case further speakers should appear, and we will
16 reconvene again at six p.m. to receive public
17 comments.

18 (At 4:13 p.m., a short recess was
19 taken.)

20 (At 4:15 p.m. the proceedings
21 resumed.)

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: It's a quarter
23 after four. We are back on the record. The next
24 speaker is State Assembly Member Hakeem Jeffries.

25 ASSEMBLY MEMBER JEFFRIES: Good

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1 363

2 afternoon. Thank you for this opportunity to speak
3 on the record about this very important project
4 that impacts the communities I represent. I
5 represent the communities of Fort Greene, Clinton
6 Hill, Prospect Heights, parts of Crown Heights and
7 Bedford Stuyvesant.

8 As you know, the Empire State
9 Development Corporation is what we would call in
10 the law a public benefits corporation. And so by
Page 88

11 your very charter you are charged with the
12 responsibility of conducting yourself in a manner
13 as it relates to the projects in our community and
14 in such a way that benefits the public. In fact,
15 there are those of us in the State Legislature who
16 recently affirmed in this past legislative session
17 the fact that public benefit corporations such as
18 ESDC have a fiduciary responsibility not to any
19 developer, not to the real estate industry, not to
20 the mayor of the City of New York and in fact not
21 even to the governor of the state of New York, but
22 a fiduciary responsibility to the public that you
23 serve. And so as you evaluate this project, it's
24 clear to me that that fiduciary duty must be
25 exercised in a way that the public benefits.

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1 364
2 Now, whenever we have hearings like
3 this, as you saw yesterday, oftentimes it's like
4 the circus comes to town. And it's filled with
5 theatrics, it's filled with showmanship, it's
6 filled with manufactured drama. And then the
7 circus leaves and folks, some elected officials go
8 back to the communities that they represent, back
9 to Bensonhurst and back to Bay Ridge, back to other
10 parts of the city.
11 But who's left. The people who live
Page 89

14 right now. There are people who need that housing
15 right now. There are people who need the jobs that
16 would result from the affordable housing that is
17 constructed right now. It's should not be held
18 hostage to an arena.
19 Second, we must make sure that you
20 enforce the promise that the developer made to
21 build on site affordable condominiums. If we are
22 going to talk about affordability, we should talk
23 about permanent affordability, and the only way to
24 accomplish that is affordable home ownership.
25 Lastly, we should make sure that

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1 366
2 if in fact thousands of units of affordable housing
3 are promised to be built, that the community
4 doesn't get short changed by two or three hundred
5 units over a 12 year period, which is all that I
6 can tell seems to have been promised in the context
7 of the 12 years and 13 years of phase one. Make
8 sure that if in fact affordability of housing is
9 the one area that everyone can agree upon, that
10 ESDC upholds its charge as a public benefit
11 corporation to make sure that if anything gets
12 built, the affordable housing gets built for the
13 communities that need it the most.
14 Thank you.
Page 91

12 and work in this community, the people in
13 Angusborough (phonetic) and Whitman and Lafayette
14 Gardens and Farragut, desperate for employment
15 opportunities. The people who have been gentrified
16 and displaced out of the only homes that they have
17 ever known, as a result of the affordable housing
18 crisis. Who's left when the circus leaves town.
19 And in a recent letter that I signed on to, along
20 with many of my colleagues, I articulated many of
21 the concerns that we have as it relates to this
22 project. So I reference that July 28th letter
23 rather than rehashing it in my testimony.

24 But let me just quickly touch on one
25 point as it relates to the public benefits that you
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1 365
2 must make sure are derived from anything that's
3 built in Atlantic yards, and that of course is
4 affordable housing. Everyone seems to agree that
5 if anything should be built there, it's affordable
6 housing for the people who have been pushed out of
7 these communities. And on that point there are
8 really three things that you must take in mind, as
9 I quickly sum up.
10 First, you must make sure that the
11 affordable housing is not held hostage to the
12 arena. The affordable housing can be built right
13 now. There's no reason that it's not being built
Page 90

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
16 Mr. Jeffries.
17 The next speaker is Senator Carl
18 Kruger.
19 SENATOR KRUGER: Thank you and good
20 afternoon. My name is Carl Kruger. I'm the Senate
21 Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. In fact,
22 I just came back from Albany a few moments ago.
23 And I was on the FDR Drive and I was pleased to
24 look back in the landscape of lower Manhattan and
25 see Beekman Tower rising. And we are changing the

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1 367
2 face of lower Manhattan. And as you come to
3 downtown Brooklyn, we see once again the vision of
4 what change needs and what Forest City Ratner
5 companies have done for our city.
6 what we're talking about is we are
7 talking about incredible things happening. Things
8 that we never dreamt could ever happen before in a
9 climate of economic despair. We're talking about
10 office buildings being built. Proposals made and
11 dreams realized for affordable housing. We are
12 talking about bringing a world class sports arena
13 directly to our doorstep, and creating a new
14 economic engine for Brooklyn and for this entire
15 city. We are talking about producing thousands of
16 jobs, thousands of units of housing. We are
Page 92

17 talking about a stimulus package that when this
18 thing is blown up will mean billions of dollars
19 coming back into our city. A city that desperately
20 needs it. A city that has been a victim for far
21 too long of economic despair. And a turn around
22 program begins with Atlantic Yards.

23 True, it's not the Atlantic Yards
24 that we once envisioned. But nevertheless it
25 brings to us all of the components that make the

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1 368
2 project a true viable entity in our communities.
3 It once again brings us that arena that we
4 desperately need to drive the engine. It produces
5 affordable housing, it produces work force housing,
6 it produces condominiums in a mix that we will be
7 proud of. It brings commercial revitalization. It
8 takes blight and eradicates it from an area that
9 desperately needs it. It puts money into the
10 coffers of the MTA, and it builds a future for our
11 very borough. So from its very onset when Bruce
12 Ratner proposed this as nothing more than perhaps a
13 vision, well, he's taken that vision and brought it
14 to the doorstep of reality.

15 After you go through with these
16 hearings, the phased project moves forward, the
17 litigation is behind us, a new day is born. A day

20 coming to us, for opening up their minds and their
21 hearts and understanding that in an economy we have
22 to learn to do more with less. And that's just
23 what Atlantic Yards is talking about. But the
24 public benefit still exists, the housing exists,
25 the arena exists, the commercial revitalization

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1 370
2 exists, the jobs are there, and the vision and the
3 growth for a new Brooklyn is at our doorstep.

4 Thank you very much.

5 (Applause)

6 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you from
7 the senator from Brooklyn.

8 Is there anyone else in the hearing
9 who would like to make a statement?

10 (No response)

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the record
12 reflect that no one answered that question. And
13 the time is now 4:25. At this point we will go off
14 the record. We will stay here until five p.m. in
15 case further speakers should appear, and we'll
16 reconvene again at six p.m. to receive public
17 comments.

18 (At 4:25 p.m., the proceedings were
19 temporarily recessed.)

20 (At 4:45 p.m., the proceedings

18 where we are able to say that Brooklyn will once
19 again be the center and the focus, a true
20 masterpiece of what our city and our state can be.
21 We're going to be going to Albany
22 next month to deal with a deficit of revenue in the
23 extent of maybe another three billion dollars.
24 It's a sad state of affairs when our economy is so
25 threatened. It's even a sadder state of affairs

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1 369
2 when we are looking to look in a negative way on
3 what a great proposal Atlantic Yards is. I've been
4 saying it all along, I've been talking about
5 revitalization in lower Brooklyn in our communities
6 for the 16 years that I've been in the senate.
7 People never thought that MetroTech would be a
8 reality, but Bruce Ratner did. And he turned
9 around what downtown Brooklyn is all about.
10 Well, as we see an economic
11 proposal on the table today, as we see developers
12 even in the worst of economic times bringing their
13 cranes into Brooklyn, creating union jobs,
14 producing commercial revitalization and housing,
15 then we can say that Atlantic Yards is a little bit
16 behind schedule but a long way in offering what we
17 need to bring Brooklyn back to the schedule that it
18 desperately needs and wants.

19 So today I want to thank ESDC for
Page 94

21 resumed.)

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: We are back on
23 the record. It is 4:45 p.m. The next speaker is
24 Paul Rothblatt.

