

The Council of the City of New York  
Committee on Lower Manhattan Redevelopment  
Oversight Hearing: Update on Rebuilding of the World Trade Center Site  
Monday, July 27, 2009 at 1:00 p.m.  
Council Chambers, City Hall, New York

Thank you, Council Member Gerson for convening this important hearing to assess the status of the redevelopment of the World Trade Center site and to gauge progress since your last hearing on the “World Trade Center Report: A Roadmap Forward” released on October 2, 2008 by the Port Authority of NY & NJ (PANYNJ). I am Catherine McVay Hughes, Vice Chair of Manhattan Community Board One (CB1).

The PANYNJ report that we discussed on October 2 addressed the 15 major decision points and mitigation options and formulated budgets and timetables for completion of the PANYNJ’s projects, as promised in the June 2008 World Trade Center Assessment.

Today we face the current impasse between the PANYNJ and Silverstein Properties (SPI) which threatens to adversely impact timelines that have already been delayed several times. It is now almost eight years since September 11, 2001, when terrorists destroyed the WTC site, and there have been numerous hearings, meetings, promises, and two revised agreements (2002 and 2006) between the PANYNJ and SPI. While there has been some significant progress at the WTC site – specifically, at the WTC Memorial and Museum, the Calatrava PATH Station, and Towers 1 & 4, the struggle to rebuild the commercial space and other important components of the site continues.

CB1 is deeply troubled by the inability of the PANYNJ and SPI to resolve their differences in recent months. We acknowledge that the parties each have serious concerns that must be worked out. We applaud the personal intervention by Governor Paterson, Mayor Bloomberg and Speaker Silver, and we call on all parties to do everything possible and to not rest until an agreement is reached that will enable this deadlock to be broken.

Parties should consider entering binding arbitration if it is concluded that it will result in the most expeditious settlement. Left unresolved, the uncertainty delaying WTC redevelopment will continue to negatively impact the surrounding residential and business community where real estate prices continue to decline and property taxes continue to increase.

CB1 would like to address the following specific components of the WTC Redevelopment and identify some of our key priorities:

- **WTC Memorial and Museum** – Complete key parts of the memorial in time for the tenth anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2011, as promised.
- **Retail** – Restore the retail space destroyed on 9/11. It represented a significant portion of the retail space in Lower Manhattan and provided needed goods and services to those working, living, and visiting downtown;
- **Calatrava Transportation Hub** – Retain the basic integrity of the design above ground with the value engineering plan and complete it by the target date of 4Q 2013;
- **Performing Arts Center (PAC)** – Proceed with the cultural center and major performing arts center (PAC) which were important elements of the Master Plan for the WTC site and would encourage the rebirth of cultural activity at the WTC site and in the surrounding area. This commitment must become a reality and planning and fundraising for the PAC must receive the highest priority and not be left as an afterthought for the middle of the next decade. A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) should be established with key stakeholders to develop viable plans and keep them on track. In connection with the proposed site of the PAC, we would like clarification as to the following:

- The projected date for turning over the site to the State and City and how it will be impacted by the creation of a north access to the vehicle security center. To whom will the site be turned over when it is ready? When will the site be turned over – this date should be firmly established as construction costs continue to escalate;

Recently a proposal was made to move the PAC to the 130 Liberty Street location which is expected to be available in early 2010. This idea needs to be fully investigated, especially since it could speed up the timetable significantly and would not be dependent on the completion of work to underlying infrastructure;

- **Liberty Park** – Develop the only public space at the WTC, which includes the roof deck of the Vehicular Security Center and is bounded by Liberty & Cedar Streets and Route 9A & Greenwich Streets. This green space should allow conductivity at street level and provide a beautiful place to relax year-round for workers, residents and visitors;
- **Tour Bus Management Plan** – Develop a comprehensive management plan for the tour buses that will bring many of the projected 5 million annual visitors to the WTC Memorial and Museum. The WTC Vehicular Security Center may not be adequate to meet traffic needs. A study should be conducted that looks at viable alternatives such as parking tour buses in New Jersey so that visitors can have the real NYC experience of taking the PATH in to the WTC site. It is essential to provide a dedicated parking area large enough to accommodate buses bringing people to the WTC site so that they do not need to circulate around Lower Manhattan damaging air quality and public health. The plan should consider an assessment of the possibility of statewide expansion of Local Law 41 which requires sight-seeing buses licensed in NYC to use the best available emissions control technology and provides benefits to companies that comply;
- **Fulton Street Transportation Station** – Complete this entire project by the current MTA deadline of 2014 – which is already five years behind the initial schedule. Now that needed funding has been secured, it is vital that the project be completed on schedule since businesses in the vicinity are struggling. In addition, we must plan to have in place and encourage the use of public transportation accessing the WTC

site as a viable alternative to tourist buses for the increased number of visitors expected when the Memorial opens;

