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**RUSH TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS ON SANDY RECOVERY, NEW BUILD IT BACK GOALS**

**Mayor Bill de Blasio:** Good morning, everyone. Let's get everyone to their places.

It's a strikingly beautiful day today, but you know, standing here today we are all taken back two years, remembering a day that shocked us all, remembering the aftermath, and what it meant to people. I was out here in this community in the days immediately after Sandy. I was here with Assemblyman Goldfeder, with Dan Mundy, and with so many community residents, hearing firsthand what people were going through.

And days like this remind us that there is hope after the storm, there is a way forward, but we can never rest until everyone who was affected is served. It's as simple as that. And today we have – thank god – an example of some progress that was finally made, but it's a reminder of a lot more work that has to be done so each and every family is reached.

The Galimi family – I imagine a lot of you know their story, it's a powerful one – the storm, for them, came this close to being fatal. This was a tight-knit family, a family that's been through a lot in the last couple of years, but in the moment of truth they stuck together, and they made it through what was obviously a terrifying moment. The floodwaters rushed into their home. It literally – John and Jayme and five kids, all in the middle of the water, trying to get to safety – sticking together, finding their way through, and then finding as soon as the water subsided that their home was gone – a home that they had spent years and years making what it was, and the place they raised their family – it was suddenly gone. So it's one thing – thank god – they saved your lives, and though – you got through that part of the storm – but then to turn around and find that the place that you lived is gone – you can only imagine the sense of despair they went through, and then for a long time thereafter, trying to get the help they deserve.

For so many victims of Sandy, they went through a second set of challenges trying to get help, living in places, any place they could find – with family, with friends – in cramped quarters, often incurring more and more debt.

---Our job is to help each and every one of these families find their way out of the crisis. For the Galimi family, thank god this nightmare is ending. They will be home this year. They will be home in time for Christmas – and that's a big deal.

[Applause]

And I'm told that now that they can see their house taking shape again, that their youngest son, Nick, has already decided on a basketball theme for his room. I like it. You got creativity. He's ready for it.

I want to thank the Galimi family for sharing their story with us and being here today – you’re going to hear from them. I admire their strength as a family. I admire their perseverance. I think they are an example of everything that’s good about this community and everything that’s good about New York City and the way people fought their way through and hung together. So I want to thank them for being a part of this.

I want to thank all of the people who have worked to fix the Build It Back program and to improve our recovery efforts and our resiliency efforts, including Amy Peterson, director of our Housing Recovery Office – you’ll hear from her in a moment; Bill Goldstein, my senior advisor for Recovery, Resiliency, and Infrastructure; Dan Zarrilli, the director of the Office of Recovery & Resiliency. The three of them have been the leaders in remaking these programs and putting us on a much more aggressive footing to address the needs of people who are affected.

We also learn every time that the best way to get things done is to talk to people in neighborhoods and understand what they need and understand what works and what doesn’t. Dan Mundy Jr, as the president of the Broad Channel Civic Association, has been a tremendous leader for this community. I remember his leadership in the days after the storm. Let’s give him a round of applause.

[Applause]

It’s a blessing to have a community leader like him in the aftermath, but since, he’s applied himself to helping us figure out how to get it right. And you’re going to see in the Galimi’s house examples of things that were learned along the way of how to get this right – and Dan has been an invaluable guide in that process. We have elected officials who have stood by the community, who fought for the community. You’re going to hear from Assemblyman Goldfeder in a bit. I can tell you, from the beginning of the storm until now, elected officials who have stood up and pushed hard to make sure communities get what they deserve.

Now let’s face it – when I came into office and before this team was even assembled, it was quite clear that Build It Back was failing homeowners. And, there had not been – literally – there had been no construction starts, there had been no reimbursement checks. A program that was supposed to help people in need had literally produced a zero and a zero. So we overhauled the entire system. We didn’t think in terms of Band-Aids – we literally overhauled the whole approach. We expanded the eligibility so, regardless of income, people could get help for a variety of needs. We provided property tax and water-bill relief for so many homeowners who were suffering. We streamlined the application process. Now, when we started the year on January 1 with a zero and a zero, we have a very very different picture – and the progress has been clear. Now, nearly half of all the applicants for help under Build It Back have now been made an offer of help – that’s 6,400 homeowners that have been made an offer of help. 4,000 had accepted the offer. 1,500 have now started the design process. And we said by Labor Day we would get top at least 500 construction starts and 500 reimbursement checks. As of today, October 20, we’re at 727 construction starts to date, 878 reimbursement checks to date. A lot more to do, but when you think about the fact we started the year with a zero and a zero – for 727 families construction has started and visible, for 878 families reimbursement checks have come and arrived – this is starting to change the lives of people who’ve been suffering.

