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2	2018 NYC CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING
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4	NEW YORK UNIVERSITY'S VANDERBILT HALL
5	40 WASHINGTON SQUARE SOUTH, GREENBERG LOUNGE NEW YORK, NY, 10012
6	July 23, 2018
7	6:00 P.M.
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9	APPEARANCES:
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12	COMMISSIONERS:
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14	CESAR PERALES, Chair SHARON GREENBERGER
15	DEB ARCHER DALE HO
16	MARCO CARRION CARLO SCHISSURA
17	KYLE BRAGG
18	RACHEL GODSIL
19	MENDY MIROCZNIK
20	ANNETTA SEECHARRAN
21	WENDY WEISER
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1	MR. PERALES: Good evening. I'd like to
2	get started, if we can take our seats.
3	My name is Cesar Perales. I have the
4	privilege of serving as chair of the 2018 Charter
5	Revision Commission.
6	As is our custom, I will begin the
7	proceedings by asking the members of the
8	Commission that are here to introduce themselves,
9	and I'll start on my left.
LO	Dale.
11	MR. DALE: Good evening. My name is Dale Ho
L2	and I am a lawyer at the American Civil Liberties
13	Union.
L4	UNKNOWN SPEAKER: I ask that everyone speak
L5	up, please.
L6	MS. ARCHER: Good evening, everyone. My
L7	name is Deborah Archer and I'm a law professor
L8	here at NYU Law School.
L9	MS. SEECHARRAN: My apologies. My
20	apologies. Good evening. My name is Annetta
21	Seecharran and I'm the executive director of
22	Chhaya Community Development Corporation.
23	MS. WEISER: Hello. My name is Wendy Weiser
24	and I direct the democracy program at the Brennan
25	Center for Justice here at NYU School of Law.

1	MS. GREENBERGER: Good evening. I'm Sharon
2	Greenberger. I'm the president and CEO of the
3	YMCA of Greater New York.
4	MS. GODSIL: Good evening. I'm Rachel
5	Godsil and I'm the vice chair of the
6	Unknown SPEAKER: I can't hear you.
7	Mr. PERALES: Press the button. You have to
8	press the button. That one.
9	MS. GODSIL: Good evening, again. My name
LO	is Rachel Godsil. I'm the vice chair of the
L1	Commission at Rutgers Law School. And I'm
12	co-founder and director of research for the
L3	Perception Institute. And it's wonderful to see
L4	all of you out here tonight.
L5	MR. PERALES: As I indicated, my name is
16	Cesar Perales. I was formally the secretary of
17	State of New York. I previously served as deputy
18	mayor of the City of New York. I've had a long
L9	history in civil rights as an attorney with a
20	particular interest in voting rights.
21	MR. SCISSURA: Good evening, everyone. I'm
22	Carlo Scissura. I serve as the secretary of the
23	Commission and I currently serve as the president
24	and CEO of the New York Building Congress. Prior
25	to that I ran the Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce

1	and before that served as chief of staff to
2	Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz.
3	MR. MIROCZNIK: Good evening. My name is
4	Mendy
5	(Inaudible.)
6	MR. MIROCZNIK: I'm sorry. Good evening.
7	Thank you. Good evening. I'm Mendy Mirocznik.
8	I'm president of COJO Staten Island. It's a
9	pleasure to be here.
LO	MR. BRAGG: Good evening. I'm Kyle Bragg.
11	I'm secretary-treasurer of SEIU of 32BJ. I'm
L2	also a member of Community Board 13 in Queens.
L3	MR. CARRION: Good evening. My name is
L4	Marco Carrion. I'm currently commissioner of the
L5	Mayor's Community Affairs Unit.
L6	MR. PERALES: I generally take a few minutes
L7	to describe what Charter Revision Commissions do
L8	but I do think at this point people understand
L9	that we are in the midst of hearing from the
20	public on numerous issues.
21	This mayor was particularly interested in
22	democracy and in reforming election and in
23	getting more people engaged, the civic life of
24	our city. But we have looked at the entire
25	budget, heard testimony not the entire but to

put the entire Charter and we've heard testimony regarding the entire Charter.

Where we are now in our process is that the staff has just issued a preliminary report. It was a report directed at the members of the Commission but it's a public document. And it is an attempt to have us narrow the issues so that we can focus on some of the issues that have been up uppermost in the minds of the public and the people who have sent comments to us and testified before us so that you will be hearing I think primarily on a limited number of issues.

Let me just say that we hope to hear from as many people of the public as is possible. This is our Manhattan hearing. We're going to do one in every borough. And last time in our first go around we went around and had neighborhood meetings in a number of places. So we've had an opportunity to hear from many of the people of the City of New York.

To just go over the ground rules for today, we're going to try to move as quickly as possible. We will limit the comments to three minutes. We have a clock and when I'm told that the three minutes are up I will so inform

1	the speaker. We will use panels to make things
2	move more smoothly. Four people at a time will
3	be asked to come up and we will call on them one
4	at a time.
5	With that, our first panel is Ben Kallos,
6	council member New York council, Betsy Gotbaum,
7	Alexis Camarda and Morris Pearl.
8	As is our custom, we will begin with our
9	elected official. Mr. Councilman.
LO	MR. KALLOS: Good morning to the
11	commissioners and members of the public who are
L2	here tonight.
L3	This is an amazing city with so much to do.
L4	The fact that you're here tonight and
L5	participating is what makes democracy work, what
L6	we see failing in other places.
L7	I want to commend this Commission for
L8	conducting an open and transparent process that
L9	included months of public meetings, debate and
20	deliberation.
21	Thank you the staff and I see some of the
22	brightest minds in New York City working on this
23	Commission for their diligence is shown by the
24	C Tone comprehensive report outlining testimony
25	and highlighting items for the Commission.

1	While government too rarely reflect the
2	voices of those who speak out it's great to see
3	so many voices from all of us reflected in the
4	preliminary staff report. Now New York City
5	looks to you as Commissioners to put the
6	strongest recommendations on the ballot.
7	Recommendations that cannot get done through
8	political process and reset the foundation of
9	this great city and great democracy that empowers
10	every voice in elections and governments. We've
11	got 19 pages.
12	And in our most recent submission I want to
13	just highlight the three must-do ballot
14	initiatives. The first is get big money out of
15	politics by matching every single public dollar.
16	The second is term limits for community board
17	members and leadership and the third is giving
18	binding land-use powers for community boards and
19	borough presidents so that if all are in
20	agreement they have the power to move forward
21	with a rezoning or stop a rezoning.
22	In addition, we came up with additional
23	items that really supported in the report
24	including of course matching every dollar,
25	lowering the dollars match and increasing the

1	multiplier.
上	marcipiter.

We withdrew previous recommendations and got behind some of the things that we heard from other people in this great city. Lowering the contribution limits we support.

We also wanted to suggest some new ideas based on your feedback such as just not matching big dollar contributions anymore. A new one which is just eliminating war chess and killing all the zombie political committees. Empowering residents to run for office we support by removing the arcane petitioning process. Love automatic registration and support that.

We also wanted to suggest splitting out voter assistance from campaign finance efforts. Another important one that we're starting to see with the musical chairs between Albany and New York City would be lifetime term limits such as they have in California. We support acting now. On the community board front we support term limits for community board members and whether it's a city's union recommendation or a new one such as having two four year terms staggered with elected officials who appoint them so that the elected officials don't have quite as much

enforcement power over their appointments, ending automatic reappointment, standardizing and making applications public, ensuring representations with automatic removal for none attendants and prohibiting the appointment of partisan party officials or lobbyists. And I see my time is expiring.

MR. PERALES: Yes.

MR. KALLOS: So I'll rap up with the last five, providing, as I mentioned earlier, binding land-use power, along with that urban planners for every community board especially those who might not think they need it. Having an office of community planning like DCP but that doesn't answer to the mayor but answers only to the community boards. Having member training that is mandatory that goes behind Ohio and what have you, which we support.

And last but not least where I disagreed with the suggestion that was considered by this Commission which is leaving the district boundaries alone. I don't think that the political boundaries that are drawn through political process and subject to one person one vote should be coterminous with our community

1	board districts. I hope you'll enjoy we've got
2	
3	MR. PERALES: Thank you. What we'll do is
4	we'll hold our questions until we've heard from
5	the entire panel and then we'll begin our
6	questioning.
7	MS. GOTBAUM: Good evening. My name is
8	Betsy Gotbaum. And I'm now executive director of
9	Citizens Union, former New York City public
LO	advocate and several other jobs before that.
L1	It's very nice for you all to do this and
L2	UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Can't hear you.
L3	MS. GOTBAUM: Sorry. Very nice for all of
L4	you to do this and I'm very impressed by the
L5	amount of support the public has shown by coming
L6	today. I am only unlike my colleague here
L7	going to speak about one issue that is of great
L8	importance to me personally and that's ranked
L9	choice voting.
20	(Applause.)
21	MS. GOTBAUM: Our committee, the committee
22	of the Citizens Union which is a committee made
23	up of board members and our members have met and
24	absolutely voted a hundred percent to support
25	ranked choice voting which made me very pleased

1	because I remember when I first ran for office
2	the primary day was September 11th, 2001. And as
3	many of you and many of us all remember it was a
4	very sad day and the primary was denied or closed
5	or whatever you call it.
6	And on September 25th we had a second
7	primary. And that primary occurred and nobody
8	reached 40 percent vote.
9	So then there was a runoff on October 11th
10	and the amount of time between September 25th and
11	October 11th was worse than agonizing. It was
12	agonizing because of what had happened to New
13	York. It was terribly costly not only for the
14	City but it was costly for the candidates. And
15	the turnout was very, very low.
16	And my understanding is that even that many
17	people, particularly those who had absentee
18	ballots couldn't vote at all because there wasn't
19	enough time. Even though it seemed to me like it
20	was a year of that terrible, terrible time so I
21	want to say that we in the organization are very,
22	very much in favor of the ranked I'm sorry,
23	the ranked choice ranked choice voting or
24	let's end the runoff system. Thank you.
25	MR. PERALES: Thank you for being brief.

1	MR. CAMARDA: Good evening, Commissioners.
2	My name is Alexis Camarda and I'm the senior
3	policy advisor for Reinvent Albany and I'm here
4	tonight to talk about redistricting one of the
5	five areas that was highlighted in the staff
6	preliminary report.

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We were very pleased that redistricting is one of the five items being considered by the Commission and we wanted to make several recommendations regarding redistricting reform. There are two mayor areas we think the Commission should tactical. The first is making the districting Commission more independent as the staff suggested in the report but the second we would urge you to also do which is addressing the criteria which council districts are drawn. first on making the districting Commission more independent we would suggest you look at the models in Arizona and California drawn and held out as being the best. Both of those models create an independent audi! To determine qualified applicants that politicians later window down into a smaller field that becomes the Commission members. We think that's a good model and we think that you should examine that model

1 closely	

On the criteria which was less discussed when you had experts come before the panel on redistricting we think there are a number of things that need to be done that are very important.

The first is narrowing the population deviation between the largest and smallest districts. It's currently ten percent from the average district size, as you may know, congressional districts are drawn essentially equal in size in states all across the country. That's not true for state legislative districts. It should be. We think it should be as close to zero as possible. There are other states that have a narrower population deviation than New York City: Colorado, Minnesota, Iowa are examples.

We think there should be provision that would band drawing districts to favor or pose any elected official candidate, presumed candidate or political party. That would prohibit the drawing of districts to preserve what are called continuities of previous districts what's essentially a euphemism for protecting incumbents

1	but it's allowed by federal case law. We think
2	that a provision prohibiting drawing districts to
3	favor elected officials, candidates or political
4	parties would indicate the ability to do so.
5	Lastly, we think that the prioritized
6	criteria that currently exists in the Charter
7	should be resequenced. Currently communities of
8	interest is ranked higher than drawing districts
9	that conform with geographic and political
10	subdivisions, what commissioner Sazarra called
11	co-terminality. We think by reversing the
12	prioritization districts could be drawn to better
13	adhere to neighborhoods and real communities
14	rather than the very vague definition of
15	community of interest in the Charter. Thank you.
16	MR. PERALES: Thank you. Next.
17	MR. PEARL: Mr. Chairman of commissioners,
18	thank you very much for the opportunity to speak
19	before you. I greatly appreciate all of the work
20	that you're doing and all of your recommendations
21	from the staff to approve the governance of the
22	city.
23	I represent the Patriotic Millionaires. My
24	name is Morris Pearl. I represent a group of
25	wealthy business people and investors who are

1	concerned by the direction of democracy is going.
2	Our democracy works best for all of us when
3	everyone is able to fully participate in our
4	political process. And we are extremely
5	concerned about the influence of money in
6	politics and we believe our democracy needs all
7	citizens with the same access to political power
8	as now enjoyed by our millionaires.
9	New York City has made great strides since
10	the 1980s but the proposals in your preliminary
11	staff reports, specifically the proposal
12	increased the available match so as to allow
13	matching funds up to the spending cap would be a
14	significant improvement.
15	I'm here not because I want to help the
16	candidates run for public office. They don't
17	need more money. The elections are rarely won or
18	loss for want of a hundred thousand dollars. But
19	I'm here today because this proposal increased
20	the engagement of our civic and economic life of
21	our city.
22	For those who donated \$175 is a stretch, for
23	those who \$2,000 is out of the question from
24	\$5,000 simply not possible. I want all of those
25	people to participate in politics regardless of

1	their income levels. And I want account
2	representatives and their mayor spend as much
3	time listening to them as they spend to listening
4	to the chair of the Patriotic Millionaires. And
5	spend time they do. I turn off my cellphone for
6	the meeting but I get so many calls requesting
7	donations that I wonder when they actually have
8	time to legislate.
9	The problem is that even those law makers
10	with the best of intentions learn what their
11	constituents need by listening to their
12	constituents but our system makes them spend so
13	much time listening to the big donors instead.
14	The realities that major donors have plenty of
15	opportunities make their concerns known without
16	waiting in line by simply sitting around and
17	waiting for the phone to ring. When money
18	becomes speech and candidates spend their time
19	fundraising from the small group of wealthy
20	people the voices of others are drowned out.
21	Small donor matching systems like ours here
22	in New York are extremely effective in empowering
23	normal citizens to engage in the political

The New York Campaign Finance System has

process and make their voices heard.

