

Transcript: Mayor Eric Adams Holds Media Availability

June 1, 2022

Question: What are your thoughts on the governor's gun legislation? And do you think you think it was smart?

Mayor Eric Adams: Good stuff. The micro stamping we've been trying to fight to get that for a long time and it's about using technology. It's a good bill. Bulletproof vests. Some good stuff in there. There's more we can do and it's a combination of that legislation, technology, and enforcement. Those are the things that must come together as we start the process of stop feeding the crime. So it's a combination. You hear me say it all the time, many rivers that feed the sea of violence and that's a good, some good stuff that I think should pass and I support all ten points [inaudible].

Question: Mr. Mayor. I know you're asking about mayoral control a little bit but I wonder if you could be more specific. Do you see two year, an extension of two years, as limiting your scope at all?

Mayor Adams: My job, and I say this over and over again, my job is to present my case to Albany. I don't control the lawmakers. They will come back after I present my case. I did a good job in doing so throughout the weekend. We talked about it. The various reasons why we should have the control that's needed. So we're going to find out what they're going to do in the outcome. And we're going to rock and roll no matter what's the outcome.

Question: You say this is a city of yes. Right? And now you're talking about development. You're talking about land use, changes, and also about carbon-free. And yesterday there was a project in Harlem, One45, the developers withdrew the project because they couldn't get support even though they were going to build in Harlem close to 500 units of affordable housing and also a geothermal system that would feed to many of the NYCHA developments around the area. What was your office's role in that? And is there a problem with the execution with the things that you're saying your administration wants to do?

Mayor Adams: I'm not sure why the developer withdrew and only the developer could tell you that and if they stated why they withdrew please let me know because—

Question: Well, lack of support from the Council, right?

Mayor Adams: Again, is that what the developer said?

Question: Well, that's what happened. The Council was not going to support it and they needed a zoning change.

Mayor Adams: Okay. Again, the developer – I haven't heard from the developer or what happened there. If they sat down and wanted to see how we could come in and assist, I have not heard that. So unless they come out and say why they withdrew. It wasn't voted down, but they withdrew. I don't know the answer to that question. They would have to come and let me know that.

Question: Mr. Mayor, OMB and Comptroller Lander came out with an estimation that the city's going to have \$4.5 billion more personal tax revenue coming in. Do you plan on spending that or putting that in a rainy day fund?

Adams: I'm not answering people who just yells out. You tell me who's [inaudible] that question, okay?

Question: Mayor. Hi.

Mayor Adams: Yes. How are you Sally?

Question: Good. How are you?

Mayor Adams: Good.

Question: I just wanted to follow up on Juan's question. You know, the City Council has kind of historically been an impediment at times because of the local control role to developments. The one yesterday, a number of developments under Mayor de Blasio. Actually, when he tried to do his zoning text change, it did get through, but it was pretty

hard and it required a lot of negotiations. So I was wondering what your approach is to the City Council and if you think there needs to be a change to this role that allows... it's an unwritten rule that allows an individual member to basically veto a project.

Mayor Adams: So look at what I laid out today. I laid out zoning, but I also laid out the city's agencies. When you heard the questions out here, you heard about not able to get a sprinkler inspection. You heard about the bureaucracy. What we're – saying the City Council has a role, but we have a role as a city with all of our agencies. Those are great impediments. I hear all the time. We have a tree in front of our construction sites, it takes Parks a long time to move it. Department of Buildings not coming in and doing inspection. So before I complain about what the City Council is not doing right, we need to get our house in order. My city agencies must be more pro-business. They must get out of the way with the bureaucracy and red tape. Then we need to say to our City Council person, how do we work together? Like the up-zoning we want to do on Atlantic Avenue with Crystal Hudson, what we want to do in the Bronx. So, but the first order business, I must get the city agencies right so that we can get the numbers that we want onto and go after those important projects.

Question: Mr. Mayor. Sorry about yelling earlier. My question has to do with personal income tax revenue. OMB and Comptroller Lander came out with new estimates that the city's going to have \$4.5 billion more in tax revenue than it originally anticipated over the next two years. Do you plan on spending that money or do you plan on putting that in a rainy day fund?

Mayor Adams: Well, we went from stable to optimistic based on the actions of what I did in the budget. And you know some people, as soon as they get a dollar, they have – it burns a hole in their pocket. And that's not what I'm going to do. We have union contracts that are coming up. We have the Healthcare Stabilization Fund that's going to cost us billions, and we must be smart with taxpayers' dollars. And so we are going to make sure we put money into our rainy day fund and our reserves to be prepared for all of those contracts, for all of those emergencies. Wall Street, we were fortunate this year, but we don't know what our outcome will be in the future. So we must be smart. Some of the money we're going to spend on new agency, new needs, but we're going to be smart with every taxpayer dollar.

Question: Mayor Adams. Hi, good morning.

Mayor Adams: Katie, how are you?

Question: I'm good, thanks. So I know you spoke a lot about this, this is the city of yes. But on the other hand, a lot of city employees say that when it comes to any flexibility about working even one day a week from home to make it something that they were accustomed to during COVID, it's a hard no, we saw that note sent by your Chief of Staff Frank Carone. Would you ever consider any kind of realm of possibility, sitting down to continue with the city of yes, to be a little bit more flexible with city workers who are asking for just a little bit of flexibility when it comes to their in-person work schedule?