There’s a lot more to do for homeowners, there’s a lot more to do for business owners – we’re going to stay with it. This is a mission that doesn’t end until it ends – it doesn’t end until everyone is reached. So we want to put forward the goals that we will use to guide us from now until December 31 of this year. By December 31, we will hit at least 1,000 construction starts – meaning, from January 1, 2014 to December 31 we will reach a level of 1,000 construction starts – meaning an additional 273 over our current number today. By December 31, counting the whole year, we will get to 1,500 reimbursement checks – we’re at 878 now, we’re going to pick up over 600 more reimbursement checks by – that get to people – by December 31. We’re also going to add a whole new component to Build It Back – we’re going to dramatically expand the design and construction capacity so we can provide relief faster.

And we know that this is not abstract. We know that every check means a family is getting back on their feet. Every construction start means a family will get back in their homes. If you want to know what it means, talk to the Galimi family about the difference between having a home and not having a home, having a plan that's going to get you back home versus having no plan at all. We see each and every one of these milestones in very human terms. That's the recovery part of the equation, and it will continue.

We also have to work on the resiliency part of the equation and we all know that. People here in Broad Channel know it well. We have to constantly work to prepare for – god-forbid – for the next storm. We don't know when it's going to come, we don't know what it's going to look like, we do know we have to be prepared. So resiliency efforts continue and they take a lot of different forms. Some are very, very local, some are very big. In every home we add in when we rebuild homes resiliency elements. So it goes from the smallest to the biggest efforts – they all add up to a more resilient community.

Here in Broad Channel, the \$7 million Sunset Cove Resiliency Project is being implemented by the Department of Parks and Recreation – that's with \$4.8 million in federal money and \$2.2 million in city money. It'll expand the green infrastructure – meaning the natural ability of the surrounding environment to hold back extreme weather – and it will shelter this community and others. The \$28 million Street-End Project – that's being done by our Department of Design and Construction – \$28 million for reconstruction of areas of Broad Channel at 11, 12, and 13 Roads. This includes bulkheads, storm and sanitary sewers, and new water mains. And there's a larger study underway of the larger area – the old Howard Beach, Hamilton Beach, Broad Channel Resilient Neighborhood Study that looks at what will be needed additionally for the long term. Community leaders and community organizations are going to be a crucial part of that effort. That's what's happening right around here.

There are major efforts being made all over the city in all the affected areas. One of the ones that's already been seen and will have a huge impact, not just in this immediate community or in Queens, but you're seeing all over the city the sand being put back on the beaches to make us more resilient by building up dunes. 3 – this is an amazing figure – 3.27 million cubic yards of sand have been placed on city beaches since Sandy hit – 3.27 million cubic yards of new sand on city beaches. And 10,500 linear feet of bulkheads have been repaired all over the city. So the work of resiliency is going on every single day – and it's crucial – and that will continue for years to come.

You know, doing the work of resiliency, doing the work of recovery in and of itself is absolutely essential. We also know that as the opportunity this work creates, we want to see people from neighborhoods that were affected, like this neighborhood, have the economic opportunity that Build It Back and other efforts allow, because so many people were thrown for a loop – not just in terms of their homes, but in terms of their jobs, in terms of their savings. People were hit hard economically. And when we can get them opportunities for jobs as part of the recovery effort, we want to do that.

So last week we announced a Build It Back local hiring initiative for residents of Sandy-impacted areas – they'll have priority for jobs in recovery and rebuilding. We also announced the Rockaways Economic Advancement Initiative, a pipeline for jobs, job counseling, training – a whole range of services to help people get jobs – and the kind of jobs they can keep for the long term. People were thrown for a loop – it's been years now. We want to get as many people as possible on the right economic track and keep them there.