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Τ	done a great deal to shift power to the people
2	and has literally changed the face of City Hall
3	or at least the faces inside City Hall.
4	However, until a candidate can run only
5	small contributions the influence of big money in
6	New York politics is still there. Your proposal
7	to equalize the cap in expenditures in the total
8	amount a candidate can receive from small
9	donations plus matches is a huge step forward
10	towards ensuring our politics are for all types
11	of people and not to wealthy people who are
12	donors in corporations. For far too long the
13	influence of money in politics has distorted
14	policy and rightfully diminished the public's
15	trust in government.
16	3New York City has been a leader in this
17	important issue. It's time to lead again.
18	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
19	(Applause.)
20	MR. PERALES: I'm sure that applause was for
21	all four of the members of the panel.
22	I will exercise the provocative of the chair
23	and ask the first question. I'll ask the
24	councilman.
25	I don't think anybody can disagree with the

1	idea of taking big money out of politics Well,
2	I suppose there are some people that do disagree
3	but what we are interested in at this point
4	is, again, to get a sense of how much money we're
5	talking about. What is too much? How much
6	should the public match be?
7	Have you had any thoughts about dollar
8	amounts that might help us?
9	MR. KALLOS: I think when you see four
10	figures, four or more, it creates an
11	appearance
12	MR. PERALES: A thousand dollars or more is
13	that
14	MR. KALLOS: I think that starts to create
15	an appearance of impropriety. I think that
16	lowering the contribution limits to 2,000 to
17	1,000 such that you can't give more to a local
18	City Council member than you can give to the
19	president.
20	But I think what is most important, as
21	Morris Pearl from Patriotic Millionaires, really
22	hit home. And I couldn't say it better myself,
23	that it's about incentivizing candidates to just
24	take small dollars. People I'm suggesting
25	that you lower what is matched. Not increasing

it. So see it to like you increased it back to 250 which would be a step backwards. I'd say drop it to 100, match it ten to one and just let people run on small dollars only.

Yes, people could take big dollars if they wanted to 1,000 or 2,000 under the proposed change but folks should just be running around to talking to as many voters as possible or residents and saying, "Can you give me \$100? It's matched ten to one." And then they wouldn't have to take any other big dollars.

And another new proposal is just don't even match contributions above the 100 or 175 mark because why are we incentivizing big dollars any way. And at that point you change it from -- you might have some folks that are still running on big dollars but at that point you're actually penalizing people that are taking big dollars when they could just run around and spend their time saying you know what I'm going to instead of just spending my time calling folks like Morris and asking millionaires for large checks of five thousand spend their time running around their neighborhoods or their boroughs and getting house parties together and hearing from the types of

1	people that give \$10 or \$50 or \$100 or give \$10
2	ten times.
3	MR. PERALES: Any of the Commissioners ready
4	for a question?
5	MR. SCISSURA: I have one.
6	Betsy, I like the idea of the instant runoff
7	but have you guys envisioned how it would work?
8	Do you have a concept or is it more of a general
9	statement of support of the
10	MS. GOTBAUM: My point of view is more of a
11	general statement but staff has looked at it very
12	carefully and we've looked at other cities that
13	have it and there's some models there. I
14	unfortunately don't know yet what they are.
15	MR. SCISSURA: Okay.
16	MS. GOTBAUM: But there are models that I
17	would suggest going forward.
18	MR. SCISSURA: Great.
19	MR. PERALES: The most persuasive argument
20	to me has been the idea that some people, because
21	of the short time between the original election
22	and the runoff many people don't get a chance to
23	vote again and we have a large number of absentee
24	ballots that nobody used and they're truly
25	disadvantaged.

1	Do you think those people are the ones that
2	are worst off in the system?
3	MS. GOTBAUM: As I said, I think the
4	candidates are really badly off. That's a
5	personal comment but I do think that people can't
6	vote because the time is so short. And I also
7	think that people aren't paying attention.
8	You have one election and then you turn
9	around and you wait a couple and then you have
10	another election and people are just not
11	interested and to me that is another real reason
12	that the abysmal voter participation, which is
13	bad any way, but it's even worse for runoffs.
14	MR. PERALES: Wendy.
15	MS. WEISER: So it's two questions they're
16	similar and one is for that council member.
17	With respect to the community board
18	recommendation and you had a whole lot of
19	helpful recommendations what are the changes
20	of the ones you recommend that you think are the
21	most important to improve the functioning of the
22	community boards?
23	And then, for all the panelists, similarly,
24	if there were only one or two tweaks you would
25	make to the campaign finance system what would

1	you think of not to say we aren't contemplate
2	willing all of them. We are. I'm just
3	interested in the ones that you think are the
4	most critical of those.
5	MR. KALLOS: I think that term limits for
6	community boards is something that I've tried to
7	get done in the City Council I cosponsored in the
8	introduction by Councilman Danny Dromm as
9	governmental operations chair we had a hearing.
10	It was very politically difficult to get it done
11	even with us pushing as hard as we could. I
12	think it's something that this Commission can and
13	must put before the voters. They seem to like
14	term limits even when it might be politically
15	difficult.
16	And I think the other piece would be perhaps
17	the most important, is giving community boards
18	actual binding power over land-use and just I
19	understand that's just the campaign finance
20	piece how much would doing a full public match
21	be?
22	2013 had a lot of people running. I believe
23	it cost \$60 million and that was for 55 percent
24	match. If we matched every single dollar at the
25	current rate that would increase the cost by

1	about	30	percent	which	comes	out	to	another
2	\$18 mi	11:	ion.					

And \$70 million is a rounding error in our budget and you just attribute it as a cost of corruption or the appearance of corruption some might argue that Irvington, the city has lost a hundred million dollars so just avoiding the Irvington's or even the legal costs we spent on defending Irvington cost I think were \$4 million. Like, we start to pay -- it ends up paying for itself when you don't have the experience or legal fees stemming from these investigations.

MR. PERALES: Which is said that this

Commission is particularly concerned about the

appearance of corruption which is very strong and
we heard from many, many people who testified

before said that is something that they are

concerned with. What -- Rachel.

MR. PEARL: As I said, I think that making the full match equal to the spending cap is the primary thing that I'm supporting. I think that all the recommendations in the report frankly I think are important, too. Particularly I agree with your concern of the appearance of corruption.

1	MS. GODSIL: So I'm interested in an
2	argument that was made about ranked choice voting
3	and the potential that it would create an
4	incentive for politicians to campaign beyond
5	their base and to and for there to be a
6	decline in negative voting because for those who
7	are seeking the certain number two, number three
8	it might actually improve our political
9	discussion.
10	I'm curious if any of you have any thoughts
11	about whether that seems like another potential
12	benefit for ranked choice voting?
13	MS. GOTBAUM: I'm sorry, could you repeat
14	the question because
15	MS. GODSIL: So there was a suggestion that
16	ranked choice voting might create an incentive to
17	campaign more broadly and to campaign beyond
18	people who would be considered their natural
19	supporters in order to increase the likelihood
20	that they would succeed in the ranked choice
21	voting system?
22	MS. GOTBAUM: And the answer to that would
23	be if you have a candidate who was in a
24	particular community and if you had ranked choice
25	voting that candidate would have to go out to

1	other communities in order to meet as many people
2	as would be possible. And I think that would
3	happen with ranked choice voting.
4	The other thing that I didn't say, and I
5	apologize, was the cost of doing the runoff
6	election is just phenomenal. I think it was
7	\$13 million when the public advocate that
8	occurred publicly which ran in a runoff was
9	\$13 million which is twice the amount of the
10	budget of the public advocate's office. Just a
11	slide comment.
12	MS. GREENBERGER: So I have a follow-up
13	question to that because I'm also intrigued in
14	part because of an inefficiency improvement which
15	I think it can represent one of the concerns that
16	was raises was that the voter education that
17	would be necessary to ensure that it was
18	effective would be considerable. And I'm curious
19	from your collective perspective how you think
20	that can be achieved and if that is of concern to
21	you?
22	MS. GOTBAUM: So that people understand what
23	ranked choice voting is?
24	MS. GREENBERGER: Yes.
25	MS. GOTBAUM: My understanding is that the

place of words has been done and I apologize for not having specifics for you but that it has not been a big deal. That the public really learns quickly and likes it and that it has not been a problem. I may be wrong. MR. PEARL: New York voters are very smart and they can understand the terminology. MR. CAMARDA: I would just add to that. We up in Albany also support instant runoff voting.

up in Albany also support instant runoff voting.

There has been a number of places, number of cities where it's been enacted and they've done polling after the fact and always found that high percentages of people understood what ranking candidates --

MS. GREENBERGER: Good.

MR. CAMARDA: And far as voter education goes we do have a voter system advisory committee that's budgeted within the CFP. They've already spend over \$2 million just on printing materials and we foster that as voter education so we have a built-in infrastructure that already does voter education. It just needs to be integrated within that probably some additional money spent. But to Ben's point -- the council member's point this is a rounding error that \$86 million budget.

1	MR. SCISSURA: I want to remind everyone
2	that for almost 30 years we had elections with
3	ranked choice voting that were called school
4	board elections and I happen to run in one and
5	it's really not as complicated as it may sound.
6	MR. SCISSURA: And I think to I forgot
7	who it was. I think it was you and Betsy it does
8	force you to build alliances and maybe not scream
9	about your opponent as much as you would have
10	because you do want their second vote. You want
11	their support so.
12	MR. PEARL: And they figured it out part of
13	northern California figured it out.
14	MR. KALLOS: I would just add that
15	instituted ranked choice voting would actually
16	cover the cost of a full public match.
17	MR. SCISSURA: I knew you were thinking that
18	by the way.
19	MR. KALLOS: Two great minds think alike.
20	And to leap off the vice chair's question I
21	think that part of the education, even that there
22	is an election, usually happens from the campaign
23	when you call the voter and you say to the voter,
24	hi, would you vote for me at this election? I
25	didn't know there was a primary. I didn't know

1	you had a primary. Sure. I'll go out and vote
2	and in that process you'll also say please make
3	sure to vote for me number one. And then if you
4	have the unfortunate occurrence which
5	occasionally happens and the person says
6	absolutely not I'm upset you want to get big
7	money out of politics you can say, well, at least
8	could I be your number two? And I think that
9	through that process voters would be educated in
10	addition to the voter assistance Commission.
11	MR. PERALES: This is a great panel. I just
12	have one comment. Alex, the reason people were
13	fixated in 1989 about communities of interest had
14	to do with minorities. They had been targeted
15	for they were disadvantaged by the line
16	drawing so the term communities of interest was
17	used as opposed to a racial or ethnic
18	description.
19	MR. CAMARDA: I just want to say we're
20	sensitive to that and I just want to say the
21	definition of the Charter is very vague and it's
22	been manipulated to protect incumbents rankly in
23	the last round of redistricting. And we would
24	like to, at the very least, see the definition
25	tightened so it actually applies to ethnic and

1	racial groups and not any group that has a hobby
2	or is united by some other purpose.
3	MR. PERALES: Sure. Right. Thank you.
4	MS. SEECHARRAN: I have a question actually
5	following that.
6	MR. PERALES: Sure.
7	MS. SEECHARRAN: Mr. Camarda, I wonder if
8	you could talk a little bit about how the
9	recommendation to ensure that the Commission
10	redirecting Commission is independent? How would
11	you do you have a specific recommendation to
12	ensure that the communities' voices are heard in
13	the process.
14	MR. CAMARDA: That's not something we
15	closely focused on. I will say that I think that
16	process has actually gotten better over the
17	years. There's much more use of technology. I
18	mean, many of the things like this Commission has
19	done where the last Commission utilized
20	technology to a great deal I think more so than
21	any previous Commission had done I think it was
22	something they'd done pretty well in terms of
23	putting the maps online and things of that nature
24	going out into communities holding many hearings.
25	We see the issues as being more at least the

1	perception of how the Commission members are
2	chosen being unduly influenced by elected
3	officials who then have to run in the very
4	districts that are drawn and then the criteria
5	that are very lose and very vague and often it
6	allow the drawing of lines really in anyway
7	fashion that they want to draw the lines in. And
8	I think too often in the past that has been done
9	to protect incumbents district and make it easy
10	for them to win again.
11	We saw on the last districting Commission
12	that certain neighborhoods were divided. And the
13	justification for that, I mean the chair of the
14	Commission said it, was that they were taking
15	into account, what they called, continuities of
16	community which is essentially that previous
17	district lines that is were drawn should be
18	continued and that is justified legally under
19	federal case law.
20	MR. PERALES: We're going to have to move
21	on. I want to thank this panel. Thank you.
22	Very much.
23	(Applause.)
24	MR. PERALES: The next panel is composed of
25	Schumacher, Roxanne Delgado, Alida Camp , and

1	Tara can we read that? Is it Kacy or, Tara?
2	I'm sure you know your last name.
3	Ms. KELLY: Kelly.
4	MR. PERALES: I don't know. Not well
5	written.
6	Any way. We'll start on the left as we did
7	last time and move across.
8	MR. Thank you for having me in the panel.
9	My name is Dave Schmauch and I'm speaking tonight
10	on behalf of the freedom socialist party in
11	response to the preliminary staff report of the
12	Charter Revision Commission.
13	In particular I'd like to address the
14	concerns and proposals made regarding the
15	municipal elections and civic participation.
16	Report refers to many responses calling for
17	expanding involvement by New Yorkers in the
18	political life in the city and correctly includes
19	that greater engagement would enhance democracy.
20	One of the proposals made at public hearings
21	was to extend the right to vote for local
22	candidates and issues to none citizens but the
23	proposal in the preliminary report is that the
24	Commission not refer this measure to the
25	election. We disagree. More than one fifth of

New Yorkers are deprived of the most fundamental democratic right to participate in social policy, the right to vote, because they are not citizens despite paying taxes more than 18 billion statewide.

