



## **MINUTES FOR THE FEBRUARY 11, 2025 HEARING OF THE NEW YORK CITY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

A duly noticed meeting of the New York City Charter Revision Commission was held at FDNY Headquarters, 9 Metrotech, Brooklyn, New York at 5 p.m. on February 11, 2025.

Chair Richard Buery presided at the meeting. The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 5:12 p.m. Also present were the following members of the Commission:

- Sharon Greenberger, Vice Chair
- Leila Bozorg, Secretary
- Grace Bonilla
- Shams DaBaron
- Anita Laremont
- Dr. Lisette Nieves
- Anthony Richardson
- Diane Savino
- Valerie White

- Carl Weisbrod
- Julie Samuels<sup>1</sup>
- Kathryn Wylde<sup>2</sup>

The Chair provided introductions and an overview of the Charter Revision Commission's role and explained ways for the public to provide testimony in-person or virtually at public hearings and by submitting written testimony online.

The Chair acknowledged the presence of a quorum. Minutes from the meeting of the Commission held January 2, 2025 were adopted on motion unanimously by all Commissioners present.

The Chair welcomed experts and elected officials to provide testimony to the Commission.

- Vicki Been, Professor of Law at NYU School of Law and Former Deputy Mayor of Housing and Economic Development testified on the importance of housing affordability and the costs attributed to delays in the approval process for developments.
- Barika Williams, Executive Director of the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD), testified in support of citywide comprehensive planning rooted in community-led neighborhood plans.

---

<sup>1</sup> Attended by teleconference.

<sup>2</sup> Attended by teleconference.

- Howard Slatkin, of the Citizens Housing Planning Council, testified in support of setting checks on member deference and making minor zoning actions faster.
- Antonio Reynoso, Brooklyn Borough President, advocated in favor of 10-year citywide comprehensive planning to guide growth and development, going beyond the work of City of Yes and the the City Council’s Fair Housing framework.
- Vishaan Chakrabarti, an architect and founder of Practice for Architecture and Urbanism, provided testimony in favor of creating as-of-right low-rise and mid-rise housing in certain neighborhoods to increase housing density.
- Jacob Anbinder, historian of housing policy and urban politics at Cornell University, testified regarding the history of land use reforms and their relationship to housing scarcity.

The Chair opened the floor for public testimony, limited to three minutes per speaker.

- Annemarie Gray, Executive Director of Open New York, provided testimony in support of fast-tracking housing development, among other reforms.
- Robert Tiburzi, a construction union member of Laborer’s Local 79, advocated for the inclusion of strong labor standards in the Charter.
- Alicia Boyd, a political activist and Crown Heights resident, encouraged the Commission to focus on affordability and the impacts of high-rise development on gentrification and displacement.

- Rod Herbert, a private citizen, advocated for improving ULURP using an operational self-assessment framework, which is premised upon bringing together a broad scope of individuals to brainstorm and rethink the ULURP process.
- Sarah Penenberg, a SEIU Local 32BJ union representative urged that any changes to ULURP account for labor protections.
- Ben Weinberg, Director of Policy at Citizens Union, raised concerns about shifting who has final decision-making authority over land use matters, and cautioned against shifting too much power from Council to the executive.
- Denis Ibric, a council representative of the NYC District Council of Carpenters, voiced opposition to efforts to alter member deference.
- Catherine Vaughn, Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director of Abundance NY and Community Board 6 member, provided testimony in favor of reforms to ULURP and community boards.
- Yvonne Roman, a homeowner, told a personal story about the negative impacts that construction can have on neighboring properties.
- Vishnu Reddy, a Sunnyside resident, spoke in favor of consolidating ULURP advisory review to a one-stage process overseen by the borough president with community input.

- John Woelfling, an architect at Dattner Architects and former Brooklyn community board member, spoke about his experience working on fully affordable housing projects.
- Hector Robertson, a Crown Heights resident and member of the Washington Avenue Botanic Block Association (WABBA), advocated for holistic community planning that includes issues beyond housing and land use, like education, safety, public health, and transit.
- David Gordon, a housing advocate, Lower East Side renter, and participant at CB3 land use meetings, spoke in support of a ULURP fast-track as proposed by Vicki Been and Annemarie Gray.
- Cormac Slade Byrd, a private citizen, spoke in support of reforming member deference and changing the makeup and voting structure of the City Council.
- Michael Abrahams, a private citizen, voiced support for the Open New York recommendations.
- Daniel Golliher, Founder of Maximum New York, advocated that Charter section 197-d be amended to limit the ability of Council to reject a housing development during a declared “housing emergency.”
- Gillian Morris, a tech entrepreneur and Fort Green renter, testified in support of consolidating overlapping oversight roles of HPD, DCP, DOB, FDNY, and other housing-related agencies to reduce bureaucracy and streamline ULURP.

- Stephen Crim, a Manhattan resident, spoke in support of balancing the preservation of historic buildings in landmarked districts with the need to address the housing crisis.
- Jay Sorid, former CB9 and CB17 land use committee member, spoke in favor of community-board participation in the Charter Revision Commission's process and direct elections of community board members.
- Olivia Gonzalez Killingsworth, a Brooklyn community member, testified in favor of fast-tracking affordable housing.
- Vadim Graboys, a Soviet Union refugee who moved to NYC in 1979, discussed his personal experience of facing extreme rent increases and the negative impacts of housing shortages.
- Chloe Phitoussi, private citizen, testified in support of streamlining ULURP.
- Theresa Westerdahl, a Community Board 9 member and resident of Crown Heights South for 10 years, advocated for protecting green space amid new development and cautioned about shadows that new high-rise buildings might cast on existing community spaces like schools.
- Nichola Cox, a Crown Heights South resident, spoke about living in an R6 zone with many 100-year-old single-family homes and cautioned against potential negative impacts of fast-tracking developments on existing residents and neighborhood character.

After hearing from all those members of the public in attendance who wished to speak, the Chair closed the public hearing portion of the meeting. The meeting was adjourned on motion by the Chair.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Helen Chananie  
New York City Charter Revision Commission