25 MR. ROTHBLATT: Raul. R-a-u-l.

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1 371
2 THE HEARING OFFICER: Raul?
3 MR. ROTHBLATT: Yes.
4 Hi. For the record, my name is
5 Raul Rothblatt. I'm here representing the Central
6 Brooklyn Independent Democrats, a group that has
7 staunchly opposed corruption in New York and based
8 in Brooklyn. We have taken a stance in opposition
9 to the Atlantic Yards.

10 I wanted to bring up something
11 that I don't think was addressed properly in the
12 environmental impact statement, and that is the
13 historic value of the properties in Prospect
14 Heights. I have a survey of the proposed historic
15 district. This is actually the old proposal, but
16 this was passed by the Landmark Preservation
17 Commission this summer and it's as of right now.
18 One of the reasons that they designated Prospect
19 Heights, well, there are several reasons. It was
20 kind of a love-fest at the LPC, because this was a
21 very clearly fantastic candidate for Landmark PC
22 because of the large network of historic buildings
Page 96

23 and how well they were preserved, the contiguous
24 nature of the district.

25 However, when I read the DEIS and

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1 372

2 I submitted my opinions, ESDC did not respond to
3 any of my comments. And I think this is a shame
4 because this is a very important historic district.
5 Eight hundred fifty buildings were landmarked. And
6 it is a glorious neighborhood. If you look at the
7 ESDC documents, it paints an image of a decrepit,
8 blighted neighborhood. And that just bears no
9 reality, no relationship to reality as far as I can
10 tell. And you would think the LPC would agree.

11 If you look at the final
12 designation document, it basically cuts as close to
13 the Atlantic Yards footprint as possible, because
14 the feeling was this historic neighborhood and
15 valuable neighborhood and steeped neighborhood as
16 well is being threatened by the Atlantic Yards
17 proposal, and that was not addressed in the
18 environmental impact statement at all, as it should
19 have been.

20 So I'm submitting this, and I
21 probably have a couple of other things to say to
22 you, but this is a good start.

23 Thank you.
Page 97

24 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
25 record reflect that Mr. Rothblatt spoke yesterday

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1 373
2 on behalf of the Prospect Park Block Association.

3 MR. ROTHBLATT: Prospect Place
4 Block Association.

5 THE HEARING OFFICER: Prospect Place
6 Block Association, and continued his remarks today.
7 Thank you, Mr. Rothblatt.

8 Is there anyone else at the hearing
9 who would like to make a statement?

10 (No response)

11 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the record
12 reflect that no one answered that question and that
13 the time is now 4:47. At this point we will go off
14 the record. We will stay here until five p.m. in
15 case further speakers should appear, and we will
16 reconvene again at six p.m. to receive public
17 comments.

18 (A recess was taken at 4:47 p.m.)

19 (At 5:00 p.m. the proceedings

20 resumed as follows)

21 THE HEARING OFFICER: We will go
22 back on the record. The time is now five p.m.
23 This hearing is now adjourned until six p.m. when
24 we will reconvene. Please note that the recorded
25 hearing will remain open to receive written

Page 98

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1 374

2 comments until 5:30 p.m. on Monday, August 31, 2009.
3 The written comments should be submitted to ESDC's
4 offices at 633 Third Avenue, 34th Floor, New York,
5 New York 10017, attention to Steve Matlin, senior
6 counsel, or by e-mail to
7 atlanticyards@empire.state.nyu.us.

8 Thank you very much.
9 (At 5:00 p.m., the afternoon
10 proceedings wer concluded.)

11 * * * *

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Page 99

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1 375

C E R T I F I C A T E

3
4 STATE OF NEW YORK)
5 COUNTY OF NEW YORK) SS:

6
7 I, KARI L. REED, a Registered
8 Professional Reporter (Stenotype) and Notary Public
9 with and for the State of New York, do hereby
10 certify:

11 I reported the proceedings in the
12 within-entitled matter and that the within
13 transcript is a true record of such proceedings.

14 I further certify that I am not
15 related, by blood or marriage, to any of the
16 parties in this matter and that I am in no way
17 interested in the outcome of this matter.

18 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
19 set my hand this _____ day of August, 2009.

20
21
22 _____
23 KARI L. REED, RPR

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Page 100

1 376

2 NEW YORK STATE
3 EMPIRE STATE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

4 -----x

5 PUBLIC HEARING

6 Re: Modified General Project Plan For the
7 Atlantic Yards Land Use Improvement and Civic
8 Project in Brooklyn, New York and the Sale of
9 Certain Property in Connection Therewith
10 (EVENING SESSION)

11 -----x

12 Klitgord Auditorium
13 New York City
14 College of Technology
15 285 Jay Street
16 Brooklyn, New York
17 July 30, 2009
18 6:02 p.m.

19
20 Before:

21

22

23

24

25

EDWARD KRAMER, ESQ.,
The Hearing Officer

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1

2 APPEARANCES:

3 For the Empire State Development Corporation:

4 Anita Laremont - General Counsel
5 Steve Matlin - Senior Counsel
6 Joseph Petillo - Senior Counsel
7 Rachel Shatz - Vice President Planning and
8 Environmental Review
9 Darren Bloch - Executive Vice President
10 Strategy Policy and Public Affairs
11 Forest Taylor - Manager, Community and
12 Government Relations
13 Warner Johnston - Vice President, Public
14 Affairs

15

16 ALSO PRESENT:

17 The Public
18 The Press
19 The Media

20

21

22

23

24

25

Marc Russo
Reporter

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1

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

3 Speaker	Page
4 EDWARD KRAMER.....	381
5 The Hearing Officer	
6 STEVEN MATLIN.....	385
7 Empire State Development Corporation	
8 GREGORY CALABRESE.....	392
9 BUILD	
10 RICHI E CANNATA.....	393
11 Local 929	
12 COLIN BENTHAM.....	394
13 GLEN MOGUEL.....	395
14 BUILD	
15 ELAINE GREEN.....	395
16 1199/BUILD	
17 AUDERY DOYLE.....	397, 406

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1 379

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

3 Speaker Page

4 CARL CULLY.....	400
5 Local 79	
6 JOE CHAN.....	403
7 President - Downtown Brooklyn Partnership	
8 LISA HALLOWAY.....	409
9 BUILD	
10 GIB VECONI.....	412, 434
11 Secretary - Prospect Heights Neighborhood 12 Development Council	
13 DENNIS DOWLING.....	415
14 BUILD	
15 PATTI HAGAN.....	416
16 Prospect Heights Action Coalition	
17 MIKE BOVE.....	421
18 NIA Community Services Network	
19 TAMMY MEADOWS.....	427
20 Resident	

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1 380

INDEX OF SPEAKERS

3 Speaker	Page
4 MICHELLE DE LA LUZ.....	424

Executive Director - 5th Avenue Committee

STEVEN HENRY..... 428

JCS Contracting Associates

RANDAL HAYES..... 429

NORMAN ODER..... 430

Blogger, Atlantic Yards Report

LANCE WOODWARD..... 431

BUILD

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

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1 381

2 P R O C E E D I N G S

3

4 THE HEARING OFFICER: Good

5 evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to Klitgord

Page 5

Auditorium of the New York City College of

Technology for today's public hearing.

It is now just a little after 6

o'clock and we are going back on the record to

continue the public hearing concerning the proposed

Atlantic Yards Civic and Land Use Improvement

Project.

My name is Edward Kramer. And I

am the hearing officer for this public hearing.

This hearing being conducted by

the New York State Urban Development Corporation

Act doing business as Empire State Development

Corporation or ESDC.

The purpose of this public hearing

is to:

(1) Inform the public about the

proposed Atlantic Yards Civic and Land use

Improvement Project;

(2) give all interested persons an

opportunity to provide comments on the Modified

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1 382

2 General Project Plan; and

3 (3) give all interested persons an

4 opportunity to comment on the essential terms of

5 the proposed real property conveyances with respect

6 to the project.

7 A stenographic transcript will be

Page 6

8 made. If you have a written copy of your remarks
9 and would like to leave them with the stenographer,
10 that would be appreciated.

11 The hearing record will be kept
12 open following the conclusion of this hearing.

13 Submission of additional written comments by the
14 public and others are encouraged and should be sent
15 by mail to: Empire State Development Corporation,
16 633 Third Avenue, 34th floor, New York, New York
17 10017, attention: Steven Matlin, Senior Counsel,
18 or by e-mail to: AtlanticYards@empire.state.ny.us.