Despite their enormous contributions in producing goods and services that benefit all noncitizen residents have no right to representation. The objections raised in the report that this measure would require the board of elections to maintain a separate list of municipal voters and to print a separate municipal ballot are minor in comparison to guaranteeing the essential civil right to all who reside in New York City. It is our view that this should include all residents regardless of immigration status.

As this City's ID YC program knows, all New Yorkers, particularly the most vulnerable should have access to public resources. We believe it should include the right to vote and to participate in the civil and political life of their communities. Addressing this issue has been too long deferred. This Charter Revision Commission should recommend and refer to voters

Τ	the proposal to amend the City Charter to extent
2	the right to all residents to vote in municipal
3	elections.
4	The report does propose several steps that
5	would make voting more accessible notably by
6	addressing language barriers and easier
7	registration and also suggest institution of
8	ranked choice instant runoff voting, all of which
9	would improve municipal elections.
10	We urge that future deliberations address
11	other means of lowering barriers to civil
12	participation in the electoral process including
13	easing the requirements for signature collection
14	would make it more feasible for independent
15	third-parties to put forward candidates and for
16	citizens to bring initiatives to the electorate.
17	In addressing engagement with community
18	boards the report raised the concern that the
19	board's
20	MR. PERALES: You will need to rap up with
21	this one.
22	MR. SCHMAUCH: Often failed to represent the
23	racial ethnic and cultural diversity of their
24	communities and proposes the imposition of term
25	limits to address this.

1	We suggest a more potent way to ensure that
2	the boards reflect and represent the changing
3	character of their district would be to give
4	those communities the right to elect community
5	board members and to recall those who failed
б	their
7	MR. PERALES: You really must rap up at this
8	point.
9	MR. SCHMAUCH: rather than have these
10	positions appointed.
11	In conclusion, we urge the Commission to
12	support the right of noncitizens to vote and to
13	promote other means to expand the democratic
14	process in New York City.
15	Thank you very much.
16	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
17	Ms. Delgado.
18	MS. DELGADO: Hi. I would like to make a
19	quick comment please regarding the instant runoff
20	rank I mean regarding the ranked file voting,
21	I'm against it because right now board of
22	election can't even handle its own election right
23	now.
24	They can't have more responsibility because
25	I live in the Bronx and they can't even put the

signs correctly. They open the wrong door, they deny people who have disabilities to have access to the poll sites. We cannot add. I would say just eliminate the runoff system to save the money because I know the board of election, believe me. I have actually dealt with them I can tell you they are a complete failure and there's no accountability.

And also, second, regarding giving more power to community board I'm against it too because first of all I didn't elect them, and most are not all in touch and most are not well informed. They're not trained and they're not informed on the issues and they're -- I did not elect them so please don't give them more power because I just had an issue with Community Board 10 where they basically had to see council member highjack the meeting, preside the meet -- over the meet before the vote. They took the vote and closed the public testimony right before six people spoke so I have issues with community boards now.

All right. So my main issue is, again, the campaign financing matching program. My issue is that currently with the system we have

encompassed or established picks being funding by

CFB while their opponents are not financed

because they were not qualified or they did not

raise the minimal threshold money.

My issue is that the CFB actually is eliminating competition because they're funding a race where there is no competition where the incumbent or the established candidate has the money and they have -- they're probably financed because they raise enough money, sufficient funds, but the other opponents couldn't raise the original requirements to be financed.

And I gave you a whole bunch of spreadsheets showing the different races recently. One is councilmen Ben Kallos. He received over 125,000 and can match the funds but his three other opponents combined didn't raise over 25,000 couldn't qualify for matching funds. So this is a discrepancy and inequality I don't care for because I feel like if you're going to continue financing or increasing the matching funds make sure that there's an equality between the haves and have nots.

Sorry. Well, I gave you all the spreadsheets but it shows so even the Public

1	Advocate's race she received over a quarter of
2	million dollars publicly financing and her three
3	other opponents both Republican and the green
4	party. They raised over 25,000 combined. How is
5	that fair? And this is all the taxpayers' money.
6	So that's it. Thank you.
7	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
8	MS. CAMP: Thank you for hearing my
9	testimony. My name is Alida Camp. I'm chair of
10	Community Board 8 in Manhattan.
11	The board would like to respond to the
12	preliminary staff report issued recently. The
13	Charter revision initiative is complex and
14	demands attention. There's quite a lot to
15	consider. However, the close proximity of the
16	release of the report should the release of
17	proposed ballot items does not allow for
18	sufficient community input. This timeframe
19	coupled with no August community board meetings
20	make the consensus for a response difficult if
21	not impossible. This is particularly serious
22	with respect to community board and land-use
23	proposals, two areas in which community boards
24	have particular and obvious interest.
25	I would like to offer the following comments

2.1

on those parts of the report on which CB 8 has
already taken positions. I would like to comment
on the question of board term limits based on my
experience. CB 8 has had a great deal of
turnover from attrition and non-reappointment of
members. For example, this year we have nine new
members which is approximately 18 percent of the
board. Last year five new members were
appointed. Together approximately one quarter of
CB 8 for new appointments.

With attrition we have new ideas and new voices with members that have remained on the board who must be hard working or faced not being reappointed. We have institutional memory and experience and guidance.

CB 8 supports additional financial and other resources to enable community boards to do their job properly. We support an urban planner for each community board for at the very least no fewer than one urban planner dedicated to community boards per borough.

CB 8 recommends a stronger more thorough community-based land-use planning process. We would like to see greater emphasis on community assessment of social and environmental factors in

considering land use plans. We oppose revenue's
request for stronger as-of-right development. We
are greatly concerned about the extent of
development in our community and across New York.
We further reject the attempt to displace the
City Council in land-use decisions and recommend
have community boards determine whether land-use
will have an impact on respective communities.

We further believe that entire ULURP process should be transparent. Transparency would include a time limit on ULURP approvals and an evaluation of where the self-certification benefits New York.

We urge the Commission to include a revision to provide for notification to community boards as soon as any land-use applications including as of right and commencement of the ULURP process are filed.

New York's great diversity of age, religion, culture, race, ethnicity, income and occupation are what create the vitality that attracts businesses, tourists and residents. We recommend a stronger role for community boards and land-use planning and decisions. We are well situated to assess impact on the diversity and quality of

1	life in our communities.
2	The landmark's preservation Commission has
3	the critical task of preserving New York's
4	valuable history and architecture. We strongly
5	urge the Commission not to diminish its power or
6	transfer its role to another agency.
7	CB 8 urges the Charter Review Commission to
8	continue to allow for a powerful role for
9	community boards as the voice of New York's
10	diverse local communities in, at the very least,
11	land use and landmarks processes. We ask for an
12	opportunity to respond to the campaign of the
13	last sentence.
14	MR. PERALES: Okay.
15	MS. CAMP: And other issues after our
16	September full board meeting. Thank you.
17	(Applause.)
18	MS. KELLY: Good morning. I'm Tara Kelly
19	speaking on behalf of the Municipal Art Society
20	of New York. MAS was founded four years prior to
21	the adoption of New York City's first Charter in
22	1897. Throughout our long history of advocating
23	for sound land use and planning policy MAS has
24	provided input on the various City Charter
25	revisions.

1	From a historical perspective we find many
2	issues relevant over 100 years ago remains
3	central to the City Charter and its subsequent
4	revisions today. As such we offer the following
5	comments and recommendations for the
6	consideration of the Charter Revision Commission:
7	For 125 years MAS has worked to educate and
8	inspire New Yorkers to engage in the betterment

inspire New Yorkers to engage in the betterment of our city. We believe the best advocates for the city are its citizens. Currently there are several offices charged with supporting civic engagement of various types but they are disparate and uncoordinated. As a result, one agency's efforts may proceed without considering relevant community comments and concerns that has been contemplated by another agency processor initiative.

A city wide strategy to document assemble and communicate all of these efforts should be established in the public advocate's office. New York's 59 community boards are critical to meeting the goals of civic engagement and must be truly representative of the citizens they serve.

MAS agrees with proposals for a standardized application form and selection process overseen

by the Public Advocate's office addressing discrepancies between community district and community board demographics.

In addition, term limits allowing members to serve a reasonable number of consecutive terms followed by an absence and reapplication process should be implemented. However, we disagree with the proposal for mayoral or business led appointments of members because it will skew the balance of the interests away from the public. In other words, for each community board to be successful operational budgets should be increased and staffing required to include a district manager, full-time planner, and support staff. Board members should be required to attend an annually standardized training of fundamental city government and land-use planning in New York City.

Community boards also need funding to increase public awareness of meetings through enhanced outreach in a variety of platforms and languages. The provision of child care interpretation and refreshments may further reduce barriers to participation. The creation of a uniformed online platform for all community

1	boards should increase transparency and perhaps
2	facilitate virtual participation.
3	We were disappointed to find out that land
4	use was an area deferred to future consideration
5	and not comprehensively addressed by this
6	Commission. Nonetheless, we offer testimony on
7	this important topic in our written statement to
8	be submitted for your review.
9	In sum, improving the ability of communities
10	to advocate for a more liveable city has been
11	part of the mission of MAS for decades. We
12	believe that the integration and availability of
13	civic engagement information the structure and
14	prominence of the community board and the
15	determination of districts is integral to
16	achieving that goal.
17	As development pressures amount and
18	communities are faced with long-term impacts of
19	the city's land-use decisions Charter revision
20	comes at a critical time for New York.
21	Thank you.
22	MR. PERALES: Thank you. Before I ask my
23	fellow Commissioners if they have questions. I
24	just need to make a comment about the first two
25	speakers.

1	We heard a great deal about the failures of
2	the board of elections, as you pointed out. It
3	was rather consistent and it is that is one of
4	the concerns we have when we hear people
5	advocating for noncitizen voting.
6	We we're living in a climate in which an
7	individual were mistakenly to find themselves
8	casting a ballot that was not just a municipal
9	one but for some other office, and it can happen,
10	we would not be surprised if the federal
11	government were to suddenly have people
12	monitoring each of our polling places. So it's
13	for that reason that there has been some
14	hesitancy about embracing a noncitizen voting.
15	With that, who wants to start the
16	questioning?
17	Dale go ahead.
18	MR. HO: This is a question for
19	Mr. Schmauch. I hope that did I say that
20	right?
21	MR. SCHMAUCH: That's very good. If and
22	when I decide to run for City Council I might
23	abbreviate it.
24	MR. HO: Okay.
25	MR. SCHMAUCH: (Inaudible.)

1	MR. HO: This question is I hope you take
2	it it's a sympathetic question because I'm
3	sympathetic to the view that everyone who has a
4	stake in their local government should have a say
5	in that local government but as mark to identify
6	there are some logistical practical concerns
7	here, which I know you made reference to in your
8	testimony, but separate and apart from those
9	logistical and practical concerns there's also a
10	legal question about whether or not the City has
11	the authority to set qualifications for voting
12	for City offices that are different from the
13	qualification set forth by State statue and I
14	don't expect you to have an answer today. If you
15	do, that's great but
16	MR. SCHMAUCH: I don't know the state law
17	from top to bottom, however, I do know that we
18	are here today because law is always on a
19	continuum. We are revisiting it constantly for
20	different reasons. Different forces are in play
21	looking to do different things.
22	And I will remind you, if you don't already
23	know, that noncitizen voting was part of New York
24	City's history up until the late 20s when it was
25	done away with for the most part but it's not

1	unknown and it can if there is the will it can
2	be instituted again.
3	MR. HO: What I was getting at is I think it
4	would be helpful for at least I can't speak on
5	behalf of everyone else up here but, you know,
6	for me, if you know someone who would perform
7	some sort of legal analysis of the city's
8	authority to set qualifications for voting for
9	city offices that are different from State the
10	qualification set forth by State statue and
11	submit that for the record. It's something that
12	I know I would appreciate taking a look at.
13	MR. SCHMAUCH: Okay. I'll see if we can do
14	that.
15	MR. PERALES: Anyone else?
16	I just want to make one comment having to do
17	with campaign finance reform. We are very
18	seriously looking at changing the way the
19	campaign our campaigns in New York are
20	financed.
21	I don't know if it will meet all of your
22	goals but I do think that at the end of the day
23	you will see a significant effort to make it
24	easier for the poor to make substantial
25	contributions.