The bottom line in all of this is it only matters if it leads to a real tangible result for everyday people, people who were thrown for such a loop by the storm and now just want to get back to normal. I know for the Galimi family this means watching that house grow every day, watching it get closer to completion. I'm told that Jayme keeps an eye on it every single day, makes sure everything's been done right. You're the official site supervisor, right? But Jayme's not going to rest until she's back in her home. We're not going to rest until everyone who has applied and is eligible is served – and that is our obligation.

I want to say a couple words in Spanish before I turn to some of my colleagues.

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

I now want to introduce someone who I think has gotten really incredibly positive reviews all over this city from people who've been suffering. They wanted to see someone in government listen and then act upon the information. They wanted to see someone who got it and knew how to do something with what they were hearing – and we found that person in Amy Peterson. As the director of our Housing Recovery Office, she has turned Build It Back around and she's making it work for people in neighborhoods like this. Let's thank Amy Peterson and welcome her to speak.

[Applause]

[Amy Peterson, Director, Housing Recovery Office, speaks]

[Applause]

**Mayor:** Now I'd like to introduce the couple of the hour and thank them again for really being an example to everyone of strength and perseverance and what a strong family looks like – Jayme and John Galimi.

[Applause]

[John Galimi speaks]

[Applause]

**Mayor:** Thank you very much. I want to call up the assemblyman for this area, Phil Goldfeder. And I've got to tell you that I remember very vividly, in my previous job, calling around to the people who represented areas affected by Sandy as the storm was starting to hit. And Phil Goldfeder was at the front line and he stayed at the front line during the crisis, after the crisis – he stayed with it. We were out here talking to community residents, trying to get the help they need, get the light towers, and the other help that people needed, and he was hands-on about it – and I give him a lot of respect for being a guy who actually gets out there and rolls up his sleeves. Assembly Member Phil Goldfeder.

[Applause]

[Assembly Member Phil Goldfeder speaks]

[Applause]

**Mayor:** Well, Dan Mundy deserves the praise he's getting and I think it's time to actually let him talk about what he is doing, because it's been extraordinary – they're helping people here in Broad Channel and beyond. Ladies and gentlemen, Dan Mundy.

[Applause]

[Dan Mundy speaks]

[Applause]

**Mayor:** Okay. We're going to do on-topic questions followed by off-topic. Let's do on topic first, yes –

**Question:** Can you give us an update on the federal money and where it stands right now [inaudible] recovery?

**Mayor:** I'll start and then Bill, Dan, Amy – you decide who wants to jump in. I mean, look, we've been through three tranches, as they like to call them in the federal government. We've gotten a substantial commitment. We think we can work with that commitment to get the things done that we needed to get done. I think that's the simplest way of saying it. There's a lot now to implement – and sometimes the rules are more cumbersome than we'd like them to be, but we think we have the resources now to get done our core mission.

**Bill Goldstein, Senior Advisor, Recovery, Resiliency, and Infrastructure:** Yes. In fact, just the other day, the federal notice finally came out allocating the third tranche of money. We have to produce an action plan, which will be a public plan of how we plan to use that money, and there'll be public meetings around that. And we feel very confident and grateful that the federal government's come through with the amounts that we need and we're going to move forward on that basis. So, thanks.

**Mayor:** Alright. [inaudible]. You want to check your facts first? Hold on, we're going to do a little math. We'll be right there with you. Go ahead.

**Question:** Resilience is the top [inaudible] Build It Back, right?

**Mayor:** Sure.

**Question:** [inaudible] you said the Rockaway Ferry was only temporary [inaudible] long-term plan. When can we expect a real – something real [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Look, we are right now working on two things. We're working on a vision for the economic future of the Rockaways, which I said last week – there's a long history here and we have to try and address that history and create more economic opportunity on an ongoing basis. That plan we're working on. I'm not going to tell you whether it's going to be out next month or the one after, but it's something that we're working on as we speak. The ferry service question is bigger than any one part of the city. I think we are trying to figure out a vision for the long-term ferry service around the city and what makes sense. It's a tough mission because of the way funding works nowadays, but it's something that we need to think about how to take greater advantage of because of the growth that's going to be happening in this city over the coming decades.