19 Written and e-mailed comments will
20 be accepted at ESDC's offices until 5:30 p.m. on
21 August 31, 2009. All comments received prior to
22 that time will be made part of ESDC's record in
23 this proceeding and will be given the same weight
24 as if spoken at this hearing.

25 However, comments received after

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1 383

2 the close of business on August 31, 2009 at 5:30
3 p.m. will not be considered.

4 The stenographer's transcript of
5 this hearing and a copy of any written statements
6 which are submitted here today or later filed with
7 ESDC, will be made available for review during
8 normal business hours at ESDC's New York City

Page 7

9 offices which, as I said, are at 633 Third Avenue
10 in Manhattan.

11 Upon written request, a copy of
12 the record of this hearing may be purchased for the
13 cost of reproduction.

14 The purpose of this hearing is to
15 inform the public and to solicit public comments.
16 It is not a question and answer session. It is
17 instead an opportunity for you to present your
18 views so that ESDC can consider them in making its
19 final determinations.

20 It should be noted that ESDC did
21 have an informational question and answer session
22 on July 22nd that was separate and apart from this
23 hearing.

24 This hearing is being held
25 pursuant to notice published on June 29, 2009 in

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1 384

2 The Daily News, The New York Post, The Brooklyn
3 Eagle and The Daily Challenge.

4 ESDC has been represented by the
5 following individuals who have appeared at this
6 hearing:

7 Darren Bloch, ESDC Executive Vice
8 President, Strategy, Policy and Public Affairs;
9 Anita Laremont, ESDC General
10 Counsel;

Page 8

11 Steve Matlin, ESDC Senior Counsel;
12 Joseph Petillo, ESDC Senior
13 Counsel;
14 Rachel Shatz, ESDC Vice President
15 Planning and Environmental Review;
16 Forest Taylor, ESDC Manager,
17 Community and Government Relations;
18 Warner Johnston, ESDC Vice
19 President, Public Affairs.
20 Again, my name is Edward Kramer
21 and I am the hearing officer for this public
22 hearing.
23 I have been asked by ESDC to
24 conduct today's public hearing from 2 p.m. to 5
25 p.m. and from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

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1 385
2 The hearing is being held pursuant
3 to Sections 6 and Section 16 of the New York State
4 Urban Development Corporation Act.
5 Now, Mr. Matlin will present an
6 overview of the proposed project and expected
7 transactions.
8 Mr. Matlin.
9 MR. STEVEN MATLIN: For those of
10 you that may have missed the earlier three
11 sessions, I'll make a very brief summary of the
Page 9

12 General Project Plan and the modifications
13 proposed.
14 The General Project Plan for the
15 Atlantic Yards Land Use Improvement and Civic
16 Project includes an 18,000 seat arena that will
17 serve as the home for a professional basketball
18 team, 16 buildings that are going to be suitable
19 for residential, office, retail, and hotel uses, an
20 upgraded train yard for the Long Island Railroad,
21 and eight acres of open space.
22 Under the plan, the train yard
23 would be covered with a platform and up to six
24 towers would be constructed on top of the platform.
25 The project, when completed, would

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1 386
2 include up to 6,430 units of housing and not less
3 than 2,250 units of affordable housing.
4 The proposed Modified General
5 Project Plan, that is the subject of this hearing,
6 is in many ways similar to the 2006 General Project
7 Plan in terms of the description of the project
8 site and what is to be constructed on the project
9 site.
10 There have been some changes to
11 the financing plan for the project. Certain costs
12 that were otherwise going to be incurred initially
13 will be deferred.
Page 10

14 It's now proposed that the site be
15 acquired in two or more stages. The first stage
16 would include the arena block, which is going to
17 accommodate the arena, three residential towers and
18 a commercial tower.
19 The first stage will also include
20 block 1129, portions of Pacific Street and two
21 parcels on the eastern portion of a site identified
22 as Block 1121, Lots 42 and 47. Block 1129 and
23 Pacific Street are essential for construction
24 staging, construction parking, parking for the
25 arena.

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1 387
2 Lots 42 and 47 are essential for
3 the new Long Island Railroad yard.
4 We expect to go forward with the
5 first stage of condemnation in 2009.
6 The remainder of the site would be
7 acquired, when necessary, for development.
8 The Modified General Project Plan
9 also reflects that the MTA air rights may be
10 acquired in stages. Initially, the MTA is going to
11 transfer to ESDC the property rights necessary for
12 the development of the arena block. The balance of
13 the air rights will be transferred, when necessary,
14 for the development of the platform above the yard.
Page 11

15 Finally, the project plan has been
16 modified to allow Forest City to defer providing
17 certain guarantees to the MTA for the new upgraded
18 yard until the commencement of construction of that
19 yard which will be not later than 2012. Forest
20 City will be required to provide the MTA with
21 substantial undertakings at the onset of the
22 project to ensure that the upgraded yard is timely
23 built.

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1 388
2 direct acquisition of certain MTA properties and
3 air rights. Once site acquisition occurs, ESDC
4 will immediately seek to relocate any remaining
5 tenants and deliver vacant possession of that
6 portion of the project site to Forest City or its
7 affiliates. The exception is that ESDC will convey
8 those two lots, Lots 42 and 47, to the MTA for
9 purposes of their train yard.
10 A detailed description of the
11 proposed transactions, including the leases and
12 other conveyances are set forth in the legal notice
13 for this hearing.
14 The legal notice, the Modified
15 General Project Plan and a Technical Memorandum are
16 all available and accessible to the public at the
Page 12

17 ESDC website at www.empire.state.ny.us/Atlantic
18 Yards.

19 Thank you.
20 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
21 Mr. Matlin.

22 The following materials shall be
23 made part of the record at this hearing:

24 (1), copies of the public notices
25 for this hearing that appeared in The Daily News,
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1 389
2 The New York Post, The Brooklyn Eagle and The Daily
3 Challenge, together with affidavits and
4 certifications of publication; and

5 (2), the project's Modified
6 General Project Plan.

7 The procedures to be followed at
8 this hearing are as follows:

9 If you wish to speak, please sign
10 in at the table in the lobby, if you have not
11 already done so.

12 For your convenience and
13 information, slips of paper containing information
14 on where to submit written comments, how to obtain
15 copies of the Modified General Project Plan, and
16 where project documents can be viewed on ESDC's
17 website are also available in the lobby.

18 Because this is the last day of
19 the hearing, and in order to give everyone an
20 opportunity to present their views, I will be
21 giving priority to persons who did not speak on
22 Wednesday during the first day of this public
23 hearing.

24 After all first-time speakers have
25 spoken, if there is time remaining at the end of

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1 390
2 this session, those who previously spoke may speak
3 again.

4 I will also request that
5 individual speakers keep their total presentation
6 to no more than three minutes. Otherwise,
7 presentations that run longer than the allotted
8 time may be concluded after all other speakers have
9 completed their remarks.

10 I will do my best to allow any
11 public officials to speak as quickly as I can upon
12 being notified of their arrival in the auditorium.

13 Otherwise, I will call the names
14 of speakers generally in the order in which they
15 have signed in and will try to alternate speakers
16 who are in favor of the project and those who are
17 against the project.

18 At this hearing we will be having
19 a clock and we will be timing people to three
Page 14

20 minutes. When there's thirty seconds left to go, a
21 chime will come off and when there's zero time
22 left, you will hear another chime to end your time.

23 In order to ensure an accurate
24 transcript and to enable all assembled today to
25 hear your remarks, I ask each speaker when called

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1 391
2 to come to the microphone in the front of the
3 auditorium and please clearly state your name and
4 address.

5 If you are speaking on behalf of a
6 group, please identify that organization or entity
7 and state its address.

8 And the first several speakers
9 that can take seats to my left, your right are:

10 Laura McCarther;
11 Gregory Calabrese;
12 Richie Cannata;
13 Colin Bentham;
14 Glenn Moguel;
15 Elaine Green.

16 Please have seats over here.
17 And the first speaker is Laura
18 McCarther.

19 And again, each speaker, please
20 state your name and address for the record.

21 Laura McCarther? Is Laura
22 McCarther here?

23 (No response.)