Mayor Adams: Well, think about this for a moment. Every time I walk in City Hall, I see you working. I tell city employees of – I want you to look at everyday New Yorkers. The train conductor can't do it from home. The school safety agent can't do it from home. I'm trying to fill up office buildings and I'm telling J.P. Morgan, Goldman Sachs, I'm telling all of them, listen, I need your people back into office so we can build the ecosystem. How does that look? That city employees are home while I'm telling everyone else it's time to get back to work. When you go to lower Manhattan with all of those city offices, if they remain empty, Duane Reade is not going to have the customer. The cafe is not going to have the customer. City employees should be leading the charge of saying New York can be back. And so that is what I'm saying to New Yorkers.

Mayor Adams: It's time for all of us to be on Team New York, to get our city back up and operating and it starts with city employees. And so there's going to come a time we may say that one day a week we may do some type of different version. We know that, post-COVID is a different environment, but you're not going to be home for five days a week unless there's some circumstances that require that. We want to be humane, but it's time for the city to get up and operated because it's a financial ecosystem that we're all a part of.

Question: Oh.

Mayor Adams: You're so surprised.

[Laughter]

Question: Okay. Mr. Mayor, it's back to mayoral control of school.

Mayor Adams: Yes.

Question: And do you think Albany lawmakers are taking [inaudible] from the teachers' union which [fairs] that you and Mr. Banks having too much control over teachers and the principal?

Mayor Adams: I have – I'm not in the heads of Albany lawmakers. We have had great conversations over the weekend. I communicated with the speaker and the majority leader as well as some of the colleagues, my former colleagues up there. And so we presented our case. Now it's time for them to make the decision on what's best to do in the upcoming school year. And we're excited about the upcoming school year. And I'm sure they're going to let us know. I think they extended session until either Thursday, tomorrow, Saturday, and based on what's happening, we have to govern the city based on what Albany carries out.

Question: Mr. Mayor. Hi, how're you?

Mayor Adams: How are you?

Question: Good, thanks. I'm curious, you rolled a very ambitious set of zoning proposals today. Can you tell us more about when you envision them being passed or implemented given the urgency of some of the problems that you talked about today?

Mayor Adams: Well, I have a great person, Dan Garodnick, former council person, who I still don't know how he was able to do the One Vanderbilt zoning. He's a magic man. And so we're going to push as quickly as possible. Some of this stuff is going to take the three years to get what we want to accomplish, but there's an urgency in housing, there's an urgency in employment, there's an urgency on what we want to do around making this the biotech center, life sciences. So there are real things we want to accomplish and we know that there's a process. There's a ULURP process that we have to go through, but we are going to be on the fast track and that's why we have Dan here to make sure that we can just get it done.

Question: Do you know which of them that you're going to pursue first? Which of the three?

Daniel Garodnick, Director of New York City Planning Commission and Chair of the City Planning Commission: [Inaudible] Yeah, so we're going to start with the Zero Carbon Zoning. We believe that we can move that the fastest. And so that's where we expect.

Question: Thank you.

Question: Thank you. Hi, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: Hi, Dana.

Question: So as far as your proposal to ease the ability for landlords to convert office to residential, do you have a target for how many square feet and isn't sort of your embrace of the proposal like a concession that the way we work has changed and that we don't need as many offices as we do?

Mayor Adams: Well, what we're finding, based on my conversations with Kathy Wylde from the Partnership and other entities, what we're finding that people are getting smaller footprints, they're using different methods of shared spaces. So there's a new energy, and that's why we're putting together a working group to see post-COVID work. What does life look like post-COVID? We don't want to stumble into it. And so we learned after September 11th, I was speaking with some of the leaders that were part of the rezoning during that time that we're going to bring them into the room and say, "How do we do this? What are the lessons learned?" And so we know footprints are decreasing, but there's still a need to have the central business district. And what that looks like is part of what the working group is going to help us understand and see, how do we retrofit this area to look at the need for affordable housing? There's a lot of opportunities here and we're going to be in a place of yes, as we figure this out together.

Question: Thank you. Back to mayoral control, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Adams: Yes, sir.

Question: You mentioned that professional naysayers in Albany are kind of to blame for this two year proposal that you don't agree with. Who are these professional

naysayers? I mean, this is a plan that's backed by the Senate Education Committee chair. It's backed by most leadership in Albany. So who's these naysayers?

Mayor Adams: Okay. I did not say two years, one year, three year, four years. I did not say that because of anything that came out of Albany. That is not what I said. I just – It's always fascinating to me how you mix up my words. You know that?

Question: That's what you said.

Mayor Adams: But look at the tape. That's not what I said. That's not what I said. And you, it's just always interesting. Your headlines, how you mix up my words. There's something called journalistic integrity.

Question: So what naysayers are you referring to then if you're saying that I'm mixing up your words?

Mayor Adams: Well, look at the tape. There are people in government that I believe are professional naysayers, and I don't have to do name calling. You could just do an examination and then you can make your determination or you can write it the way you want like you always do.