**Question:** If the state offered the money, would you get in the way of it? [inaudible] Rockaway [inaudible] New York Rising money, the community itself [inaudible] wish-list. [inaudible] state money, would you get in the way of that?

**Mayor:** Let me separate what I was saying from what you're saying. What I'm saying is we need a long-term plan. We will have a long-term plan, because ferry service in this city will say a lot about our future – particularly a city that's projected to rise up to 9 million people over the next few decades – so that's part one. On the second part – look, I very much make it a point not to deal in hypotheticals, but I'll say if the state of New York has money they want to offer us, we're certainly going to work with them to see how we could use it, but I have not heard that offer to date. I would welcome it if it's there.

**Question:** How are you guys ensuring that these new starts and checks will be, you know, spread out throughout all areas affected by Sandy?

**Mayor:** Let me – I'll start and then turn it to you guys. When you have your math ready, you'll jump in too – we like to be accurate with our math. I'll let Amy go into the details, but the bottom line here is we set numerical goals on purpose, to keep ourselves accountable and to move the ball. So we move wherever there is a start ready to happen or wherever there's a reimbursement check ready to be sent. It's absolutely equal opportunity in that sense in terms of what's ready to go. Amy?

**Amy Peterson, Director, Housing Recovery Office:** Yeah – we’re in all of the communities, both with our offices, with our embedded offices in the elected officials’ offices, and then going to community meetings, and we keep an eye across all of the communities to ensure that projects are moving forward – and we’ve seen that happening in all of the communities. We feel like we’re reaching the Staten Island communities, Coney Island, Gerritsen Beach, and certainly the Queens communities that have been impacted. You can actually see by district on our Sandy tracker more information by location.

**Mayor:** Let me have Dan come up and do the previous question.

**Dan Zarrilli, Director, Office of Recovery & Resiliency:** [inaudible] just the question on the third tranche and how much money there is – it’s just shy of \$1 billion – about \$639 million for housing recovery in the third tranche and there’s another \$355 million for resiliency efforts – that’s \$335 million for a project on the Lower East Side, another \$20 million for additional planning and work in Hunts Point around our food distribution center. So – and the mayor just [inaudible] the Staten Island project – \$60 million was awarded to the state for a project in the five boroughs, not coming through our [inaudible].

**Mayor:** Pay attention, Dan. I’m watching.

**Zarrilli:** Yes.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, when you talk about the goals by the December, does that exhaust the need or do you have a projection of the need beyond December? And also, are there efforts to re-contact the thousands of people who left Build It Back in frustration? And are they now being talked to to come back in?

**Mayor:** I’ll let Amy speak to the second point, but let me go to the first point. So, the rough number of people who applied that we are dealing with across the different elements of Build It Back is 14,000. We’ve been working down through that 14,000-family figure, trying to get as much done as possible – so, again, the 1,000 starts by December 31, the 1,500 reimbursements checks – but then we just constantly keep moving. As you heard, a number of families have agreed on the next step – you know, the design or other next steps. So it’s just going to be constant motion. But our goal is, with everyone who’s applied, once we determine eligibility, we see them through to completion – whether it is a rebuild, whether it is a elevation, whether it’s repairs, whether it’s a reimbursement check, or a combination, we’re going to see them through to completion. So once someone is deemed eligible, we stick with that case until it’s done. Do you want to speak to the existing pool versus other folks?

**Peterson:** Yeah – so there are about 6,000 people that had withdrawn or are ineligible, and we are making sure that we reach out to all of them to let them know that if they want to get back in touch, they have that opportunity.

**Mayor:** Again, just to clarify – that is not the same as saying they will necessarily be eligible, but we want to certainly see what could be done.

**Question:** Is there a deadline [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** No, it’s ongoing.

**Question:** [inaudible] talking about 1,000 construction and 1,500 reimbursement checks by the end of the year. You know, at that pace, it could [inaudible] five, six years to get through all of them. I know you’re hiring more [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** [inaudible]

**Question:** So, I mean, the question is, I know you're hiring more contractors, but [inaudible] any kind of realistic estimate of how long this will all take?