1	And what's always on my mind is to do away
2	with this sense that there is great corruption in
3	our system. That if you give a few thousand
4	dollars you're definitely going to have an
5	interest and that that elected official is going
6	to be responding to you. So we're very well
7	aware of the problems that exists in our current
8	system of campaign financing.
9	MS. DELGADO: Quickly just on corruption in
10	the community boards now because Like I said in
11	the last month's meeting it's unbelievable.
12	They're just the extension of the political arm
13	and they will sell out for free follow-up with a
14	politician for free lunches. It's disgusting so
15	eliminate community boards. Thank you.
16	MS. CAMP: Respectfully disagree.
17	MR. PERALES: Yes, of course. We've heard
18	all four of you. Thank you very much.
19	MS. DELGADO: Thank you.
20	MR. PERALES: The next panel Joseph Lally,
21	Lynn Ellsworth, Kelly Grace.
22	Is that Pike?
23	MS. PRICE: Price. Price.
24	MR. PERALES: What is it? Price.
25	And Ken Coghlan.

1	MS. ELLSWORTH: (Inaudible.)
2	MS. PRICE: Sure. I can go in the next
3	panel.
4	MR. PERALES: Alison Greenberg.
5	MS. GREENBERG: Thank you.
6	UNKNOWN SPEAKER: What's your name?
7	MS. GRACE: Kelly Grace.
8	MR. PERALES: Shall we begin?
9	MR. LALLY: My name is Joseph Lally.
10	I want to first respond to Ms. Greenberger's
11	comment about whether ranked choice voting would
12	be confusing. It's a question that's brought up
13	many times. Of course because it's a different
14	system it would require education but but I
15	don't believe it would be a problem because it's
16	used in so many places, San Francisco, Oakland,
17	Berkley, Aspen, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Santa Fe,
18	state of Maine. Overseas it's been used in
19	Australia for a century; New Zealand, Ireland,
20	Northern Ireland, Scotland. London uses it for
21	it's mayoral election. And in fact, the Academy
22	of Motion Pictures Arts and sciences uses it to
23	pick the oscar for best picture. So it has a
24	track record that surveys have shown that voters
25	are happy with so with some effort of education I

1	don't	believ	re so	it	would	be	a p	roblem.	
2	٤	So I'd	like	to	make a	2 pc	int	about	

So I'd like to make a point about possible -- possibly establishing an office of civic engagement. Now, we all know that without the engagement of the population of the citizens we have a democracy in name only, right? So there's nothing more important than engagement. Of course the devil is always in the details so it would be a question of what exactly is this always going to do so I have a couple of ideas:

I noticed that in New York City we don't have a written voter's guide for non-municipal races. I think that I find that really astounding that no one sends out a written voter guide. The campaign finance board has a written voter guide for municipal races and they have an online guide for all the other races but no one else sends it out. So I'm thinking maybe if we had an office of civic engagement they would have the budget and manpower to send out a printed copy because there's nothing like having a copy in front of you coming in your mailbox. I think it would be a good idea.

Also, possibly an office of civic engagement could have an opt-in mailing list for people who

1	want to come to meetings. For instance, I got no
2	notice about this meeting. I found out about
3	this meeting through an e-mail list of a council
4	member. I don't even live in his district. And
5	he had something so that's how I found out about
6	this so maybe it would be a good idea if an
7	office of civic engagement could create some kind
8	of database where people who wanted to could opt
9	in.
10	Also, perhaps such an office could provide
11	guidance or help for people who want to run for
12	offices, vote for or to run for public office for
13	the first time that might be a possibility for
14	them as well.
15	And also we could expand the participatory
16	budgeting perhaps under the offices of an office
17	of civic engagement. I don't know if that's
18	possible. We could also move in the New York
19	City Service under the umbrella. You know
20	there's a lot of ways to go enforce. This is
21	just some of the thoughts I had off the top of my
22	head.
23	Thank you.
24	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
25	MS. ELLSWORTH: I'm Lynn Ellsworth. I'm

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chair of Human Scale NYC. It's a nonprofit that
seeks neighborhood livability democratic control
over the built environment and human-scale
urbanism. We have longer testimony prepared with
examples of conflicts of interest and community
boards taken from Manhattan discussion of pros
and cons of the reforms that we suggest. So I'll
just read here just an excerpt of that:

We've read the online testimony about community boards given to the Commission and the Commission's interim report and I agree with many who say that reform of community boards is badly needed and that the ULURP process needs improvement but none of the proposed reforms that we've heard about so far such as giving every board a city planner to work with who are giving boards more training or some money to do community plans will solve the underlined problems that create what one Council Member Reynoso has called the political cesspool of community boards.

Giving unelected appointed boards more resources of any kind would only delegitimize them more and infuriate the electorate. What's needed is the comprehensive approach for separate

1	reforms that legitimize the boards and provide
2	them with effective purpose. The reforms would
3	be term limits, a second one would be imposition
4	of a broader conflict of interest rule that
5	precludes appointment or election to the board
6	for anyone who represents special interests who
7	have obvious divided loyalties over policy
8	issues. An example, for example, would be a vice
9	president for governmental affairs of the Real
10	Estate Board of New York co-chairing a land-use
11	committee an a Manhattan community board, as now
12	the case.
13	We should also have election of community
14	boards and the pros and cons of the different
15	debate about that are submitted in our separate
16	testimony. We should also revamp the rules and
17	powers of elected boards with one eye to the
18	principle of subsidiarity and the regulation of
19	public space and the other eye on checks that

We would not be supportive of having a community, even elected community boards, having a hundred percent authority over land use.

assured that a citywide public interest is

And let elected boards fire and hire their

accounted for.

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1	own independent planners, land-use lawyers and
2	district managers and as to reform of the ULURP
3	process we suggest that as soon as the City
4	Planning has a glimmer of an idea about a
5	land-use action they should be required to issue
6	a one page-notification of intent to change
7	zoning and neighborhood X which should define the
8	widest possible terms geographic area of interest
9	to state planning. And this notification should
10	be public and should trigger a real estate
11	speculation tax or flip tax in the affected area
12	until the land-use changes are approved or
13	abandoned. They should also be required to
14	publicize on their website on a monthly basis a
15	list of all the real estate developers and
16	property owners who have meetings with City
17	Planning staff including the subject of those
18	meetings in the geographic area discussed.
19	Our expanded testimony is with you. Thank
20	you.
21	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
22	MS. GREENBERG: Thank you for your public
23	service for our city. My name is Allison
24	Greenberg. I'm a villager and I'm testifying on
25	behalf of Human Scale NYC.

1	This testimony was written by Lynn Ellsworth
2	sitting to my right and she's done a lot of work
3	on these issues.
4	We have read the testimony given thus far
5	about campaign finance reform and wish to add to
6	the discussion the following.
7	First, the point of modifying the Campaign
8	Finance Act should be to make New York's middle
9	class the dominant force behind the system. Not
10	the upper middle class and the wealthy. That
11	would mean, one, lower the maximum contribution
12	overall to an amount that is within reach of the
13	middle class. We suggest the ancient rule of
14	tithing: Take 10 percent of the median income of
15	New Yorkers. That figure would come out to a
16	maximum contribution of \$560. To compensate for
17	the reduced total take of the system raise the
18	public matching ratio from six to one to 12 to
19	one or even 15 to one.
20	Second, dramatically lower the spending
21	maxes to reduce the spectacle of public waste of
22	TV ads, printed mass mailings and the hiring of
23	campaign consultants, none of which is necessary
24	in this day and age.
25	Three, dramatically reduce the number of

1	signatories required to get on the ballot for any
2	office. The current system is utterly
3	unnecessary and induces an unsavory Tammany Hall
4	like dependence on political clubs.
5	Four, the candidates do not let do not
6	partake in the public finance system. Do not
7	allow them to participate in publicly televised
8	debates, but encourage them to finance their own
9	debates.
10	Five, short of adopting the fully finance
11	public system like Seattle's this would have the
12	advantage of eliminating a large part of the
13	inherent pay-to-play system that currently exists
14	and our second general point if these dramatic
15	reductions are not feasible then we urge the City
16	to eliminate three specific loop holes in the act
17	that appear designed to allow real estate
18	developers to get around the doing business with
19	the city campaign contribution limit of \$400.
20	We thank you.
21	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
22	MS. GREENBERG: Thank you. Good evening.
23	My name is Ken Coghlan. I've been a member of

the Manhattan community board for the past nine

and a half years. The opinions expressed here

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are mine and not those of my board. Community

board members serve at the pleasure of their

borough president. Although members must be

reappointed every two years there is no limit on

how many terms a member can serve. And it is not

unusual for members to have served on a board for

literally decades.

The solution of these lengthy terms is term limits. An idea that certainly involves tradeoffs. On the one hand long serving members add expertise and institutional memory to a board. But on the other, members who have been sitting on a board for decades can espouse outdated values that no longer reflect those of their community. Communities change but all too often their boards right behind them change and this has real and sometimes life or death consequences. Although community boards are supposed to play only advisory role, in reality some city agencies treat their voices as a proxy for the community at large and defer to their issues.

Thus, these entrenched parties can yield enormous power of the proposed changes. Some form of reasonable term limits could preserve

1	continuity while ensuring that fresh, fresh faces
2	reflecting a changing community and values.
3	One proposal put forward would set a 12-year
4	term limit but allowed term limited members to
5	apply after a year out of the board.
6	A related concern is the lack of standards
7	standardization in the appointment process.
8	Community board appointments were historically
9	about whom you knew. When he was Manhattan
10	borough president Scott Stringer instituted a
11	system in which applications were reviewed and
12	evaluated by an independent screening panel with
13	finalists interviewed by staff. Borough
14	President Gale Brewer has continued this reform.
15	A transparent merit-based process should be in
16	place in all five boroughs. Thank you.
17	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
18	Deb.
19	MS. ARCHER: This question is for
20	Ms. Ellsworth.
21	Can you talk about how broadly or how
22	narrowly you're defining special interest when
23	you say that community boards should not include
24	people who represent special interest? So I'm
25	curious to hear more about what you mean by that.

1	MS. ELLSWORTH: Well, in our survey we did a
2	quick look at Manhattan community boards and I
3	can't say we went through every single member of
4	every single board but we find people who are
5	special lobbyists for special interest such as
6	the hotel and hospitality working on licensing
7	committees, you know, they're very concerned
8	about liquor licenses and sidewalk tables. And
9	if a board member is a professional paid lobbyist
10	they have a conflict in the sense that they serve
11	one master and how can they also serve the public
12	and I think even the board personally would see
13	certain problems. There are other categories of
14	members like people who are at the senior
15	executive teams of political clubs or unions. I
16	would put them in the same category in the sense
17	that you know they have a loyalty if you're a
18	political club leader, you've endorsed certain
19	candidates, you've taken certain positions, you
20	seek access, you have an agenda and you bring
21	that to the community board as well and everyone
22	in the neighborhood knows that. Same with
23	unions. It's not that an older union member
24	couldn't serve it's like but if you're on the
25	leadership team you have a conflict and it's an

1	institutionalized conflict.
2	MR. PERALES: Wendy.
3	MS. WEISER: A quick follow-up question
4	about that.
5	Recusal requirements for participating in
6	decisions that relate to the subject of your
7	conflict address that or do you think and if
8	not why not?
9	MS. ELLSWORTH: No, I think that recusal.
10	Recusal is meant philosophically I think to
11	handle a situation where you have an immediate
12	financial concern you know your brother-in-law
13	owns the construction business that is up for a
14	bid and you don't want to
15	MR. PERALES: Not true.
16	MS. ELLSWORTH: you don't want to step
17	away. But if you're a professional lobbyist for
18	the real estate board of New York, you know,
19	you're on the board you're on the chair you're
20	influencing tons of additions, you're influencing
21	agenda you're choosing who gets to do what work.
22	There's endless small items that I kind of think,
23	well, how can that person possibly who's his
24	master? So requesting doesn't really help the
25	public have credibility to believe that there's

1	honesty in the game for them.
2	MR. SCISSURA: I just want to make a
3	comment. I think the fact that someone happens
4	to work in the real estate industry so I
5	happen to work in the industry that is building
6	the places that we all live in, we shop at, we
7	get on a subway, we drive our cars on roads, our
8	children goes to schools, we go to hospitals we
9	build educational complexes such as NYU. So it
10	sounds like in your logic all those people should
11	not be on a community board because they are
12	influenced by some other master.
13	MS. ELLSWORTH: Right.
14	MR. SCISSURA: So I will take an opportunity
15	to say that people who work in real estate are
16	not bad people. People who happen to work for a
17	union and are in leadership are not bad people
18	and by the way there are good people and bad
19	people in everything. So I would caution you not
20	to lump all people in one category just because
21	they work in one industry.
22	MS. GREENBERG: I'm sorry but she didn't do
23	that.
24	MS. ELLSWORTH: (Inaudible.) All together
25	and I understand that. You know everybody I'm

1	an economist and I think in certain fields of
2	work if I was called public service it would be
3	hard to not have special locality to my
4	profession because I owe them but other areas of
5	work I can operate in the public interest. And I
6	think it's same if you were chair of my land use
7	committee I might have some concerns if you were
8	chair of my local service community committee and
9	my community board I might not be so worried
10	about you.
11	MS. GREENBERG: May I respond to the comment
12	because I don't think it was fair to characterize
13	Ms. Ellsworth testimony as lumping anyone as good
14	or bad. Instead she was expressing sincere
15	concerns that we have. And we think very highly
16	of plenty of people on real estate and who are on
17	unions.
18	The issue is when somebody has a leadership
19	position in certain realms that are very powerful
20	how can they possibly not control the outcome of
21	a community board decision, City Council vote.
22	That's what we're very concerned about is
23	citizens of New York.
24	MR. PERALES: Sure. Any one else has
25	comments?

