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**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR ERIC ADAMS TOURS THE SNUG HARBOR CULTURAL
CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT**

Mayor Eric Adams: So, excited. This is a real exciting moment for us. What is fascinating about our administration is that I kept a list throughout my entire campaign and my time in government. And I sort of built a wish list of people I wanted to hold positions in government. Because the life that we are living, I wanted people who live that life, and nothing personifies that more than the role of deputy commissioner or commissioner of our Cultural Affairs. I wanted someone that understood the fullness of what we need to do with our cultural institutions. And I know people find it hard to believe, but cultural institutions are more than the Museum Mile in Manhattan. In all of these outer boroughs, we have amazing cultural opportunities and you don't have to only want to snug up to be on Snug Harbor. But this is a unbelievable space. I came out here some time ago to attend a wedding. And when I walked in, I saw the ceremony. I said, "Wow, maybe I'll get married."

[...]

Mayor Adams: But this is a beautiful place and it is a jewel that has been hidden for a long time. And by doing the professionalizing, the constructions, having all of our teams come together and utilize these important spaces where we're doing music, culture, and art together.

The heart and soul of the city is in our cultural institutions. Staten Island cultural groups asked for our support and what was interesting, we heard them, we heard them. We were in the Bronx yesterday. We're now here on Staten Island, to say that we are listening loud and clear, and we are giving and allocating 3 million dineros. Moolah. Money. Dollars. No matter what language you said, it is in good sound. And the goal is to be part of the interior restoration, lighting, and structural reinforcement for this beautiful place. And this is part of the larger capital amount that I'm going to have our amazing, amazing deputy... I keep saying deputy.

Commissioner Laurie Cumbo, Department of Cultural Affairs: I feel like you're giving me a promotion.

Mayor Adams: Our amazing Cultural Affairs commissioner. She had her museum. She knew what it was. She was struggling in the outer boroughs to get those capital dollars in. She came with a real ball of energy on how do we improve our cultural institutions? And I'm just really proud to have her as part of our team leading this initiative. And I want to bring up our Commissioner Laurie Cumbo. Commissioner?

Commissioner Cumbo: I am so excited to be here. This is such an honor and a privilege, and it's especially exciting to me because I am day three in being a new Staten Island resident. You didn't know that? That's why I brought you out here. Talking about snug and getting snugly. A very handsome gentleman invited me to Staten Island about eight years ago and I enjoyed the experience so much that I decided we would get married, have a baby, and buy a house, and become a Staten Island resident. So Snug Harbor does amazing things. Even got our mayor talking about wedding bells. So that really makes this space so special.

Commissioner Cumbo: And I want to give a special shout out to all of the summer youth employment students that are here today. Yay. You are what makes this space so very special. And I just wanted to come out and celebrate.

Commissioner Cumbo: I'm doing, as a new commissioner, a five borough tour, going to each of our boroughs to celebrate the incredible commitment of funding that our mayor, Eric Adams, has made a priority of this administration. Many of you know, as a result of the pandemic, and so many of the challenges that we have had over the past few years. Any other administration would say times are tough. And when times are tough, typically you always know what goes on the chopping board first. The arts and culture are always the first to go. People see it as some type of superfluous activity that doesn't really matter to the fiber of the city. And Mayor Eric

Adams has said, "We are not cutting the city's budget as it pertains to art and culture. We are not maintaining the city's budget of art and culture. We are increasing the city's budget for art and culture." With a \$45 million increase to expense funding all across the City of New York. That is the largest investment ever in New York City's expense budget.

Commissioner Cumbo: And I'm so proud. It also followed the capital budget where we have at this time \$127 million in capital infrastructure in the City of New York. Largest infrastructure investment by any New York City mayor. And when Mayor Eric Adams appointed me to this position, I said, "You are certainly going to go down in history as the greatest cultural mayor of all time."

Commissioner Cumbo: And so that's why we are here today. Staten Island, we are from another major important borough in Brooklyn. That's where we grew up and raised, but we understand the struggle that many of the outer boroughs have had in terms of attention, investment, and resources. And that's essentially why we're here today, to let the outer boroughs know that we are really the new hip hop and happening thing, and we are part of the inner circle, if you will. And we are going to make sure that we continue to invest in our outer boroughs because hey, we all pay taxes and each and every one of our communities deserve equal investment in our prospective communities.

Commissioner Cumbo: So at this time, I want to make sure that you recognize and know our next speaker, Snug Harbor President and CEO, Jessica Vodoor. Come on up.

Jessica Baker Vodoor, President and CEO, Snug Harbor Cultural Center: Thank you so much Commissioner Cumbo and Mayor Adams and Borough President Fosella for being here today, and for your incredible investment and partnership here in Staten Island's cultural community.

Vodoor: My name's Jessica Baker Vodoor. I'm the Snug Harbor Cultural Center President and CEO. And I'm so delighted to welcome you all here to the steps of our historic Music Hall in celebration of New York City's historic investment in Staten Island arts and culture. I'd also just like to say a quick thanks to some of our local officials who are here with us today as well. Our friends from Council Member Kamillah Hanks' office and Representative Nicole Malliotakis' office. Thanks for being here with us today.