**Mayor:** Yeah – so, a couple of things. First of all, we came in, we assembled our team, they went to work trying to figure out what was not working. That took a while – to retool the whole thing. That's what got us to the progress we've made so far. Now, there's a number of things being put in place to speed up that process – I'll let Amy talk a bit about the additional features right now that are going to speed up the pace even from what you've seen in the last week. Look, the area where I think we have the most assurance is in the area of the reimbursement checks. We are confident that process will be completed next year because of the speed with which this retooling of the effort is going on.

**Peterson:** On design and construction, we definitely need more design and construction capacity. We are not happy with the current pace and want to greatly significantly increase our design and construction capacity. We feel with the new RSP that we're putting out on the street in the coming weeks that we'll be able to make sure that the majority of homeowners are in design or construction in 2015.

**Mayor:** Can you explain the RSP?

**Peterson:** Yes, partnering with the Department of Design and Construction, we're putting out a community-based RSP that will bring the construction managers together with design teams, and contractors will be able to bid on specific projects from a pre-qualified list. This will really allow us to address some of the complicated issues, especially where there's a lot of row homes and other complicated neighborhood issues across the city.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** I have a favorite change – Amy Peterson.

[Laughter]

I think, with so much of life, you need a strong leader. You know, I mean, Amy can tell you about her favorite technical change, but I think this needed a leader who was going to go in there and bust heads and make things happen – and she's done it. She's really created that urgency. And the team, again, of Bill Goldstein, Dan Zarrilli, Amy Peterson – there's been a great cohesion between them about making sure the recovery efforts and the resiliency efforts are all moving together. But in terms of just taking a broken bureaucracy and forcing it into action, I give Amy that credit. Now you can give a more technical answer.

[Laughter]

**Peterson:** I'm going to give my three favorite changes. So, one was eliminating the income level and priority level – that was a huge obstacle in getting the additional federal funding – and doing that even before we got the additional federal funding on some of the categories has allowed us to move everybody forward; I think having a much deeper relationship with the communities and in the communities and with the community leaders and elected officials and really trying to come meet the homeowners where they are has been really important; And then adding some flexibility. The project – the program's not completely flexible but there were a lot of people who were stuck at the point when I got here and not sure if they were rebuild or elevate and couldn't, kind of, get out of a box – and we've tried to, as much as we can, give a homeowner the opportunity to make the choice that they want to move forward.

**Mayor:** Okay, on topic – yes?

**Question:** Regarding the Galimi's house, did you have a model for the design of it in terms of some other place in the nation where homes are typically elevated? And what's the height of it? And what was the standard for that height? And what can it survive?

**Mayor:** [inaudible] speak to the technical question.

**Zarrilli:** I can take a crack at some of that.

**Mayor:** We'll give you some of it and the rest we may need to get back to you on.

**Zarrilli:** So, on the nationwide models, I'm not sure that New York City has many models anywhere else in the country, so a lot of the solutions really have become unique here. But the standards that are applied here are based on the new building code changes that were put in place that require that all new homes – all elevated homes, any substantial alterations to structures – have to elevate beyond the 100-year flood plain on the latest FEMA maps. The city has already adopted the maps into its building code that will become effective for insurance purposes – but those are already in the code. Plus we've added two feet of [inaudible] to that for an additional – really an allowance for sea level rise and just contingency beyond the [inaudible] standard.

**Question:** What's the feet?

**Zarrilli:** It's different all over the city. So there's the – so it – and it is different all over the city based on the flood maps.

**Mayor:** But 12 feet here, Dan.

**Unknown 1:** Yeah, based on [inaudible] FEMA number [inaudible].

**Mayor:** So it's a higher standard than what it would've needed to be to meet Sandy – it's above that. It could withstand a storm greater than Sandy. On topic –

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** How what, now?

**Question:** [inaudible] established these goals [inaudible], but is it scientific or are you guys, you know –

**Mayor:** We have a dart board we use. Yes, it's – [laughs] – it is about what do we think is the highest – the highest number we can reach. We don't chose comfortable goals. We chose the number that we think is a stretch, but that we believe is within our reach. And last time we were pretty damn accurate in terms of the 500 and 500 on the construction starts and reimbursements. We managed to beat it a little bit in each case and – construction starts was, by Labor Day?