1	(No response.)
2	MR. PERALES: With that, well, we thank the
3	four of you.
4	(Applause.)
5	MR. PERALES: Towaki Komatsu, Jacobs is the
6	last name I'm having trouble reading.
7	MR. ADAM: Adam, yes, that's what it says.
8	And John Day. Why don't we start with you Kelly.
9	MS. PRICE: Thank you so much, Chair
LO	Perales. I go by Grace, if you don't mind. My
L1	middle name was my grandmother's name. And I'd
L2	like to thank you for allowing me to testify
L3	today.
L4	I'm Kelly Grace Price with the Jails Action
L5	Coalition and with Close Rosie's. I'm sorry to
L6	admit that I've not been participating in these
L7	Commission review panels and I haven't had the
L8	opportunity to submit my suggestions. So my
L9	comment today might seem like a bit of a
20	nonsecretor because they have nothing to do with
21	your report or what other people have already
22	discussed.
23	I'm going to specifically discuss rape and
24	sexually assault investigations in all of our
25	city agencies. I personally do advocacy with the

1	Board of Correction and the department of
2	correction. My specific advocacy plank for the
3	better part of the last decade has been to end
4	rape on Rikers Island.
5	People say, well, rape happens in prisons
6	and jails but in our city we have the most
7	abysmal substantiation enclosure rate for rape
8	and sexual assault of any jail complex in the
9	country. We literally have a zero percent
10	enclosure rate. This is mimicked when we talk
11	about investigations against police officers.
12	Police officers and correction officers.
13	Those specific investigations the closure rate is
1 Д	far below the national average. I would like to

Police officers and correction officers.

Those specific investigations the closure rate is far below the national average. I would like to specifically propose that the Charter Revision

Committee seriously consider creating a new entity that serves sort of like Mark Peters DOI,

Department of Investigation. It is an overarching investigative body and has the ability to investigate rape and sexually assault against any city agent employee, agency official, subcontractor, consultant, etcetera.

Right now we have this problem ranging in four of our city agencies -- actually all of our city agencies but most acutely in the NYPD and

In March Mark Peters, Department of
Investigation, released a very long 90-page
report about the abysmal methodology and
substantiation rate of rape and sexually assault
cases within the NYPD SVU. That report mimicked
a very similar report, a community report that
was issued in 2012 that NYPD.

I did turn in my comments, written comments via e-mail so please note that all these things have hyper wings to news articles and different board reports issued by city agencies so that when all of my comments in fact are verified but we had a report issued that basically mimic the exact same findings in 2012. NYPD is literally just ignoring the community. The same thing with the Department of Correction.

Now, the most sacrosanct offering that our government can give us is our safety. And as women, people that are trying to live our lives sexual assault free, this goal has been completely obfuscated by our city agencies.

I'd like to encourage you to please take the time to read my short written testimony. It is detailed but I think it's worth taking a look as

1	this is an issue that no one is talking about
2	outside of the confines of the Downstate
3	Coalition against sexually violence and I'll
4	really like this to be apart of the Charter
5	revision.
6	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
7	(Applause.)
8	MR. PERALES: Next.
9	MR. KOMATSU: My name is Towaki Komatsu. I
LO	testified repeatedly at City Council meetings and
11	I have a federal lawsuit filed against The City
12	of New York as well as a New York State Supreme
13	Court lawsuit filed against the city agency. The
L4	basis for those lawsuits is I had a conversation
L5	with the mayor on July 18th of last year.
L6	You have Section 1063 in the New York City
L7	Charter that says that after a public hearing
18	video is supposed to be released within
L9	three days thereafter. So the question is
20	instead of me rehashing what I said to the mayor
21	on July 18th, why don't I just play the video for
22	you. So here is the image.
23	MR. PERALES: How long is the video?
24	MR. KOMATSU: It's short.
25	(Whereupon wideo was played)

1	MR. KOMATSU: So sorry. So just to rap up,
2	all of you are appointed to this Commission by
3	the mayor, correct?
4	MR. PERALES: Yes.
5	MR. KOMATSU: So essentially there's no
6	legitimacy behind the election. It follows
7	MR. PERALES: Which election?
8	MR. KOMATSU: The New York the 2017
9	mayoral election. It follows a whistle blower
LO	trying to attend the mayor's public town hall
L1	meetings, public resource public meetings. New
L2	York State has an open meetings law. There's
13	also Federal Statue 18 U.S.C 245 whereby I can
L4	exercise my first amendment right lawfully to
L5	just like this nitro federal lawsuit to walk
L6	through the doors lawfully and say you know what
L7	I know about these problems with the New York
L8	City human resources administration. They are
L9	being covered up by Steven Banks. I have 15
20	UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Could you speak closer to
21	the microphone I want to hear everything you say.
22	MR. KOMATSU: Sorry. I had 15 punches
23	connect to my left temple on July 2nd of 2016
24	only because the fact that Atria did absolutely
25	nothing about whistle blower reports I submitted

1	to a jury on March 16th of 2016.
2	I had conversations with Mr. Carrion over
3	there repeatedly and they've come to no avail.
4	So essentially if other people continue to
5	be harmed due to fraud negligence bait-and-switch
6	fraud by Atria's business partners and there's no
7	oversight, there's no current action being taken.
8	People like me have to walk into the federal
9	court to file a civil rights action.
10	And I should also point out enclosing I
11	tried testifying at a public town sorry, at a
12	public hearing with the mayor on November 27th of
13	2017. On that same date the plaintiff's attorney
14	filed papers against mayor's head of security.
15	So basically I found out Lieutenant Nieves of the
16	mayor security detail. He told me in a video
17	recording that I recorded that Inspector Harold
18	Garvin made the decision to kick me out that
19	public hearing on November 27th.
20	So I guess the point I'm driving at is if
21	we're all here tonight for you to consider
22	recommendations, for you to consider feedback,
23	again, if there's no legitimacy behind the result
2.4	of 2017 mayoral election due to acts of voter

fraud, voter suppression, why are we having this

25

1	meeting?
2	MR. PERALES: Let me well, why don't I
3	move along as we have any others that
4	MR. KOMATSU: (Inaudible.)
5	MR. PERALES: The purpose of this meeting is
6	to consider changes to the New York City Charter.
7	I'm not sure I understand your point.
8	MR. KOMATSU: The point I'm driving at is
9	all of you were appointed by the New York City
LO	mayor
11	MR. PERALES: That's correct.
L2	MR. KOMATSU: If the manner in which he
L3	prevailed in that election is by suppressing
L4	whistle blowers who tried to essentially engage
L5	in whistle blowing at those public meetings that
L6	he uses at campaign events as voter suppression,
L7	as voter fraud in the outcome of the 2017 mayoral
L8	election is essentially null and void.
L9	MR. PERALES: All right. Well, that's an
20	interesting point. I've answered your question.
21	Next.
22	MR. JACOBS: Thank you, Commissioner. My
23	name is Adam Jacobs and thank you for giving me
24	the opportunity to speak tonight. I am a
25	resident of Community Board 6 and I am here to

1	discuss	the	issues	of	lobbying	and	conflicts	of
2	interest	wit	thin New	v Yo	ork City.			

Just to step back for a minute on Lynn Ellsworth testimony within the Charter of Chapter 68 of I believe of this Commission Advisory Opinion 95-58 does outline laws that do not allow lobbyists or people with interest to actually chair committees. So now we need to stretch that to actually other people throughout the committee or, I'm sorry, throughout the community board.

But there is actually within your existing
Charter Advisory Opinion 95.18 that I think all
of you should know. So from a standpoint of
lobbying, just for my quick review here from a
historical standpoint I think we all feel that
lobbyist were a way for elected officials to
become educated about an issue. They all had
value and again it was an opportunity for them to
hear all sides of an issue.

Unfortunately. In a regulated democratic system that works very well. So it is obvious to everybody here and I think a lot of people throughout New York City and throughout the country that this city -- this system is now

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Within the current system it appears right now that there seems to be a quid pro quo going on between lobbyists and elected officials. Basically the system is now set up that you help me get my project passed and the people that are paying me will donate for your reelection. goes on all the time. It is absolutely disgusting. So from, I mean, again, ultimately if you don't play along then ultimately those people who are paying for the lobbyists will not fund your candidate and ultimately that candidate will ultimately, you know or that elected official will leave. This is a sort of round about way of getting around campaign finance reform but again lobbying at issues need to ultimately be addressed. So what actually are these lobbyists getting from our elected officials. What does \$20,000 buy you 40,000 dollars? Why is Gale Brewer continually involved in real estate projects? it access? Is it pressure? Is it her vote?

Nobody really seems to know. But what is it that

actually the Manhattan borough president gets

from the lobbyists?

1	This money is basically eliminating the
2	citizens from being apart of the process because
3	they can't come up with \$40,000 or \$60,000. And
4	again they don't get the same things that other
5	people get.
6	Again, ultimately this goes on from a
7	federal level, state level, our mayor has been
8	involved in a pay-for-play slush fund from the
9	beginning of his ultimately he was elected to,
10	again, community board members to ultimately we
11	filed actually a complaint, a conflict of
12	interest to the COYB board. And now actually
13	there's an investigation undergoing the lobbyist
14	on one of our community boards ongoing right now
15	from that standpoint.
16	So at this time basically, again, just from
17	the standpoint of this new Charter I'd like the
18	members to address some of these issues.
19	MR. PERALES: Now
20	MR. JACOBS: What I'm asking for is again
21	MR. PERALES: can you sum up?
22	MR. JACOBS: Yeah, I will very quickly.
23	Limits on the amount of lobbying allowed for
24	elected officials. This should not be a casino
25	game. There should be limits. Whatever is

1	provided to the lobbyist should be provided to
2	the public for free. It's our taxpayer money.
3	They shouldn't get access if we don't. It should
4	be specific and total transparency. Not just
5	listing them as a target but what are they
6	actually asking for, okay. And should be written
7	down.
8	And then, again, number four the public
9	should be made aware of the voting records of
LO	their elected officials. There should be
L1	actually a percentage or a rule, a listing of
L2	where we can find out how they're being how
13	they're voting
L4	MR. PERALES: You really have to sum up.
L5	MR. JACOBS: Okay. Last point, no lobbyists
L6	at this point should be allowed on community
L7	boards. Good, bad, or whatever. And again,
L8	Rule 95/18 should be expanded and should be
L9	looked at again to make sure there really is not
20	a conflict.
21	MR. PERALES: Thank you very much.
22	Mr. Day.
23	MR. DAY: Hi, John Day. I'm with Save
24	Central Park NYC and a resident of Community
25	Board 7 The concerns I want to express are

1	about the advance of super tall buildings into
2	residential neighborhoods. It's been a huge
3	problem in Brooklyn.
4	I think Councilman Kallos spoke about one
5	solution in binding land use by community boards.
6	There's a broad perception among citizens in this
7	city that the fix is in. We personally think we
8	have very fine civil servants. But the concern
9	is money from major real estate developers some
10	of whom are principals others of whom may have
11	even made it to the white house. And so
12	transparency is an issue.
13	I think the DSA, the Department of
14	Buildings, City Planning, particularly the sale
15	and purchase of development and error rights.
16	It's extremely hard to find that information.
17	And transparency and how it's filed and how it's
18	available to its citizens to community boards is
19	very important.
20	So I'll keep it short. Thank you.
21	MR. PERALES: Let me just say, again, as
22	I've said before so issue of corruption and the
23	appearance of corruption comes up all the time.