24 THE HEARING OFFICER: Then the
25 first speaker will be Gregory Calabrese.

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1 392
2 MR. GREGORY CALABRESE: Good
3 evening.

4 My name is Gregory Calabrese. I'm
5 a resident of Brooklyn. Address, 2523 Cropsey
6 Avenue.

7 I've been a resident of Brooklyn
8 for 39 years, eight months. My parents been
9 residents of Brooklyn for 82 years.

10 More than a tree grows in
11 Brooklyn, families, careers, businesses. And I
12 can't understand a debate about a project like
13 this. This is a good thing. It's good for
14 Brooklyn. It's good for the union trades.

15 And I want to leave off on a note
16 that, give people to think about. All around the
17 country people look at Brooklyn like it's -- they
18 hear so much negative. And if this is a chance of
19 doing positive of an arena in Brooklyn, it would
20 only better Brooklyn. It would create jobs. It
21 would put us on the map as a good thing, not as
22 what most people think about Brooklyn. And I can't
Page 16

23 understand why we're even debating this.
24 Please build it. Build it now.
25 Thank you.
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1 393
2 (Applause.)
3 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
4 Mr. Calabrese.
5 The next speaker is Richie
6 Cannata.
7 MR. RICHIE CANNATA: Hello,
8 everybody.
9 My name is Richie Cannata. I live
10 on 7918 12th Avenue in Brooklyn. And I've been a
11 resident of Brooklyn for 41 years. My family, my
12 father, my grandparents have been born and raised
13 in Brooklyn. I have two kids in Brooklyn.
14 I believe this project is going to
15 be a big plus for us in numerous ways. Besides the
16 work that it brings, I believe it would better the
17 area. And besides creating a ton of jobs and
18 construction afterwards, there would be a lot of
19 jobs available for people who work in the
20 community.
21 And like the gentleman said, it
22 also gives Brooklyn, you know, a good -- a positive
23 spin where they can -- people look and go, hey, you
Page 17

24 know, they got -- it's not just about, you know,
25 like what they think about Brooklyn or whether it's
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1 394
2 good or bad. I feel it's good, the stigma that we
3 have.
4 I say build this project. Like I
5 say, I don't see why there's any debate about it.
6 And I want to be able to put food on my family's
7 table and I need to work. And for that reason alone
8 I feel very strongly about putting this project
9 together as soon as possible.
10 And that's all I have to say.
11 (Applause.)
12 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
13 Mr. Cannata.
14 The next speaker is Colin Bentham.
15 MR. COLIN BENTHAM: Good evening.
16 My name is Colin Bentham. I live
17 in Brooklyn since 1963 until 1987, I left for a few
18 years, came back. And I'm in favor of this
19 project. I need a job and I'd be glad if they
20 started building it right now.
21 Thank you.
22 (Applause.)
23 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
24 Mr. Bentham.
25 The next speaker is Glen Moguel.
Page 18

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1 395
2 MR. GLEN MOGUEL: Good evening.
3 My name is Glen Moguel. And I've
4 been living in Brooklyn for over 21 years.
5 And I'm personally in favor of
6 them building the Atlantic Yards for what it brings
7 on extra stability for the borough and also it
8 creates jobs for those that are looking for
9 employment like myself. I just finished the
10 pre-apprenticeship program for the Carpenters
11 Union. And like I said, --
12 (Audience participation.)
13 MR. GLEN MOGUEL: Thank you.
14 And also, for those that are in
15 here, it will create jobs for them and it would
16 help, potentially help me get my foot in the door
17 with the union and to further advance myself within
18 a career within the Carpenters.
19 And that's it.
20 Thank you.
21 (Audience participation.)
22 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
23 Mr. Moguel.
24 The next speaker is Elaine Green.
25 MS. ELAINE GREEN: Good evening,
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Page 19

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1 396
2 everyone.
3 My name is Elaine Green.
4 I have been in Brooklyn just about
5 my entire life. I've seen how Brooklyn have been in
6 a turmoil. I seen the area where they are
7 presently going to be building this project where
8 you had nothing but prostitutes, dope addicts, drug
9 feins, all in that neighborhood and now I seen how
10 Brooklyn is now becoming an up-and-coming
11 neighborhood.
12 I do support the building of this
13 project and I support Mr. Caldwell and the BUILD
14 Foundation where they are trying to help young men
15 and young womens (sic) to get jobs. I say let's
16 build this project. It can't hurt. All it can do
17 is help and give more jobs to our young men and
18 young women.
19 (Audience participation.)
20 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
21 Ms. Green.
22 The next speaker will be Audery
23 Doyle; and
24 On deck will be Carl Cully.
25 Audery Doyle. Audery Doyle.
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Page 20

1 397

2 MS. AUDERY DOYLE: Good evening.
3 I wasn't really prepared to speak
4 because I didn't think I'd get up here so soon. I
5 just walked in the door a minute ago. And when I
6 walked in, I saw that most of the people here are
7 speaking in favor of the project so I just -- he
8 just called my name.

9 My name is Audery Doyle.
10 I'm a mother of two and a
11 preschool teacher. And since everybody has to give
12 their bona-fides, I've been a resident of Brooklyn
13 for the last 40 years or so. I'm in favor of
14 affordable housing. I'm in favor of unions jobs.
15 And I'm in favor of development, responsible
16 development.

17 I am opposed to the Atlantic
18 Yards, at least I'm opposed to the plan as it was
19 presented five years ago. I'm certainly opposed to
20 approving a new modified plan which neither I nor
21 anybody else who has testified knows exactly what
22 it is. We kind of have a vague idea that it's
23 supposed to provide jobs. It's supposed to provide
24 affordable housing.

25 The latest estimates say that the
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Page 21

1 398

2 housing that will be provided will not be
3 affordable to most of the people who are hoping to
4 be housed in this project.

5 They have statistics and tables
6 and all sorts of information about how much the
7 housing is supposed to cost and the housing is
8 going to be mostly at what is now the market rate.
9 What they are calling affordable housing will not
10 be affordable to anybody who's making less than the
11 local median income which I believe is about
12 \$35,000 a year.

13 So in that respect, as far as I
14 can see, a lot of what they're saying that we're
15 going to get is pie-in-the-sky. What we will get at
16 this juncture is an arena that's been valued
17 engineered to the point where it's ugly.

18 Now people might say that it's not
19 important that it's ugly. But when it was first
20 presented, it was presented as world-class
21 architecture by a star architect that was going to
22 put Brooklyn on the map and was going to give us
23 back our first-class attitude and make Brooklyn a
24 wonderful place.

25 But, in fact, what we're getting
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1 Page 22 399

2 is Podunk architecture by somebody who doesn't
3 really, you know, who knows their names.

4 The other thing is that when I
5 testified against this project three years ago,
6 they were going to get incredible density and
7 out-of-scale development.

8 Now what we're going to get is
9 parking lots, an arena that the taxpayer pays for,
10 but Forest City Ratner gets to take the profits,
11 and very little else. One tower or two may be
12 there after ten years, which will have not really
13 affordable housing.

14 And the rest of it will be empty
15 for up to 22 years while Ratner eventually pays off
16 the money and when the economy turns, eventually he
17 decides to build something which will be in his
18 interest to build. We don't know what that will be.
19 And we won't see the benefits, if we ever do, for
20 many, many years to come.

21 I'm opposed to this plan.
22 Thank you.
23 (Audience participation.)
24 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
25 Ms. Doyle.

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1 400

2 (Audience participation.)

Page 23

3 THE HEARING OFFICER: The next

4 speaker is Carl Cully; and

5 After Carl Cully will be Joe Chan.

6 Is Carl --

7 MR. CARL CULLY: Yes, sir. I'm
8 here, sir.

9 THE HEARING OFFICER: Okay.

10 MR. CARL CULLY: Hello.

11 I'm going to make this quick.

12 I'll tell you a little bit about myself. My name is
13 Carl Cully. I represent Local 79, one of the
14 strongest unions in the labor.

15 (Audience participation.)

16 MR. CARL CULLY: Second

17 generation. Born 852 Herkimer Street between
18 Rochester and Buffalo.

19 I just want to say one thing about
20 this project. I am a business agent for Local 79
21 and I'm also an executive board member for Local
22 79.

23 (Audience participation.)