**Peterson:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** 535. Reimbursements was?

**Peterson:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** 543. So, we took a number that we thought was a stretch and we gunned the engines and we were able to get there. This time we're doing that again.



**Question:** For the Galimis – so when did the construction actually start at your house? And can you speak a little bit to what you’ve been dealing with between the storm and now – you know, where have you been staying and how you’ve been managing to, you know, [inaudible]?

**John Galimi:** We started construction in, like, August, like the first week in August. And, as you can see, we progressed pretty well. You know, we’re supposed to be in by Christmas. And when we got – when we lost the house through Sandy, we stayed at a friend’s house back in Ozone Park for a little while, and then we rented – the next town over, which is Howard Beach, we were there for a year. And then we moved closer, because this is where we live, this is where the kids are, this is their home, so we tried to get a little closer, which we did. So now we’re around the corner, and with a few months, we should be back home.

**Mayor:** Alright. [inaudible]

[Applause]

**Question:** [inaudible]. Can you tell us something concrete – a firm deadline, 2015, we can look forward to, where the [inaudible] economic boost that you’re talking about [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Well, again, we announce things when we have the firm commitment ready. I can tell you what I’m working on. I’m certainly working on speeding up the boardwalk. I’m working on job creation. Again, for not only the Rockaways but for the city, a bigger plan around ferries, which will be a long-term plan – and if we are so lucky as to find the way to do that, that’s going to be a long-term and funded plan. So there’s a lot of pieces, but the thing I am focused on, you know, specifically, that I think we have a crying need in the Rockaways is a consistent economic development plan. The one thing I’ll say that is true for the Rockaways – at least as much as other parts of the city, if not more – is that some of the other things we put in place – the affordable housing plan, the pre-k, afterschool – there’s a bunch of pieces that are certainly going to benefit, are benefiting, and will benefit the Rockaways at least in proportion to population, if not more so. So a lot of moving parts, but you can certainly – you’re going to be hearing a lot. We announce when we’re ready to announce, but you’ll be hearing a lot on economic development in particular. Okay. Off topic.

**Question:** [inaudible] leading a protest against the opera “The Death of Klinghoffer” at the Metropolitan Opera House. I wanted to know – do you agree with these [inaudible]? Do you think it’s appropriate for this opera to be produced by the –

**Mayor:** I really think we have to be very careful in a free society to respect that cultural institutions will portray works of arts, will put on operas, plays, that there’ll be art exhibits in museums – and in a free society we respect that. We don’t have to agree with what’s in the exhibit, but we agree with the right of the artist and cultural institution to put that forward to the public. The former mayor had a history of challenging cultural institutions when he disagreed with their content. I don’t think that’s the American way. I think the American way is to respect freedom of speech, simple as that.

**Question:** [inaudible] opera [inaudible] –

**Mayor:** I haven’t seen the opera and I don’t want to judge something I haven’t seen. I think there is a serious problem today in the world that has nothing to do with this opera, and I’ve spoken about it many times. There is an anti-Semitism problem in this world today, particularly in Western Europe, that worries me greatly – that’s where my focus is. I don’t think an opera is what the focal point should be right now. I haven’t seen it so I haven’t commented on it. I’ve heard all sorts of views about it. The only thing I know about the opera is that the Metropolitan Opera has the right to show it.

**Question:** We wrote about the city having paid more than \$200,000 to store the belongings of a homeless individual long-term and just wondering if you believe there should be any kind of limits to that program or if you might be [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** As you know, we are compelled by state law in that area, and I certainly have concerns, because our focus is on housing people not belongings. So we have a huge challenge with homelessness, we're doing a lot to address it, and I fundamentally believe our affordable housing plan, as it builds out, is going to be one of the most basic ways of addressing the homelessness crisis. So I'd like to see resources go to people not belongings, but we have to figure out how to navigate that state law.

**Question:** Mayor, can you talk about how you ensure transparency when people in the administration are able to use private emails to communicate? And also what account do you use when you correspond?