We are certainly sensitive to that and we're

going to see how it is that we can address it

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1	from our limited rules as people who are looking
2	to revise the existing City Charter. Any other
3	Commissioners have any comments?
4	MR. JACOBS: What is your fix? I know the
5	appearance is bad but what is your fix?
6	MR. PERALES: One of the things we are
7	looking at we don't have an immediate fix that
8	we're going to tell you now but we're looking at
9	campaign finance reform. That's the obvious
10	opportunity that we have within the City Charter.
11	MR. JACOBS: And what about the concern with
12	lobbyists being infiltrated in our system. We
13	will be looking at all of that.
14	MR. JACOBS: Okay. Thank you.
15	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
16	MS. GREENBERGER: Can I ask you a question,
17	excuse me? I am particularly interested in this
18	question of civic engagement and what are the
19	mechanisms that can prompt better civic
20	engagement.
21	And if you will indulge me for a moment,
22	Mr. Chair, I would like to ask everybody here if
23	you could just by a show of hands let me know
24	whether or not you use any of the following
25	existing mechanisms 311 and if you do if you

1	could just put your hands up: NYC.gov? Mayor's
2	management report? And notify NYC.
3	Okay. That's helpful. It's just an
4	interesting look into thinking about what are the
5	mechanisms and tools that we may be able to use.
6	Thank you very much.
7	MR. PERALES: Next panel, Angela Connors,
8	Hale Philips, Kaitlyn Scheuer and Sheila
9	Kendrick.
10	Let's start on my left, your right.
11	MS. CONNORS: Greetings, Commissioner. My
12	name is Angela Connors and I am a member of the
13	campaign for an elected civilian review board.
14	Our campaign has written a Charter amendment for
15	an elected civilian review board and an
16	independent special prosecutor.
17	Our amendment is simple. It makes our
18	current appointed board elected and then empowers
19	that elected board to make finding decisions. In
20	addition to our review board our police in
21	addition to our review board for police officers
22	who are accused of crimes. Our Charter amendment
23	establishes an independent special prosecutors
24	office whose sole duty is to investigate and
25	prosecute those cases to solve the conflict of

interest that is inherent when the DA offices take the cases involving their co-workers, the police.

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We appreciate that the Commission staff took the time to hear our testimony on May 9th and include an analysis of the proposed amendment for an elected review board in the 2018 preliminary staff report. However, we are disheartened to here that this Commission intends to push off the responsibilities to address the serious crisis to address accountability citing an unwillingness to take on the careful analysis and public input under timer constraints. The ongoing problem of police accountability in this city will not stop until leaders are willing to take a stand in support in empowered mechanisms to hold police accountability for the violent crimes committed against those they were sworn to protect and serve.

The Current Civilian Complaint Review Board is highly ineffective and upholds a major conflict of interest by allowing the police commissioner ultimate authority over decisions.

Therefore, ultimately the police themselves that they need discipline is watered down and families

1	are forced to wait for justice which seems to
2	never come as in the case of Eric Garner.
3	Once again, our campaign calls upon this
4	Commission to stand up for New Yorkers,
5	especially marginalized New Yorkers by proposing
6	changes that protect the people of New York
7	against unabated police misconduct and violence.
8	A review of the City Charter without addressing
9	the accountability crisis we believe is an
10	incomplete review. We plan on bringing our
11	amendment to the city convened Charter Commission
12	because New Yorkers shouldn't have to wait for
13	justice. We desperately need reform to hold
14	police accountable.
15	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
16	(Applause.)
17	MR. PHILLIPS: Hi. Thanks for hearing my
18	testimony. My name is Hale Phillips. I'm here
19	in support of ranked choice voting or instant
20	runoff voting.
21	I know the Commission has already heard a
22	number of compelling arguments in favor of this
23	so in the interest of hopefully giving you
24	something you haven't heard already I wanted to
25	very briefly share with you just a little bit of

1	research	Ι	did	in	this	recent	election	results.

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I looked up the results for City Council primaries in 2017 and 2013 that had three or more candidates meaning if we had instant runoff voting it would have been used in these elections. And as I'm sure you know primary elections tend to be more competitive than general elections.

So what I wanted to see with this was how low the threshold is for the percentage of the vote in order for someone to actually be considered elected. What I found is that in 2017 and 2013 we had 40 City Council primaries with three or more candidates and of those 40 were won by a candidate who received under 50 percent of the vote. Twelve of those 40 were won by a candidate who received under 40 percent of the vote and three of those 40 primaries were actually won by a candidate who received under 30 percent of the vote. The lowest winning percentage was 24.4 percent which means that in that election over three quarters of the voters did not vote for the person who was ultimately deemed the winner.

25 Now, with no disrespect intended toward any

of the winning candidates this seems obviously and shockingly anti-democratic. We have elected officials in office today who were voted against by an overwhelming majority of the people that were voted but were still deemed elected. That seems like a clearly broken system.

And I'm concerned that we can have a repeat of this in 2021 because we have term limits so we're going to have dozens of open seats which means a more potential for a competitive multiple candidate races in which there could be more split votes and more people getting only about a third of the vote still winning.

And I'm concerned that if we don't change this now this is, you know, 24.4 is not as low as it's going to get. We all saw a very high profile example of what can happen when a multi-candidate field with no strong front runner can let somebody without majority support win via plurality in the 2016 Republican presidential nominating process. That's been happening in New York City for years. And it's getting worse.

And I really hope that we change this before the 2021 primaries because I don't want my next City Council member to get 24 percent of the vote and

Τ	still win.
2	Thank you.
3	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
4	MS. CHER: Good evening. My name is Kaitlyn
5	Cher. I'm a volunteer member of the New York
6	Chapter Represent Us. We're an anticorruption
7	organization in the city. I am also here
8	speaking in support of outbreak choice voting
9	and congratulations that was a wonderful point
10	that you just made. Much more passionate than
11	I'll be able to make here in my short time.
12	We all know that we have a voter engagement
13	problem in this country and in this city. New
14	York State is below average in voter turnout as
15	referenced in the preliminary staff report. We
16	ranked 14 from the bottom nationwide in casting
17	ballots in the presidential election in 2016. In
18	most general elections from mayor or governor and
19	governor only 25 percent of registered New
20	Yorkers go to the polls. And turnout for primary
21	elections even lower with only 12 percent of
22	eligible voters turning out for the mayoral
23	primary in 2017. So there are many reasons for
24	this disengagement.
25	Among them is a perceived disconnection

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between the candidates platform and its impact on voters' life lives as well as a general political apathy caused by a growing mistrust in our institutions. Instead of seeing -- our world is growing ever more complex than nuance yet

American politics appear to be retreating into a polarized two-party system instead of seeing themselves represented by individual candidates with distinct views.

Voters often only see a candidate's party. Constituents subsequently turn to the defensive least worst option voting instead of voting on the actual issues or for candidates in which they actually believe in. I do believe that ranked choice voting could offer some solutions to this problem. Ranked choice voting enables voters to weigh in on more candidates when they're voting. It gives voters the opportunity to rank candidates in order of preference allowing them to consider candidates who may not be front runners or from a major party. This in turn encourages a greater and more diverse field of candidates to run shaking up the two-party system. Ranked choice voters also avoids split votes and victory for unpopular candidates.

1	Seems completely unreasonable in a large
2	democratic society that the issues that you just
3	expressed are occurring. With ranked choice
4	voting votes will not be wasted on such
5	candidates but rather redistributed to voters
6	next intended choice which makes elections more
7	fair.
8	Lastly, ranked choice voting eliminates

Lastly, ranked choice voting eliminates expenses and necessary runoff elections. In New York City if no candidate receives 40 percent of the vote in a primary a runoff election must be held.

Beyond the fiscal concerns that were also voiced already earlier involved in holding a second election voters are required to, again, wake up early use their lunch break or pay a babysitter to watch their children or to do their civic duty which they already did once. So it's hard enough to get voters to the voting booth once and implementing ranked choice voting will allow them to voice their full opinion in a single election.

I spend my hours calling council members and advocating on issues like ranked choice voting because I believe that campaign and electoral

1	reform are at the I'm sorry, election reform
2	are at the root of improving the democratic
3	process. I want New York City to continue to be
4	one of the best cities in the world. We have
5	established some of the most progressive campaign
6	finance laws in the country we should be leaders
7	in the state and the nation and forming
8	democratic reform such as ranked choice voting.
9	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
10	(Applause.)
11	MS. KENDRICK: I'm Sheila Kendrick from Save
12	Central Park NYC and I would like to encourage
13	you to look at some of the land use things that
14	have come up recently and I know you are going to
15	go. The one thing that is of concern and it was
16	brought to the mayor's attention in the Town Hall
17	last January is the loop holes that developers
18	are utilizing to build super dolls. And going
19	down the street today it's every block there's
20	another crane. So the time is now.
21	There's a real urgency for you all to look
22	at the land use abuses. I think some of the
23	frustration with voters is that we know that
24	there's zoning laws that are there to protect us.
25	But when we look at these towers going up in

1	residential neighborhood and you know there are
2	protections in place, whether it's landmarks or
3	special districts or a ceiling cap that should
4	pertain and it doesn't. I think voters sit there
5	and go it doesn't matter what I do because it
6	doesn't matter what the laws are. It doesn't
7	matter what the zoning resolution states. The
8	abuse just goes on and on because some people
9	have the power and some people don't.
10	And Community Board 7 recently passed a
11	resolution addressing five of the most egregious
12	loop holes that are being used. People like Gale
13	Brewer and Ben Kallos stood up and run
14	overdevelopment forums to draw attention to this
15	issue and in the meantime the cranes continue to
16	go up and towers are going to be built around
17	Central Park and more and more of them are going
18	up in residential neighborhoods and we're all
19	going to feel the loss of the most democratic
20	space when it's covered in shadow. Thank you.
21	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
22	(Applause.)
23	Sharon.
24	MS. GREENBERGER: I have a question on the
25	ranked choice voting. One of the things that has

1	come up is whether or not we should be
2	implementing this on a city wide on all
3	elections or on just city wide elections.
4	Do you have strong feelings about whether
5	there's any benefit to implementing first on a
6	city wide election basis and then moving to City
7	Council members or would you suggest that we go
8	all in?
9	MR. PHILLIPS: Personally I'm in favor of
10	using it for all municipal elections primary and
11	general City wide and City Council and borough
12	wide.
13	I know that there's been more momentum for
14	using it for just city-wide primaries to replace
15	the current runoff system. That certainly is far
16	from my preference but if that were what came up
17	I support that as a baby step in the right
18	direction. I would hope that that would sort of
19	acclimate the voter and help make this more
20	popular so that we could then implement it
21	further down the road.
22	But if it were up to me I really see no
23	reason not to use it in every election. I think
24	the benefits do apply across the board. Really
25	the only additional benefit of using it to

1	replace our current runoffs is the cost savings.
2	MS. CHER: And I could agree with that. I
3	also in terms that we're talking earlier about
4	the confusion is there a potential confusion for
5	constituents when they go to the voter booth, and
6	I think that it should apply to all elections in
7	order to keep some resemblance of consistency.
8	And I think that we're already, you know,
9	potentially facing a difference in terms of, you
10	know, within the staff report.
11	It did go into, you know, state versus local
12	or state versus city and how that might be broken
13	up and that will so for, say, elections we
14	would have a different system than the current
15	system that we have versus ranked choice voting
16	for our city elections. So I think that in order
17	to keep it as consistent as possible it should be
18	all at once and consistent.
19	MR. PERALES: Dale.
20	MR. HO: Just a couple of questions about
21	the CCRB. To see if I understand your proposals
22	correctly, and forgive me if I have this wrong.
23	It sounds like there are two separate
24	proposals here. One, that would change the way
25	that the CCRB is the members of the CCRB are

Τ	selected.
2	And a second proposal that's separate from
3	that about the special prosecutor. And those two
4	are really I understand you're in favor of
5	both but they seem like two distinct proposals
6	that aren't necessarily interrelated.
7	Do I have that right?
8	MS. CONNORS: We wrote the legislation with
9	those two entities combined rolled into one sort
10	of but I am that being said I am not our
11	campaign's legislative working group so I can get
12	back to you with more detail about how that would
13	go down the line.
14	MR. HO: Sure. I guess I was trying to
15	understand if you also wanted to change the scope
16	of the CCRB's authority separate and apart from
17	changing how it's constituted?
18	MS. CONNORS: Yes, we want to empower. We
19	want to replace the CCRB with an elected civilian
20	review board so it becomes the ECRB and we want
21	to empower them so giving them the authority
22	which right now remains with the commissioner.
23	We want to give them the authority to give to
24	disciplinary measures to police officers.
25	MR. HO: And if I could just also back up

1	just like so I can understand your prospective
2	here a little bit better.
3	MS. CONNORS: Mm-hm.
4	MR. HO: When it comes to how we select
5	adjudicators like members of a court, for
6	example, there are different views. Some people
7	think we should have a merit selection process.
8	You look at the way the highest court in New York
9	is selected that's basically what we have. Other
10	states for their highest courts they have
11	elections. You know, they elect the State
12	Supreme Court in Michigan and North Carolina.
13	And I'm just curious if you could just say a
14	little bit about why you think an elected board
15	would be more likely to share, what I gather are,
16	your views on police accountability and why you
17	think it wouldn't be the opposite? Why, you
18	know, an elected CCRB might actually be less
19	sympathetic to the views that you have as
20	compared to the one that we currently have?
21	MS. CONNORS: Right. We didn't believe very
22	strongly in democracy so right now the CCRB is
23	appointed. So the people of New York City do not
24	get to do not get any voice on who sits on
25	that board. If it was an elected board I

1	understand there are separate challenges in
2	elections. We do understand that but we do
3	believe that we want to give the people of New
4	York City that chance to as community members run
5	for those positions on community members who have
6	firsthand experience with their police officers.
7	We want to give them the chance to have a
8	position like that; to have control over the
9	police that polices their community. We believe
10	very strongly in that.
11	MR. HO: Thank you.
12	MR. PERALES: Thank you all very, very much.
13	(Applause.)
14	MR. PERALES: Our next panel: Walter South,
15	Andrea Goldwin, Sophie Meyerowitz, and looks like
16	Terri Gruday or Cude.
17	Yes, proceed.
18	MR. SOUTH: I'm a member of Community Board
19	9 and we have a bit of a problem. We're having a
20	lot of condos being built, overbuilding, in our
21	community and putting a burden on our
22	infrastructure. So what's happening is they come
23	in the building, sell the condos and walk away
24	with the profits and they're not making any
25	contributions to our infrastructure.