24 MR. CARL CULLY: And change is --

25 change is good. I understand there's some people

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1 401

2 here today that are not quite happy about the
3 project, and that's fine. Everyone is -- everyone
4 has an opinion. I don't want to tell you about what
Page 24

5 opinions is, but here and there you have to think
6 out the box some time.
7 The fact is that I'm born and
8 raised here and I have the great fortune to be able
9 to put people to work right here in this great
10 City. You can check my records afterwards. I put
11 people to work every single day in all these
12 schools. I send them to work. I do.

13 And I send people of color. I
14 send people of color and I also send people that is
15 not my skin color. It's all about putting people to
16 work and affordable housing.

17 I can tell you something really
18 fast. When I was a kid in Brooklyn -- I never
19 forget -- my parents told me, they came -- they
20 came from North Carolina. They came here from North
21 Carolina when I was kid. And that actually I used
22 to hear them talk back and forth. And they said
23 that, when they was on their way here, they were
24 told the streets would be paved with silver and
25 gold. I don't think if you guys ever heard of that

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1 402
2 story before.
3 But the truth of the matter is
4 that they didn't find the silver and gold, but they
5 raised me and they raised my brother. And I'm 48
Page 25

8 (Audience participation.)
9 MR. JOE CHAN: I am Joe Chan.
10 I am President of the Downtown
11 Brooklyn Partnership.
12 I have prepared remarks which I
13 will submit to the record, but I'm just going to
14 keep this simple and speak from the heart.
15 I am resident of the Downtown
16 Brooklyn area. I live in Fort Greene. Before that
17 I lived in DUMBO so I've been here for quite some
18 time and I'm fully invested in the area. I have
19 daughters who go to public school in the area.

20 And my job is to ensure that
21 Downtown Brooklyn grows and continues to grow as an
22 economic center and as a downtown to a City of 2.5
23 million people.

24 Let me make it very clear that
25 there is no other single project that will have a
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1 404
2 greater positive economic impact on Downtown
3 Brooklyn and Brooklyn for decades to come than the
4 Atlantic Yards.
5 (Audience participation.)
6 MR. JOE CHAN: For all the reasons
7 that have been mentioned, you know, the speaker
8 before, it's economic opportunity, it's affordable
Page 27

6 years old, 30 years in the business. And I'm
7 fortunate enough to bring people and put people to
8 work in these schools right now. They're working
9 right now as we speak.

10 So anyone in their right mind,
11 hear what I'm saying: Change is good. Change is
12 good. We need the affordable housing. If you could
13 put food on your table and if you can do that, you
14 did half the job for your family. And I'm going to
15 tell you something, anyone who says that, okay
16 joining the union is not a future, you're looking
17 at the future right here. I'm born and raised
18 here. I'm a union representative and I put people
19 to work. And if this ain't a damn career, I don't
20 know what is.

21 (Audience participation.)
22 MR. CARL CULLY: Thank you and God
23 bless you's all.

24 And I am for the Atlantic Yard
25 project and I'm working right now and I'm still
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1 403
2 sending them to work as we speak.
3 God bless you's all.
4 (Audience participation.)
5 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
6 Mr. Cully.
7 The next speaker is Joe Chan.
Page 26

9 housing, and it's also treating Brooklyn the way
10 that Brooklyn should be treated. Not to be overly
11 parochial, but Brooklyn is a city of 2.5 million
12 people. And to think that our downtown does not
13 have an arena, to think that our downtown does not
14 have a public gathering space for thousands of
15 people like any other downtown across the nation in
16 much smaller sizes do is a shame.

17 This is Brooklyn's time. This is a
18 once-and-a-lifetime opportunity. I don't want to be
19 standing here or standing in Downtown Brooklyn
20 fifty years from now talking about how we lost the
21 Nets like the Dodgers were lost in 1957.

22 I think we have a great
23 opportunity here. Obviously, there's a lot of
24 public support. There is a public dialogue, as
25 there should be, and, you know, as it will continue

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1 405
2 to be. But now is the time. And we fully support
3 this project and advocate for its swift start and
4 for its swift completion.
5 Thank you.
6 (Audience participation.)
7 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chan.
9 Is there anyone else at the
10 hearing who would like to make a statement?
Page 28

11 (No response.)
12 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
13 record reflect that no one answered to that
14 question.
15 And the time is now 6:30 p.m.
16 At this time we will go off the
17 record. We will stay here until 8 p.m. in case
18 further speakers should appear to receive their
19 public comments.
20 (At 6:30 p.m., the hearing was
21 temporarily recessed.)
22 (At 6:34 p.m., the hearing was
23 resumed.)
24 THE HEARING OFFICER: We are back
25 on the record.

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1 406
2 It is 6:34 and one of our previous
3 speakers wishes to make a few more remarks and that
4 is Audery Doyle.
5 MS. AUDERY DOYLE: Hello again.
6 I'm Audery Doyle. And I really
7 appreciate being given this opportunity to speak
8 again. I won't keep you long.
9 I have a question that is
10 something that I've been wondering about and some
11 of my colleagues have been wondering about and that
Page 29

12 is in the fight against Atlantic Yards. And that
13 is, who is Susan Romm and what is her position with
14 the ESDC and what is her connection with the
15 Atlantic Yards project? I don't expect to have
16 that question answered, but I wanted to get in into
17 record because, you know, we've seen her and heard
18 her name, but we really wonder what it is that she
19 does.
20 The other thing that came to me
21 that I had planned to say that I didn't say is
22 that, a couple of years ago my block association
23 had a meeting with -- we have a tri-block
24 association so there are three blocks that meet
25 together to work on issues in the neighborhood.

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1 407
2 And Joe Chan of the Downtown
3 Brooklyn Partnership attended that meeting to talk
4 to us about development in downtown because we are
5 located very close to downtown.
6 And we asked him about a
7 construction site that was starting to be worked at
8 80 DeKalb Avenue. It was just in the very beginning
9 stages. And we were concerned about we are on the
10 side of Flatbush Avenue where we didn't expect and
11 we hoped that we would not have high-rise condos
12 going up.
13 He said at that time that he
Page 30

14 didn't know anything about that building, what was
15 going to go up on that site. Within 48 hours of the
16 time that he spoke to us and said he knew nothing
17 about it, I went online just to see if there was
18 any information and there was a rendering of a
19 building called 80 DeKalb Avenue which is 30
20 stories and was being built by Forest City Ratner,
21 our good friends, and was supposed to be a rental
22 building that was going to be completed within a
23 year-and-a-half of the time. And he said he knew
24 nothing about it.
25 I don't trust the Downtown

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1 408
2 Brooklyn Partnership. I don't trust Joe Chan. I
3 don't trust Forest City Ratner and I don't think
4 anybody else should either. I certainly don't
5 trust ESDC, but I hope they'll do the right thing
6 in this case.
7 Thank you.
8 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
9 for your additional comments, Ms. Doyle.
10 Is there anyone else at this
11 hearing who would like to make a statement?
12 (No response.)
13 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
14 record reflect that no one answered to that
Page 31

15 question and the time is now 6:36 p.m.
16 At this time we will go off the
17 record. We will stay here until 8 p.m. in case
18 further speakers should appear to receive public
19 comments.
20 (Short recess taken.)
21 THE HEARING OFFICER: We are back
22 on the record.
23 The time is now 6:38.
24 The next speaker is Lisa Halloway.
25 Right over here.

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1 409
2 MS. LISA HALLOWAY: Oh, thank you.
3 THE HEARING OFFICER: Speak right
4 over here. That's a three-minute timer. It will
5 tell you when you have thirty seconds.
6 MS. LISA HALLOWAY: Okay. Hello.
7 My name is Lisa Halloway.
8 I'm here to represent the BUILD
9 and RWA Foundation, nonprofit organization.
10 I'm speaking about in general
11 about the inner city how there are no jobs
12 available and the unemployment rate is just like
13 impossible right now. Fortunately I just recently
14 was employed, like two months ago, thank God for
15 that. But I need more.
16 And so when I say more, I speak
Page 32

17 for everybody in general, we need more jobs, more
18 skills, more availability to employment that's in
19 the inner city.

20 Also, speaking on my prospect,
21 I've recently been released last year. Okay? But
22 the grace of God I'm working, I'm doing good. Those
23 who are in the same predicament as me, need a
24 chance as well. Don't just erase them off because
25 they need your help as well.