**Mayor:** With folks in City Hall?

**Question:** [inaudible] city business, whether it's –

**Mayor:** On city business, I use my city account. You know, there's – again, sometimes people either accidentally use their personal account or sometimes it's a personal email that's not city business – and they have every right to have a life outside of City Hall. But I think for the vast majority of us, we use our city accounts – maybe from time to time, not – but for the vast majority of us the vast majority of the time, we use our city accounts.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, Rachel Noerdlinger's boyfriend invoked her name, your wife's name, and invoked the race card to try to get out of paying parking tickets, basically, I think, you know, basically saying that he was like the victim of stop-and-frisk for parking tickets. I wonder your reaction to that and your reaction to his invoking –

**Mayor:** He's not a public servant – I really have nothing to say about him. And I think I've spoken sufficiently to this topic.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, there have been some reports about JPMorgan Chase lobbying your administration [inaudible] try to get tax breaks. I was wondering if you could first comment on the substance of that? And secondly, on your [inaudible], if that's going to help them or have any [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** No. Harold is a dear friend, someone I think the world of, but you know, we all separate in our lives all the time, you know, our personal relationships with people from the work we have to do. The fact is – and I think this was reported well the other day – there was a discussion put forward to the city of a substantial amount of subsidy and, as Deputy Mayor Glen made very clear publicly, that's not on the table from the city's point of view. But we value JPMorgan as a major employer in this city for sure and we certainly look forward to their long-term presence here. And if they're looking to switch locations and we can find appropriate ways to be helpful, we certainly will.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, just to follow up – to be clear – so you do not think JPMorgan deserves a tax subsidy for –

**Mayor:** The plan that was put forward, as I just said, was in excess of \$1 billion, and that's a non-starter.

**Question:** [inaudible] if I may, what assurances can you give that [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** When we say in a public forum – I mean, again, emails about the work of government day to day and the policy-making process are not, you know, put on the internet, you know? That is an internal process that people do, again, overwhelmingly on their City Hall email. So I think it's pretty straightforward.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, on the JPMorgan – is it a non-starter because of your pledge to reduce subsidies – public tax subsidies – for wealthy corporations? Is that what's driving your –

**Mayor:** Well, I think there's a lot of different factors at once. I certainly philosophically believe the history of subsidies has not been productive and I've made clear there's a lot that I don't believe in. But there was a specific – again, I try very very strenuously not to deal with hypotheticals when we're talking about a real live situation. A proposal was put forward. That wasn't a proposal that we could live with, but again, we're still talking about any way that we think we can appropriately be helpful because they're a major employer and we certainly value their presence.

**Question:** [inaudible] Astoria Cove development [inaudible]. Do you [inaudible]?

**Mayor:** Well, this ball game has just begun. The – so the first thing is, no one should judge until the process is over, but second – you know, this is one of the first cases where mandatory inclusionary zoning is coming into play because of our change of the policy – and there will be affordability and it will be very substantial affordability at a site that might not have had any. So I'm very satisfied that, one, there's going to be affordable housing where it wouldn't have necessarily been before; two, it's going to be very substantial by the time this process ends.

**Question:** [inaudible]

**Mayor:** Well, any time that we think people are being forced out of homes that are legally theirs, we try to act. And I know HPD is looking into the situation. We also in many cases need the state to act with us. We've lost a huge amount of affordable housing over the years because of people ending up leaving affordable units because they legally became unaffordable or they legally left Mitchell-Lama programs or whatever it might be. But there's a second problem – when people have been forced out or harassed – and we don't accept that and we're going to use every power we have to stop that. Again, we often need the state to be our partner in that, but if we find any instance of that in this case, we'll do everything we can to stop it.

**Question:** Mr. Mayor, I know this is an irritating topic, but I want to return to –

**Mayor:** Thank you for offering it so kindly.

**Question:** I just want to ask you about the use of the first lady's name being invoked in that hearing about –

**Mayor:** You know, again, I've said everything I'm going to say. And this is a guy who does not work for us and I'm just not going to speak to what a boyfriend does – I've said that before. There's just nothing to say about it.

**Question:** He's representing somebody who works for you and you –

**Mayor:** No, he's not. He's on his own time and he shouldn't have done that – and that's all I have to say about it. Thank you, everyone.

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