1	For example, our subway system, our bus
2	system, our school system etcetera is now being
3	overburdened with a number of new people coming
4	into our community and these developers are
5	walking away and not making any contribution at
6	all to this infrastructure problem.
7	So I propose that we do away as of right.
8	Period. And that there be a fee imposed upon
9	every new building in our community and this fee
10	be determined by the community board as to what
11	portion or what part of the infrastructure should
12	be funded. That's it.
13	Thank you Commission for hearing us out
14	today. I'm Sophie Maerowitz. I'm on East
15	Village Community Board 3 as a public member of
16	the transportation public safety and environment
17	committee. I stress public member because even
18	as a relatively young person who's trying to get
19	more civically engaged I'm sad to say I was
20	discouraged from applying for full board this
21	year. I applied last year.
22	Overall, I found the full board application,
23	the group interview process chaotic. I also saw
24	a lack of transparency in their brief and frankly
25	very late rejection letter. I think the city

needs to do a better job in articulating exactly
why full members are chosen. Based on a number
of returning full members who were reappointed
this year. I can only assume that previous
service on the board was part of that
consideration.

I agree with councilman Ben Kallo's recommendation that we need term limits to ensure a more of a diverse board and new perspectives in the constantly changing environment that is our city. We also need to ensure that we get those term limits that if we get those term limits grandfathering does not allow those who have been in service for decades to add another ten years to their time on the board.

Finally, I think we need access to urban planners at community boards. As somebody who cares deeply about street safety and accessibility I don't want to have to wait for DOT to perform studies and create mock ups before our board can vote on crucial street improvements. The board should be able to come up with some of these plans of its own fruition which would expedite needed safety improvements and align with vision zero priorities. Thank

1	you.
2	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
3	MS. GOLDWIN: Good evening, Chair Perales
4	and Commission members. I'm Andrea Goldwin
5	speaking on behalf of the New York Landmarks
6	Conservancy. Our president Peg Breen wanted to
7	be here tonight and sends her regards.
8	The conservancy is a 45-year-old
9	organization dedicated to preserving,
10	revitalizing and reusing New York's architectural
11	resources. The land use issues that this
12	Commission has discussed are central to our work
13	and preservation and planning. We understand
14	that this body intends to defer consideration.
15	However, given the critical nature of these
16	topics we wanted to respond to the preliminary
17	staff report. New York's landmarks preservation
18	Commission is one of the strongest and most
19	defective preservation agencies in the country.
20	Its protection of historic resources was integral
21	and reinvigorating the city's committee after the
22	dark days of the financial crisis of the 1970s
23	and 80s.
24	In the recent boom years it's been a balance
25	working to maintain the dynamic mix of old and

L	new that makes New York unique. The
2	conservancy's own study on the economic impacts
3	of landmarks designation found tremendous
1	benefits. More than \$800 million is invested
5	annually in New York's historic buildings
5	creating nine thousand jobs every year.
7	The success leads to the conclusion that th

The success leads to the conclusion that the LPC should absolutely continue as an independent agency. The landmark's law charges it to safe guard buildings in place that is: Stabilize and improve property values, foster civic pride, protect and enhance the city's attraction to tourists and strengthen the economy of the city. These goals are just as relevant now as when the law was written 50 years ago. We believe that the LPC would be even more successful if there was a requirement that the commissioner, perhaps even the chair, have a background in preservation.

When the law was established this was a new field. So the requirements were sensible. In the decades since the field of preservation has been professionalized with several academic program that have created thousands of alumni. The LPC's preservation staff is required to have

1	а	degree.	It	should	be	а	prerequisite	for	an
2	aŗ	pointed	comm	missione	er.				

On the larger planning issues we've heard as you have tonight from constituents across the city who say that their voices are not being heard when it comes to new development in their neighborhoods that the department of City Planning zones but doesn't plan. We urge this and future Commission to consider a more comprehensive approach.

We should have a planning agency that considers the community's needs, its existing resources and its capacity and then makes decisions based on those factors instead of the current system which relies on uncertain outcomes and negotiations with developers. Until that large scale change is realized we believe that community boards need to be strengthened.

We agree with others that these volunteer members should have assistance to address the extraordinary complicated land use issues that they face. We support consistent city wide training an additional boards -- excuse me -- additional resources for boards to engage professionals as staff or consultants.

1	Thank you.
2	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
3	MS. CUDE: Good evening, Chair Perales, vice
4	chair, and Commissioners. I'm Terri Cude and I'm
5	chair Community Board 2 Manhattan. We're
6	delighted to welcome you to our district.
7	Unfortunately the late notice regarding this
8	meeting prevents Community Board 2 from offering
9	an official position so today I'll be speaking
10	for myself.
11	Community Board 2 Manhattan is the board
12	that has the longest serving community board
13	member Doris Diether who has served on CB 2 for
14	more than 50 years. We have three or four others
15	who have served more than 20 years.
16	CB 2 relies heavily on their experience.
17	Understanding the often complex issues and
18	regulation we face and memory. For example, one
19	of our members was on the board more than
20	20 years ago when some plots of land acquired by
21	the City and promised for a unique purpose. Over
22	time the agency changed what they were about to
23	do and they were about to renege on those
24	agreements. Only the fact that one person's
25	memory said wait a second. This was promised as

1	a park	for	this comm	unity	that	desperate	ely needs
2	a park	has	prevented	that	from	becoming	another
3	buildir	ng si	ite.				

The many issues addressed by our community board every month including land-use landmarks liquor licensing, sidewalk cafes, street use, transportation, social services, parks, environment, schools, the arts, and small businesses are complicated and it often takes years to master their subtleties and nuances.

The community benefits from the combination of long-term experience members. Some have been around for a few years and new members bring a fresh perspective. Over the pass few years CB 2 has had about a ten percent turnover each year and that has resulted in a highly functional board. It is important to consider that the elected officials who appoint us are term limited and this in itself creates a national change over point to fit the priorities of the new office holder thus by extension generating a healthy turnover of the community board.

I must say burnout is more of a problem for community boards than long-term service. So please give community boards added resources so

1	we can do our volunteered jobs month after month
2	with the best support and expertise possible.
3	And please allow our elected officials to do
4	their jobs so they're appointing only those they
5	feel will serve the needs of the board and the
б	community for the two years sometimes less if
7	they're filling a vacancy to come. It is a short
8	enough time to keep the board as fresh and
9	diverse as it should be without codifying a
10	requirement to remove those that are available
11	and important to the work we do for our
12	communities.
13	I thank you all for your kind attention.
14	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
15	You were reading from you phone weren't you?
16	Did you
17	(Inaudible.)
18	MR. SOUTH: She was.
19	UNKNOWN SPEAKER: That was me.
20	MR. PERALES: But you have not submitted
21	anything in writing?
22	MR. SOUTH: Pardon me?
23	MR. PERALES: Have you submitted anything in
24	writing.
25	MR. SOUTH: No. I have not.

1 MR. PERALES: It'd be useful for us. 2 MR. SOUTH: Okay. 3 MR. PERALES: You had a good idea. MR. SOUTH: I can do it. 4 MR. PERALES: Good. 5 6 MR. SOUTH: Boston have done away with as of 7 right and they negotiate now with every good offer to make contributions. 8 9 MR. PERALES: I ask you to put it in 10 writing. The hour draw is late but I am 11 interested. 12 MR. SOUTH: Thank you. 13 MR. PERALES: Let me thank all of you. Ιt 14 has been helpful. 15 MR. SOUTH: Thank you. 16 MR. PERALES: We have one last panel: Ken Brown, Debra Brown, Billy Freeland, Joni Eaton 17 18 and Kay Samuels, looks like MD. Okay. Let's 19 begin. 20 MR. BROWN: Thank you very much, Chair 21 Perales, distinguished members of the panel. 22 Thank you very much for offering me opportunity 23 to present testimony. 24 My name is Ken Brown. I am both a resident 25 of East Harlem Community Board 11 and I have the

1	privilege	of	serv	ing	as	the	district	manager	of
2	Community	Boa	rd 5	in	the	Bro	nx.		

I principally like to address the question of term limits and capacity at the community boards. It has been a contentious issue of term limits at our board and anecdotally other boards. However, the objection or one of the considerations that's been raised about imposing term limits is the question of institutional memory is not necessarily required to be resided at the community board and that the longevity of officers at the district manager's office can't function as a surrogate and as a resource for that constitutionalized memory which is a principal resource for the board.

I certainly concur that one of the great benefit that could be had to the function in community boards in terms of its advisory capacity for land use questions would be greater access to technical assistance.

It's been my observation at our board in the Bronx the board will vote on questions of zoning and upzoning and the consequence of that vote will not really sink in until after the fact when residents find it, as people have testified,

1	large buildings being put up next to their
2	two-family home. So it's my consideration that
3	if there could be one of the recommendations
4	identified in the report is a pool of land use
5	planners that could be made available at the
6	municipal level, the city-wide level. I think
7	that that would have the potential to mitigate
8	any possibility of conflicts of interest bought
9	it wouldn't necessarily be rooted to the place
10	that is are under consideration. That's one.
11	One of the primary source of friction at our
12	community board is a question of fair share
13	criteria regarding I forget the exact term of
14	our burden some community facilities, homeless
15	shelters. It's our understanding that the fair
16	share criteria we've been told is for
17	notification purposes only and we'd like I
18	have a sentence it's our recommendation that
19	we would like fair share criteria to waive the
20	consideration of homelessness crisis as a means
21	to circumvent fair share criteria. And I can't
22	talk anymore. Thank you.
23	MR. FREELAND: Good evening. My name is
24	Billy Freeland. I'm a former member of Community
25	Board 2. A current member of Community Board 8

1	and proud member of NYU Law School so I'm glad to
2	see so many faculty and affiliates on this
3	Commission. I think it gives me the confidence
4	in your work. I want to thank you all for the
5	way that you are doing
6	MR. SCISSURA: Can you just tell us what
7	neighborhoods they are and same with you which
8	community boards, the neighborhoods or what area
9	of New York?
10	MR. FREELAND: University Heights, Morris
11	Heights, Tremont. Community Board 2 is Greenwich
12	Village, downtown basically between 14th Street
13	and Canal from the Hudson to Bowery. CB 8 is the
14	Upper East Side, 59th Street to 96th Street and
15	Roosevelt Island.
16	So I was want to thank you all for your
17	service because I think this is extremely
18	important. It's long overdue to revisit the
19	Charter. I come here actually I didn't even
20	plan to speak. I just sort of jotted down some
21	notes. It's only been since your preliminary
22	report came out that I started really thinking
23	about this more seriously and I think I come
24	it's not as interesting as the substantive points
25	but I come with some process concerns.

1	The report came out on July 17th and my
2	concern is that it is simply not enough time for
3	the community boards to really evaluate and form
4	a unified and thorough opinion of what your
5	recommendations are particularly around the
6	community board reform. I know most community
7	boards if not all do not meet in August and I
8	just sort of did an informal survey during this
9	meeting. I think there's about five community
10	boards in Manhattan that do not meet in July or
11	August.
12	So my concern is that because of the timing
13	the preliminary report coming out at the end of
14	July. It's going to be finalized at the end of
15	August that this process is not as thorough or
16	robust as it could have been.
17	So my recommendation to you would be to find
18	a way to either get that community board input in
19	a hurry or in your final report to note that the
20	community boards have not been able to be as
21	engaged in this process as would be ideal. That
22	may be to our fault to some extent but it may
23	also be the fault of the process.
24	I have only 50 seconds left so some previous

thoughts on the substance since I have the time I

25

1	found that my experience on the community boards
2	that institutional knowledge institutional memory
3	is invaluable. I'm not here to say no term
4	limits but I am here to say that some of the best
5	mentors I've had on community boards have been
6	people who has been around for 10 years, 20 years
7	who really know the ropes, who understand land
8	use in a way that most of us cannot. And again,
9	we do not have a city planner on the boards
10	although that would be a good idea.
11	I think there are rules in place that we
12	could standardize and make more uniformed that
13	get at the issue that term limits are trying to
14	get at. I think as Ms. Chung said at your
15	hearing I think on the 19th of June, she's with
16	CB 3, it is a blunt instrument.
17	So for example, Section 2800 B of the
18	Charter currently says for substantial absences
19	about six months you may be removed from the
20	board. If you can standardize that and make that
21	more uniformed I think
22	MR. PERALES: You've run out of time.
23	MR. FREELAND: So thank you all for your
24	efforts and I hope you'll take response into
25	account. Thank you.