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1 410
2 I can understand those who will
3 come out and become a felon once again, recidivism.
4 That rate is low now but it could become high once
5 again. I don't really know the status of it, but I
6 know if you give somebody a chance, you know, you
7 can -- they can make you proud.
8 The skills that's inside, I've
9 obtained car craft, general maintenance so I'm
10 certified. Also, I work for the DMV, okay, so when
11 you pick up -- when you're picking up a telephone,
12 your answering -- you're asking questions, and you
13 might be talking to a prisoner. So I was one of
14 those. I was a DMV customer service representative,
15 yes, I was and I knew my stuff very good.

16 Now, what I'm asking you is that
17 you just please, you know, this is Atlantic Yards
Page 33

18 is giving us a chance, not only for felons but
19 those who are low income family, those people who
20 are losing their houses. You know, this is not a
21 joking matter, this is not a situation that you
22 just like, all right, they'll get a job one day.
23 No, we need help right now, you know, and putting
24 off this project is like, wow, it seemed, oh, well.
25 So I'm just here to represent

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1 411
2 those that are unemployed, underemployed, no
3 education, no skills, even for the youth. You see
4 youth today are going to jail early. We're talking
5 about 17, 16. They need skills, they need someone
6 to care. So you give them the opportunity, that's
7 your -- that's our future right there. You have to
8 give them some kind of direction and which way to
9 go.
10 So that's my speech. Okay? And
11 that's a heartfelt speech and I hope you feel it.
12 Okay. Thank you.
13 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
14 Ms. Hallway.
15 Is there anyone else here at this
16 hearing who would like to make statement?
17 (No response.)
18 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
19 record reflect that no one answered to that
Page 34

20 question.
21 And the time is now 6:33 p.m. --
22 6:43 p.m. I mean.
23 At this time we will go off the
24 record. We will stay here until 8 p.m. in case
25 further speakers should appear to receive public

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1 412
2 comments.
3 (At 6:41 p.m., the hearing was
4 temporarily recessed.)
5 (At 6:54 p.m., the hearing was
6 resumed.)
7 THE HEARING OFFICER: We are back
8 on the record.
9 The time is now 6:55.
10 And the next speaker is Gib
11 Veconi.
12 MR. GIB VECONI: Good evening.
13 My name is Gib Veconi and I'm
14 Secretary of the Prospect Heights Neighborhood
15 Development Council representing merchant
16 associations, civic associations and block
17 associations of Prospect Heights.
18 PHND is concerned that what is
19 known of the proposed modifications to the Atlantic
20 Yards plan make it likely the project will bring
Page 35

21 blight, not benefit to Brooklyn.
22 Concessions in the project's
23 delivery schedule and phasing allow the developer
24 to meet its obligations by building an arena, one
25 or two buildings and a massive surface parking lot.

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1 413
2 The surrounding neighborhoods may
3 be required to sustain the impact of this
4 incomplete build-out for decades. Such impacts
5 include:
6 Changes to the arena design that
7 diminish and removed mitigation intended to lessen
8 the impact of siting an arena in a residential
9 neighborhood:
10 Delay in the creation of open
11 space planned for the project's second phase with
12 the space instead being used for a surface parking
13 lot that will increase traffic impacts, negatively
14 effect air quality and decrease quality of life in
15 the surrounding neighborhood;
16 The delay in the creation of
17 stormwater management measures which depend on
18 second phase construction;
19 The effect of the developer's
20 commitment to build only a fraction of the
21 affordable housing originally promised for the site
22 resulting in construction of only slightly more
Page 36

23 units of affordable housing than will be displaced;
24 Effects on the LIRR service given
25 the reduced number of tracks provided in the
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1 414
2 temporary rail yard that may not see expansion
3 planned in later project phases:
4 A negative economic impact to the
5 taxpayers of New York State and New York City
6 resulting from an Atlantic Yards arena; and
7 Finally, the potential delay of
8 decking the Vanderbilt Rail Yards, meaning the
9 project might fail to realize its primary goal of
10 connecting Fort Greene, Prospect Heights, Boerum
11 Hill, and Park Slope and removing the blighting
12 influence of the rail yards.
13 The stated reason for the proposed
14 design -- the changes to the MGPP is to allow the
15 project to proceed in a changed economic climate.
16 However, we note that it is now known ESDC approved
17 the original GPP without a complete financial
18 analysis. The original analysis, when later
19 provided to a local elected officials through FOIL,
20 showed that its assumptions for construction costs
21 were sharply lower and sales in rental income
22 sharply higher than comparable projects in
23 Brooklyn.

24 Had ESDC reviewed that analysis
25 prior to its original approval of Atlantic Yards,
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1 415
2 the changes sought at this time might have been
3 foretold.
4 Now, instead of taking the
5 opportunity to offer a realistic assessment of the
6 Atlantic Yards project, ESDC appears to be
7 fast-tracking approval of the project without so
8 much as a site plan, updated design drawings or a
9 financial analysis. In so doing, the agency sets
10 the stage for another meeting like this two or
11 three years in the future or sooner.
12 PHNDC calls on ESDC to release
13 revised design documentation and undertake a
14 Supplemental EIS analyzing the impact of an
15 Atlantic Yards project that includes only the
16 elements for which the agency has negotiated as
17 obligations of the developer. The SEIS must be made
18 available for public comment prior to any further
19 action being taken by the ESDC board.
20 Thank you very much.
21 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
22 Mr. Veconi.
23 The next speaker is Dennis
24 Dowling.
25 MR. DENNIS DOWLING: Hi. How's
Page 38

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1 416
2 everybody doing?
3 My name is Dennis and I'm a
4 resident of Brooklyn. I am for this. I think it
5 would be a great opportunity for people to find
6 jobs. I'm with the BUILD organization and it would
7 personally be a benefit for me.
8 I feel it would be great for the
9 community and I also think that it would be special
10 because it would allow us to take some of the
11 animosity that you may find in Brooklyn streets and
12 with the arena being built, give us some team
13 spirit. So I'm definitely for it.
14 Thank you.
15 (Applause.)
16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
17 Mr. Dowling.
18 The next speaker is Patti Hagan.
19 MS. PATTI HAGAN: Good afternoon.
20 My name is Patti Hagan. I'm a
21 30-year resident of the Prospect Heights Historic
22 District.
23 Here we are again, gathered again
24 in the dark days of summer at the behest of the
25 Empire State Development Corporation for their

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1 417
2 latest Potemkin hearing to comment on Bruce
3 Ratner's Modified General Project Plan or ghost
4 project plan for Atlantic Yards.
5 It's nonsense to ask the public to
6 comment much less for the ESDC to approve an
7 Atlantic Yards Modified GPP without a plan. The
8 ESDC cannot be serious. Or has the ESDC caught the
9 New York State dysfunctional virus? You don't call
10 something a project plan when there is no plan.
11 This is ESDC in wonderland.
12 Regarding Atlantic Yards, we all
13 know the Emperor has no clothes just as the Empire
14 State Development Corporation has no plans. So how
15 dare the ESDC approve the vastly-changed Atlantic
16 Yards project in September without the plans:
17 Without the financial analysis;
18 Without the cost benefit analysis;
19 Without the height and footprint
20 of the buildings;
21 Without a Supplemental
22 Environmental Impact Statement;
23 Without an NYPD security terrorism
24 analysis;
25 Without an upgraded Vanderbilt

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Page 40

1 418
 2 Rail Yard plan;
 3 Without the abuse for eminent
 4 domain for Ratner's private gain.
 5 To rubber-stamp Atlantic Yards in
 6 such deplorable ignorance is to shirk your
 7 responsibility as a public benefit corporation.
 8 Likewise, the Public Authorities
 9 Control Board's December 2006 fact-absent approval
 10 of Atlantic Yards should be revoked. The PACB, like
 11 the ESDC, needs to begin to practice due diligence
 12 regarding Atlantic Yards. In fact, this Atlantic
 13 Yards Modified ghost project plan is nothing but a
 14 Bush-style, faith-based initiative.
 15 We are being asked to revert to a
 16 simplistic faith in the goodness of Ratner, the
 17 ESDC, the PACB, Bloomberg, Pataki, Paterson, et
 18 cetera. But there is no there there, no plan, no
 19 financial analysis, no security terrorism police
 20 study, no Carlton Avenue Bridge.
 21 Please, ESDC, in the interest of
 22 good government, scrap the Atlantic Yards albatross
 23 now. Despite the earnest attempts of thousands of
 24 citizens to inform the ESDC of serious likely
 25 impacts of Atlantic Yards, the ESDC appears