Vodoor: I just have to say we are so grateful and enormously privileged to be the recipient of this amazing capital award this year. Thank you for fighting to ensure five borough access to culture through your investment in Staten Island. Thank you for recognizing that the significant role that these Staten Island cultural organizations play in our local community and in New York City at large.

Vodoor: We're also so happy to be joined today by some of the 90 Summer Youth Employment Program participants that are working side by side with our team here at Snug Harbor this summer. Thanks to you all for your investment this summer and your hard work in making Staten Island a vibrant and beautiful place. And Mr. Mayor, thank you for your commitment to our community's future. These wonderful young people.

Vodoor: I'm also here today with a number of my fellow cultural leaders from the Staten Island Museum, the Staten Island Children's Museum, the Staten Island Zoo, Historic Richmond Town, The Noble Maritime Collection, and The St. George Theater. These fantastic cultural organizations welcome hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. And we provide employment to more than a thousand New Yorkers of all ages and backgrounds. Our cultural organizations merge our city's history with the wonder and possibility of the future through world class exhibitions and the possibility of the future.

Vodoor: We are stewarding spaces of community connection, reflection, and healing. Our museums, our theaters, our historic sites, our gardens, and our zoos lift up our community with education and workforce development initiatives that build bridges of opportunity to the future for New York City's next generation of future cultural leaders and advocates.

Vodoor: Snug Harbor's deeply honored this year to receive a city capital appropriation of \$3.4 million for our Music Hall's auditorium restoration. These funds will support new seating, assisted listening, and accessibility improvements for Music Hall attendees, and we'll make upgrades to the audience's air conditioning filtration systems in the Music Hall's main auditorium.

Vodoor: We're also deeply appreciative of the vision to invest in our storm water resiliency, drainage, and campus infrastructure. Thank you, Mayor Adams.

Vodoor: On behalf of all of us here at Snug Harbor, thank you to the entire New York City administration for your investment in the future of Snug Harbor Cultural Center and Botanical Garden. In celebration of this historic day and this historic support, we also just wanted to celebrate a historic collaboration that we're launching right here at Snug Harbor. Our entire campus community has come together to collaborate and announce a new discovery pass at Snug Harbor that will be launching at the end of this month. For the first time ever, an adult visitor will now be able to purchase a single visitor ticket which will allow them access to the Staten Island Museum, the Noble Maritime Collection, the New House Center For Contemporary Art, the New York Chinese Scholars Garden, as well as our 14 beautiful botanical gardens.

Vodoor: The diversity and breadth of Staten Island's cultural offerings should be experienced by everyone. So I invite every New Yorker to come and visit Staten Island's cultural assets. There is something here for everyone and you will be amazed what you find when you visit. I wish you all a very vibrant summer and filled with everything that all of these cultural partners provide. Thank you for joining us all here today.

Commissioner Cumbo: So much excitement is happening and I'm so excited, at this time, to recognize the importance of partnership. All that you're seeing and all that's happening could not happen if all branches of government don't come together. It's imperative that we create these relationships between the City Council, our borough president, our mayor, our governor, and our state and senate representatives. When we work together, our entire boroughs win. So it's important that we continue those strategic relationships to make sure that the next generation who's represented here have all of the things that they are truly deserving of.

Commissioner Cumbo: At this time, I'd like to bring up Staten Island's borough president, who needs no introduction. Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together for our borough president, Borough President Fosella.

[...]

Commissioner Cumbo: That was like a drop the mic statement. You just put it all together because that really sums it up. But I would say since I've become the commissioner over the last four months, there has been no state senator who has called me more than our State Senator Diane Savino, because she wants to make sure that Snug Harbor receives adequate support, receives state funding, makes sure that the funding that she has allocated is realized. She is a

strong champion and a strong fighter for Snug Harbor. And I want to bring to the podium, your New York state senator, Diane Savino.

[...]

Commissioner Cumbo: We are preparing now to go on our walking tour to see all of the great organizations that we've been able to support. I too want to just recognize Snug Harbor, the Staten Island Museum, the Staten Island Children's Museum. Dina, you're going to get really tired of us. We are going to be so there.

Commissioner Cumbo: And I also want to recognize the Noble Maritime Museum. And I also want to recognize the St George Theater, which I've seen some incredible productions. We just saw The Blues Brothers, which was awesome. We had a great time and before that, their Christmas show, and so many others. So always have a good time at the St. George Theater. It's a very special place.

Commissioner Cumbo: I just want to give a special shout out to my team. Are they all here? The Department of Cultural Affairs team, raise your hand. Yay. Ryan, Kathy, Lance. I see Terry. I see Michael. I see a lot of folks and I also want to shout out to Andy who does incredible work. And we have our DDC commissioner here, Commissioner Foley, who's doing incredible work and brought his whole hard hat team. DCLA, We've got to get like an outfit that we just travel in, like this. Different colors, maybe pink and blue or something like that. I don't know.

Commissioner Cumbo: But we are going to begin this tour and thank you so much. I want to again, thank our mayor, Eric Adams, for truly representing what he spoke about on this campaign. This is a realization of promises made and promises kept.

Commissioner Cumbo: Thank you so much and let's go on this walking tour.

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