- **Cortland Street Subway Station (R and W)** – Reopen the uptown service at the station this December 2009 in time for the holiday shopping season as promised, and the downtown service as soon as possible; and
- **130 Liberty Street & Fiterman Hall** – Complete safe demolition of both WTC damaged buildings as soon as possible. In light of the incident on Wednesday, July 22, in which a chunk of concrete 3 feet by 3 feet by 10 inches was reported to have fallen from 130 Liberty Street, we reiterate our concern about the need for construction safety at the site, and question why an e-update did not go out to inform the community about this incident.

More generally, there is a need for the safest construction practices to be followed at the WTC site and the surrounding area, especially since tens of thousands of people move daily around the site to access the PATH station and tens of thousands of others walk around the perimeter. We appreciate your recent efforts, Councilman Gerson, to conduct roundtable meetings to develop recommendations for improvements in construction safety. We look forward to working with you to implement some of these recommendations.

We were distressed by the article that appeared in the NY Post on June 28, 2009 “WTC Hard Hats Get Hammered”. We understand that measures were taken against the specific workers featured in the article, and we are requesting that the Port Authority provide information about how its contractors and subcontractors will implement a zero tolerance policy going forward and clarify what other steps have been taken to address this serious problem.

All rebuilding entities must ensure that the WTC complex is constructed in full compliance with New York City building, fire and safety codes. DOB’s new building code incorporates accumulated knowledge from the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 as well as other incidents that have occurred since. We continue to request that the WTC buildings be searchable by address on the useful and informative NYC DOB Buildings Information System (BIS) website so that the public can monitor work at the

WTC site, which has been by far the largest construction site in Lower Manhattan for the past eight years and will continue to be into the future.

We thank the PANYNJ for maintaining an open dialogue with CB1 through its Quarterly Construction Updates at the WTC Redevelopment Committee, stakeholder coordination committee meetings and “Walkshops” established last fall to identify ways to minimize impacts from work on the surrounding community. The community has welcomed Improvements made and steps taken by the PANYNJ such as the development of a new Pedestrian Management Program, keeping Vesey Street between Church and West Broadway open and better lit, installation of soundproof windows in residential buildings in the immediate area of the World Trade Center site, and the start of preliminary discussions on the Liberty Street Park. It is important that the PANYNJ continue to address the need for the surrounding community to remain livable and viable throughout this challenging project

In April 2009, CB#1 unanimously passed a resolution urging the PANYNJ to release an updated June 2009 Annual Assessment of the WTC projects one year after its initial report with updated project milestones and schedule details. In addition, CB1 would like to be informed immediately about any changes to the WTC Master Plan.

As we requested nine months ago at your last hearing, CB1 would like rebuilding entities to provide a report from the Lower Manhattan Construction Command Center (LMCCC) in coordination with the Port Authority World Trade Center Program at all levels, showing projected construction activity levels in light of recent developments, and clarifying how the community will be affected at different points in time.

With regard to 1 World Trade Center, we are concerned about a recent report in the press that negotiations with the Metropolitan Television Alliance for an antenna atop the building have broken down. We would like a clarification of the status of these negotiations, the impact of the potential loss of an estimated annual payment of \$10 million for use of the antenna to broadcast 11 stations, and how this would affect the design of the building.

It is critically important to make sure all components of the WTC development are back on track as soon as possible and to meet the promised revised timetable in order to bolster commercial and residential real estate values and business in Lower

Manhattan. This in turn will have a ripple effect that will benefit the general economy in New York City at large, which is especially important given the severe current downturn in the economy and consequent decrease in both income and real estate tax revenues. We thank you, Council Member Gerson, for your continued oversight in monitoring developments at the World Trade Center site.