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1 419
 2 uninformed to an alarming degree.
 3 At the July 22nd Atlantic Yards
 4 information meeting last week it was as if Donald
 5 Rumsfeld had taken over answering for the ESDC.
 6 And the FCR, when asked about the
 7 modified, low-budget, so-called upgraded, in fact,
 8 downgraded Vanderbilt Yard, we were told, "The MTA
 9 has determined that the upgraded yard is the
 10 upgraded yard."
 11 What about the much modified ghost
 12 project plan?
 13 "The project is the same."
 14 What about the escalating cost of
 15 the arena?
 16 "We do an analysis of the entire
 17 project, not just the arena, the entire project."
 18 What about the new \$5 billion
 19 price tag?
 20 "Part of our value engineering was
 21 to produce the price point that's more manageable."
 22 What about restoring the Carlton
 23 Avenue Bridge as a matter of public safety --
 24 THE HEARING OFFICER: Ms. Hagan,
 25 please finish your remarks.

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2 MS. PATTI HAGAN: Okay. I will.
 3 "The Carlton Avenue Bridge will be
 4 up and operational prior to the completion of the
 5 arena."
 6 What about Atlantic Yards as a 620
 7 to 511-foot tall misfit?
 8 "From an architectural point of
 9 view, it is our responsibility to make it
 10 contextual."
 11 Well, the context is the 150-year
 12 old Prospect Heights Historic District, 19th
 13 century brownstones of three to five stories.
 14 It is more than ironic that after
 15 six years of this long-running Atlantic Yards
 16 farce, we the people are still asking the same
 17 question and still getting the stonewalled
 18 nonanswers.
 19 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
 20 Ms. Hagan.
 21 MS. PATTI HAGAN: Something is
 22 rotten in the State of New York.
 23 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
 24 Ms. Hagan.
 25 The next speaker is Mike Bove.

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3 THE HEARING OFFICER: Your time's
 4 up.
 5 (Laughter.)
 6 MR. MIKE BOVE: Help me, help me.
 7 What am I doing here.
 8 My name is Mike Bove. I represent
 9 the NIA Community Services Network. My grandfather
 10 was born here in 1882, my father, of course,
 11 myself, my children, now my grandchildren.
 12 Brooklyn has come a long way and
 13 needs to go further. When nobody invested in this
 14 part of Brooklyn, the Ratner Organization invested
 15 in this part of Brooklyn. There's buildings all
 16 around us that he took a chance on, helped us grow,
 17 helped jobs.
 18 There's no reason why we shouldn't
 19 go forward with this program to help the rest of
 20 the community to bring jobs, to help our children,
 21 to help growth patterns. It's so important that we
 22 have this project.
 23 For the people that spoke early
 24 this afternoon that have no faith, have no jobs,
 25 have no education, there's a middle class. There's

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5 it further.

6 I beg you to support this program.
7 I beg to support this project. Manhattan has
8 basketball. The Bronx has a stadium. Queens has a
9 stadium. It's no reason why Brooklyn shouldn't come
10 into the 21st, 22nd, 23rd century.

11 Thank you very much.

12 (Applause.)

13 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
14 Mr. Bove.

15 The next speaker is Tammy Meadows.
16 MS. TAMMY MEADOWS: Hi. My name
17 is Tammy Meadows.

18 And I've been living in Prospect
19 Heights for about 20 plus years. And I'm for the
20 project.

21 I just -- I was going to say that
22 one sentence but, you know, just leave it, but
23 that's like cheapening the process. What I really
24 want to say is that I think the advantages of this
25 project has forced a lot of people who have been

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1 423
2 silent for so long and forgotten to actually come
3 to the forefront and say exactly what it is that,
4 you know, they've been living with for the past
5 years. And it has forced the politicians to finally

6 notice those people who have not had jobs and have
7 been unable to make ends meet and to put food on
8 the table for their families.

9 We just seem to go about our daily
10 lives and just hope that everything gets better and
11 so on.

12 You know, I really appreciate the
13 debates on both sides because it has also forced
14 people who never -- who normally don't even speak
15 to each other to actually say something, to
16 actually listen to each other and to actually hear
17 what the other side had to say. And then at the
18 end, they meet in the hallway and they finally
19 discuss and realize that they too are just humans
20 and just trying to make ends meet.

21 So the eye of the photographer
22 sees a lot of things so, you know, you can debate
23 and have a healthy debate and then in the end still
24 come and shake hands and go home and try to work on
25 things together.

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1 424
2 So I'm for this project and it's
3 not just about basketball. It's about a way of life
4 for a lot of people.

5 Thank you.
6 (Applause.)

7 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
Page 46

8 Ms. Meadows.

9 The next speaker is Michelle De la
10 Luz.

11 MS. MICHELLE DE LA LUZ: Hi. My
12 name is Michelle De la Luz. I'm the Executive
13 Director of the 5th Avenue Committee. We're a
14 31-year old nonprofit, comprehensive community
15 development corporation whose mission is to --

16 THE HEARING OFFICER: Can you slow
17 down a little?

18 MS. MICHELLE DE LA LUZ: Sure.

19 THE HEARING OFFICER: I'll give
20 you more time.

21 MS. MICHELLE DE LA LUZ: But
22 aren't you a New Yorker?

23 THE HEARING OFFICER: I'll give
24 you more time.

25 MS. MICHELLE DE LA LUZ: Our

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1 425
2 mission is to pursue social and economic justice.
3 One of the things that we do is
4 build and manage affordable housing and train and
5 place people into living-wage jobs. Brooklyn
6 deserves all of the things that the Atlantic Yards
7 project has said it will deliver one day. But
8 unfortunately, the project was never designed to

9 actually deliver those things, neither the
10 affordable housing, nor living wage jobs nor the
11 open space.

12 And the newly-revised project,
13 which is a vast change from the original plan, does
14 even less to fill the needs that everyone here
15 recognizes absolutely have to be met. And it does
16 so at an incredibly high price tag to the public.

17 I can tell you that the 5th Avenue
18 Committee was recently chosen with a team of other
19 for-profit developers to redevelop a 5.8-acre site
20 along the Gowanus Canal that will deliver more
21 affordable housing than the revised plan at
22 one-tenth the cost to the public. And that housing
23 will be permanently affordable because we've
24 committed to do so. And it will have nearly two
25 acres of publicly accessible open space.

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1 426
2 So we have to ask ourselves, are
3 we getting what we deserve for our tax dollars? If
4 there were a true public process in which this
5 project had gone through and could have been
6 discussed, then the input and the wisdom of the
7 many organizations and the elected officials could
8 have been included so that we could have a project
9 that would actually deliver on the promises of
10 truly affordable housing, true living wage jobs for
Page 48

10 folks that deserve them, and need access to that
11 training and education so that they can have that
12 employment and have that affordable housing.

13 I believe that this project is
14 flawed beyond belief and that the Empire State
15 Development Corporation would be wise in stopping
16 this miscarriage in its tracks. The fact that the
17 vote was taken without a site plan, without a
18 review is incredible.

19 I can tell you that the kind of
20 input and requirements that I have to go through as
21 an executive director and as our organization has
22 to go through as a nonprofit organization that
23 competitively bids on projects was more strenuous
24 and more stringent than what the Forest City Ratner

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1 427
2 has had to do in terms of public input and in terms
3 of public disclosure than what we have had to do.
4 It's absolutely ridiculous that this will be
5 allowed to move forward. And I hope that once and
6 for all this gets stopped and that we can revisit
7 and rebuild something over the Vanderbilt Yards
8 that truly serves the community and its needs.
9 Thank you.
10 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
11 Ms. De La Luz.

12 Is there anyone else at the
13 hearing who would like to make a statement?

14 (No response.)

15 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
16 record reflect that no one answered to that
17 question.

18 And the time is now 7:12 p.m.

19 At this time we will go off the
20 record. We will stay here until 8:00 in case
21 further speakers should appear to receive public
22 comments.