1	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
2	MS. BROWN: My name is Debra Brown. No
3	relation to Ken Brown at the end of the table.
4	You want civic engagement, well, here I am.
5	I am not on the board of anything. I'm not a
6	chair, of any office. I'm a representative of
7	the Upper West Side and a concerned citizen.
8	My home and my neighborhood gets ruined with
9	the out of control development that's going on.
10	The creep of super talls by the gross misuse of
11	our zoning resolutions, the opaque ULURP process.
12	The death ears of BSA and I realize that this is
13	not the place where zoning laws I know it's
14	going to follow a separate approval procedure
15	elsewhere but the developers who have big money
16	get their voices heard. They get what they want.
17	How? We want a voice in the changes in our
18	neighborhoods in our homes.
19	The great sense that we the middle class are
20	no match for big money or big titles. We are
21	frustrated and angry. We don't have the answers.
22	I don't have the answers but I certainly heard a
23	couple of people here specifically MAS, Save
24	Central Park NYC, and there are others like
25	Landmark West that have common sense answers. So

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1	I beg you that these are our neighborhoods and
2	our homes and they're being ruined. So if we
3	need changes to community boards let's do it. If
4	we need a new entity or office or resident,
5	residential engagement let's do it. But the
6	sense that we're not getting anything done is
7	very much alive and well as far as like just
8	normal people are. Thank you.
9	MR. PERALES: Thank you.
10	MR. EATON: Hi. My name is Joni Eaton. I'm
11	also not really on the board of anything. I'm
12	just a graduate student of physics whose really
13	interested in sort of the math behind voting
14	systems.

And I just really want to register my support for the ranked choice voting system. To me this is like a no brainer. Ranked choice voting encourages politicians to broaden their appeal away from the extremes who find the primaries. It allows voters to vote for third-party candidates without wasting their vote.

And for anyone who's confused about the system there are actually some really fantastic five-minute explainers online in video form. And

from a voter perspective it actually is really simple if you know how to rank your favorite ice cream flavors you basically know how to rank who your favorite candidates are on a ballot.

I also wanted to register my support to any all proposals to make voting easier. In particular I think it makes a lot of sense to follow the footsteps in elections in Colorado. Recently where they have a vote by mail system where ballots are automatically mailed out to every single eligible voters so voters can vote at their own convenience at home where they have all the resources and time that they need to make an informed vote.

I don't know about you but I can spend an hour researching which stupid toaster to buy. I think if people can get their ballots mailed to them at home you will find people actually spending a lot more time researching which candidates that they want to put on the ballot.

And lastly, I want the Commission to ask if they've considered a single transferrable vote system. This would be an alternative to the usual redistricting process. Any timing of a winner-take-all system, as we have now, you run

1	the risk of 49.9 percent of redistrict population
2	from being unrepresented.
3	And with and also winner-take-all system
4	are very susceptible to gerrymandering. Under a
5	single transferrable vote system you would have
6	to combing you would combine three or five
7	winner-take-all districts into one larger
8	district who is actually three to five winners
9	where the winners are determined by your ranked
10	choice voting and that would ensure a lot more
11	proportional representation and a lot fewer
12	disenfranchised voters.
13	This system has all the advantages of the
14	ranked choice voting thing but also gives
15	minorities an opinion and a voice without having
16	to rely on some Commission to draw some weirdly
17	shaped district. That would give that minority a
18	majority. I should clarify it's not some
19	actually new crazy new voting system. Elections
20	in Australia has been doing this for the last 40,
21	50 years and some places even further. That's
22	all.
23	MR. PERALES: Thank you very much.
24	(Applause.)
25	MS. SAMUELS: Good evening. My name is

Τ	Katherine Samuels. I'm a physician born and
2	raised Harlemite.
3	I just found out about this meeting by
4	reading City and State earlier today. So I just
5	want to go over a list of issues and I'll just
6	have to write a little more concretely and submit
7	it to the Commission once I have a moment to
8	really sit down and pull it together.
9	First of all, I definitely support elections
10	for community boards. This appointment thing
11	does not work. All you have are little
12	politicians supporting the bigger politicians
13	(Applause.)
14	MS. SAMUELS: and it has hurt Harlem
15	terribly, terribly. My community is being pushed
16	out by real estate sitting on property not put
17	building. Moving buildings around between
18	different real estate owners. Putting black
19	faces forward at the community board to represent
20	buildings that they want to build and you don't
21	know who's really behind building the building
22	until after it gets done. Making sure the rents
23	are so high my community can't live there
24	anymore. And senior citizens are just being
25	pushed out completely and this is revenue doing

all of this. It's almost as though they want to provision-ize Manhattan so everybody else will have to live outside of Manhattan. And it just keeps going on and on until more and more people have to keep going further and further outside of Manhattan.

I believe that real estate people can be consultants on boards but they should not sit on boards particularly on the land use committee because once they get control of that that's it. That's one thing.

The next thing is that the renaming of streets and buildings we have one road in particular that's been renaming streets and buildings in Harlem and they say that they're renaming it after historical black figures but the community that is supposed to be responsible, let's say, for that street sometimes they don't even know it's being renamed because the person that's getting signatures is going all over the place to get these signatures.

I think it has to be very clear where those signatures need to be coming from so that that community, local community, should be involved in who the street is being for and the reason for it

1	not just somebody picking the name and going
2	around and naming it just to be doing something.
3	The other thing is that there needs to be a
4	provision, for example, where we don't have NIMBY
5	operating for Harlem. When the sewage plant went
6	to, I believe, Board 1 they didn't want it they
7	sent it up to two, two didn't want it, they sent
8	it up to three and then finally it went to the
9	Negros in Harlem and that's how that happened.
10	That should not be allowed to happen. Something
11	should be written so that that does not occur.
12	You don't want it in your neighborhood why you're
13	sending it to us?
14	MR. PERALES: Dr. Samuels, you're going to
15	have to
16	DR. SAMUELS: I'll finish very quickly, I'm
17	sorry.
18	So that's something that should be written
19	at because somebody doesn't want something in
20	that neighborhood they bounce it to who they
21	think the poorer neighborhood is that can't fight
22	back and keep it from their neighborhood.
23	And the other thing is this: The community
24	of New York City should be able to create
25	referendums and vote on those referendums. It

Τ	should not have to go through the City Council.
2	(Applause.)
3	DR. SAMUELS: And that should be written in
4	galore and very clear. This business if we
5	want a referendum it has to go through City
6	Council. It's ridiculous. City people want a
7	referendum, for example, to recall politicians.
8	We should have a write to put that for a vote and
9	vote on it.
10	MR. PERALES: Your time is up.
11	DR. SAMUELS: Thank you very much.
12	MR. PERALES: Thank you. All right.
13	MR. FREELAND: I think I just failed to say
14	I was speaking from my personal capacity and not
15	on behalf of any community board.
16	MR. PERALES: Okay. Shelly.
17	Ms. GREENBERGER: Can I ask, excuse me, a
18	clarifying question for you two as well the other
19	CB chairs or members who are here. One of the
20	suggestion and one of the things we've talked
21	about is providing technical assistance to
22	community boards around land use issues and I'm
23	wondering if you could give us an example of
24	where that might have been useful and very
25	briefly.

1	MR. BROWN: Sure. Our community board just
2	completed a rather extensive rezoning, the Jerome
3	Avenue rezoning. And the department of City
4	Planning had a robust menu of facade show of
5	community engagement. On one side of the table
6	you had literally a panel of credential city
7	employees making presentations. On the other
8	side of the table are community residents that
9	did not have that do not have the technical
10	expertise to appreciate what kind of questions
11	should be asked.
12	So a lot of the ability to engage for
13	engagement by the community is not sufficiently
14	supported with technical expertise. If there was
15	someone sitting on the community side of the
16	table that had the education, that had the
17	expertise that was a credential planner that
18	could then inform how the community asks
19	questions.
20	MS. GREENBERGER: That's helpful. Thank
21	you.
22	(Inaudible.)
23	MS. CAMP: I'm Alida Camp. I'm chair of CB
24	8.
25	We have no (inaudible) and are trying to

1	either create special districts or do something
2	to stop the massive overdevelopment that's
3	occurring in its communities we feel have gone
4	too long because the developers have their urban
5	planner who work for them and we don't have the
6	ability without significant financial funds to be
7	able to engage an urban planner who could help us
8	in our quest to get some kind of pipe restriction
9	or some kind of planning for that community.
10	Furthermore, we have hired an urban planner
11	with some funds but we have a hard time finding
12	someone who wasn't conflicted because of working
13	for the builders. So we need to have not only
14	urban planners but dedicated planners for the
15	benefit of the community.
16	I just would like to address some of the
17	people who spoke. Community boards are advisory
18	only. When you feel that they don't represent
19	the community in the fight against developers
20	it's because we can't. We are only advising the
21	city and insofar as the City wants to listen to
22	us.
23	MS. GREENBERGER: Thank you very much.
24	That's helpful.
25	(Inaudible.)

1	MR. PERALES: Are there any questions that
2	
3	MS. ARCHER: This is for the community board
4	folks as well. Can you respond to Dr. Samuel's
5	suggestion that community boards be elected as
6	opposed to appointed? I understand you're
7	speaking in your individual capacity but it'd be
8	helpful to hear your response to that.
9	MR. FREELAND: Sure. I'll go ahead. I
10	understand where the sentiment is coming from.
11	My concern is that if you look at a lot of
12	elections that we currently have and again
13	speaking from my personal capacity I think the
14	developers have a lot of advantages in those as
15	well and the devil is in the details.
16	How do you have elections in which you don't
17	get outgunned by those who have money? I can say
18	from my personal experience on the community
19	boards they actually tend to often be maybe
20	not in your experience but in ones I've seen
21	they often tend to be more opposed to new
22	development. Community Board 2 I felt that was
23	true and currently on CB 8.
24	And listening to some of the more
25	pro-development voices in our community they

1	often criticize the community board for having
2	too many voices against upzoning and development.
3	So I'm not sure that elections would result in
4	better outcomes who are better outcomes
5	against developers. In fact, I worry that the
6	outcomes might be a little bit worse. So
7	something you really have to study and I
8	certainly would not urge you to put that to the
9	ballot in November.
10	DR. SAMUELS: I think if one, two and three
11	you have a certain group in those community
12	boards I could see that but in some of the other
13	uptown community boards
14	UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Like the Bronx.
15	DR. SAMUELS: you don't have that. And
16	that's what I'm worried about. Because I see
17	what happened to Harlem. And when you're looking
18	at plots that's just sitting there in years and
19	all of a sudden the neighborhood starts to change
20	and the next thing there's a building.
21	First of all, somebody comes to the board
22	and they're black and they're telling you about
23	this wonderful building they're going to be
24	putting up and the next thing you find out that
25	who's putting the building up really isn't a

1	black person and the rents are two or \$3,000 a
2	month. Well, who in Harlem is going to be able
3	to pay that? So what you're really doing is
4	pushing the people in Harlem out of Harlem.
5	MR. FREELAND: I will just, to that point,
6	add that I do think that so much of the
7	appointment process is determined by the City
8	Council person and the borough president.
9	DR. SAMUELS: I agree with that, too.
10	MR. FREELAND: I may be wrong about this. I
11	do have a lot of confidence, for example, in Gale
12	Brewer and I think she tries to appoint people
13	who have great judgment but does the City Council
14	person or they have the same philosophy?
15	DR. SAMUELS: As I said
16	MR. FREELAND: And that's
17	DR. SAMUELS: As I said, I've seen this
18	whole thing developed in Harlem and when your
19	City Council person is a real estate developer
20	MR. PERALES: I think I've lost control of
21	this meeting here.
22	(Laughter.)
23	MR. PERALES: Are there any other questions
24	from the Commission?
25	(No response.)

1	MR. PERALES: If not, I will entertain a
2	motion.
3	UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Motion.
4	UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Second.
5	MR. PERALES: All those in favor?
6	(Array of "Aye".)
7	MR. PERALES: The meeting is adjourned.
8	Thank you.
9	(Whereupon, at 8:15 P.M., the above matter
10	concluded.)
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1	CERTIFICATE.
2	
3	STATE OF NEW YORK)
4	: SS.: COUNTY OF BRONX)
5	
6	I, CECILIA NAVARRO, a Notary Public for and
7	within the State of New York, do hereby certify:
8	That the witness whose examination is
9	hereinbefore set forth was duly sworn and that such
10	examination is a true record of the testimony given by that
11	witness.
12	I further certify that I am not related to any
13	of the parties to this action by blood or by marriage and
14	that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this
15	matter.
16	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand
17	this 26th day of July 2018.
18	
19	Cecilia Navarro
20	
21	CECILIA NAVARRO
22	
23	
24	
25	

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