23 (At 7:12 p.m., the hearing was
24 temporarily recessed.)

25 (At 7:18 p.m., the hearing was
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1 428
2 resumed.)

3 THE HEARING OFFICER: We are back
4 on the record.

5 It is 7:19.

6 The next speaker is Steve Henry.

7 MR. STEVEN HENRY: Where do I go?

8 THE HEARING OFFICER: Right over
9 here.

10 MR. STEVE HENRY: Good evening.

11 My name is Steve Henry. Along
12 with my brother we own and operate JCS Contracting
13 & Associates. We are a union company. And what I
Page 50

14 have to say I think won't be different from much of
15 what you heard pro the Atlantic Yards project and I
16 think that's a good thing. I believe that JCS,
17 myself, my brother, that we join the chorus of
18 entrepreneurs, business owners that would like to
19 see this project going for not only the projects,
20 but for the development of Brooklyn.

21 I've watched my father build a
22 business in Brooklyn, owned and operated for 25
23 years, along with my mother. His business is
24 different from my brother's and mine. But following
25 in his footsteps we would like to take it to the

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1 429
2 next level. He was able to do what the market could
3 bear at the time for him with the opportunities he
4 was given. I think it goes without saying that the
5 economic times limit the resources available for
6 small business owners as well as opportunities.
7 This Atlantic Yards project gives not just myself
8 but other business owners the opportunity to grow,
9 operate a business.

10 As we have been in Brooklyn for
11 the longest time as residents, we worship here. Our
12 church is here, we would like to see this project
13 go forward for the development for the jobs for the
14 next phase of Brooklyn for the next generation of

15 business owners. And along with Forest City
16 Companies and with the BUILD organization and the
17 apt leadership of Mr. James Caldwell, we are able
18 to take that next step. The project has already
19 began and my voice is only here to say I would like
20 to see it continue.

21 Thank you.

22 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
23 Mr. Henry.

24 The next speaker is Randal Hayes.

25 MR. RANDAL HAYES: Right here?

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1 430
2 Good day, folks, ladies and
3 gentleman, chairman.

4 I support BUILD a hundred percent
5 on these projects and I'd like them to start the
6 yard because it is employment and development for a
7 whole city, Brooklyn, New York.

8 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
9 Mr. Hayes.

10 The next speaker is Norman Oder.

11 MR. NORMAN ODER: My name's Norman
12 Oder, O-d-e-r.

13 I am a Brooklyn resident. I write
14 a blog about Atlantic Yards, as some of the people
15 know. It's called Atlantic Yards Report.

16 We have some time so I figured I'd
Page 52

17 just bring this up, reminder to the ESDC.
18 In December of '08 I filed a
19 Freedom of Information Law request. I'm still
20 waiting and either -- I don't know how fast these
21 things go, but it strikes me that it either should
22 be rejected or responded to in full.
23 So I'm anticipating that. Just a
24 reminder. Thanks.

25 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
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1 431
2 Mr. Oder.
3 Is there anyone else at the
4 hearing who would like to make a statement?
5 (No response.)
6 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
7 record reflect that no one has answered to that
8 question.
9 And time is now 7:25 p.m.
10 At this time we will go off the
11 record. We will stay here until 8 p.m. in case
12 further speakers should appear to receive public
13 comments.
14 (At 7:25 p.m., the hearing was
15 temporarily recessed.)
16 (At 7:38 p.m., the hearing was
17 resumed.)

18 THE HEARING OFFICER: We are back
19 on the record.
20 It is now 7:38.
21 And the next speaker is will Lance
22 Woodward.
23 MR. LANCE WOODWARD: Thank you.
24 I'd like to go on the record and
25 state that I am for the Atlantic Yards project.

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1 432
2 To start out with, Brooklyn is a
3 borough of great people, great ideas and great
4 things.
5 At the end of this month on August
6 27th we're going to celebrate a little noted
7 holiday. But what it is is the beginning of the
8 War for Democracy in America, the Battle of Long
9 Island, which took place here in Brooklyn and gave
10 us our modern day democracy.
11 George Washington led that effort
12 and eventually we all know became the 1st president
13 of the United States and here we are today with our
14 great flourishing democracy.
15 Now I say that all to say, that
16 there have been a number of great people come
17 through Brooklyn but there have been two
18 specifically that have changed Brooklyn for the
19 better. First I already said George Washington.

20 The second is Mr. Bruce Ratner.
21 He has done more for the Borough
22 of Brooklyn than any other human being that I'm
23 aware of in terms of its development prosperity and
24 progressive advancement.
25 To ESDC, I would like to quote

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1 433
2 Bobby Kennedy when he made note of the fact that
3 five percent of the people are against everything
4 all of the time. Please take that into
5 consideration. We've had probably five percent of
6 the people here that were against this project with
7 95 percent of the people probably for the project.
8 With that, I am in support of this
9 project.
10 Thank you very much.
11 (Audience participation.)
12 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
13 Mr. Woodward.
14 The time is now 7:41.
15 Is there anyone else who would
16 like to make a statement?
17 (No response.)
18 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
19 record reflect that no one has answered to that
20 question.

21 At this time we will go off the
22 record. We will stay here until 8 p.m. in case
23 further speakers should appear to receive public
24 comments.
25 (Short recess.)

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1 434
2 THE HEARING OFFICER: We are back
3 on the record.
4 Mr. Gib Veconi wishes to make
5 additional remarks.
6 MR. GIB VECONI: My additional
7 remarks are actually historic in nature. I just
8 wanted to comment on George Washington and the
9 Battle of Brooklyn.
10 George Washington did, in fact,
11 lose the Battle of Brooklyn. In fact, after Boston
12 he lost most of the battles of the Revolutionary
13 War for the next three years. He ended up winning
14 the war without a lot of money, without a lot of
15 resources, fighting the most powerful army in the
16 world because he was very tenacious, and he never gave up.
17 He's the antithesis of a large
18 real estate developer using the power of government
19 to get a piece of land and be able to exploit it
20 for private gain. George Washington has absolutely
21 nothing to do with Bruce Ratner. He's an American
22 Page 56

23 hero and was unbelievably prescient in figuring out
24 how to defeat the most powerful army in the world.
25 (Audience participation.)

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1 435
2 THE HEARING OFFICER: Thank you,
3 Mr. Veconi.
4 Is there anyone else at the
5 hearing who would like to make a statement?
6 (No response.)
7 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
8 record that no one answered to that question and
9 the time is 7:44.
10 At this time we will go off the
11 record. We will stay here until 8 p.m. in case
12 further speakers should appear to receive public
13 comments.
14 (At 7:44 p.m., the hearing was
15 temporarily recessed.)
16 (At 7:58 p.m., the hearing was
17 resumed.)
18 THE HEARING OFFICER: We are back
19 on the record.
20 Is there anyone else here who
21 would like to make a statement?
22 (No response.)
23 THE HEARING OFFICER: Let the
Page 57

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1 437
2 C E R T I F I C A T I O N .
3
4 STATE OF NEW YORK)
5 SS.
6 COUNTY OF NEW YORK)
7
8
9 I, MARC RUSSO, a Shorthand
10 (Stenotype) Reporter and Notary
11 Public within and for the State of
12 New York, do hereby certify that the
13 foregoing pages 376 through 437 taken
14 at the time and place aforesaid, is
15 a true and correct transcription of
16 my shorthand notes.
17 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have
18 hereunto set my name this 14th day
19 of August, 2009.
20 _____
21 MARC RUSSO
22
23
24
25
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Page 59

24 record reflect that no one answered to that
25 question and that the time is now 8 p.m.

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1 436
2 This public hearing is now closed.
3 However, the record of the hearing
4 will remain open for the receipt of written
5 comments until 5:30 p.m. on Monday, August 31,
6 2009.
7 Any such written comments should
8 be delivered to ESDC's offices at 633 Third Avenue,
9 34th floor, New York, New York 10017, attention
10 Steven Matlin, Senior Counsel or by e-mail to
11 Atlantiyards@empire.state.ny.us.
12 Thank you very much and good
13 evening.
14 (Applause.)
15 (At 8:00 p.m., the proceedings
16 were concluded.)
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
Page 58

AY MGPP Hearing7-30-09PM.txt
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