

THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
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CONTACT: pressoffice@cityhall.nyc.gov, (212) 788-2958

**TRANSCRIPT: MAYOR DE BLASIO DELIVERS REMARKS ANNOUNCING CITY
SECURED MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN 2017 THAN IN ANY PRIOR YEAR**

Jasper Hurst: Good morning, everyone. I want to introduce you to the Mayor of New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio.

[Applause]

Mayor Bill de Blasio: Do you want to do any of that, or not?

Hurst: No, that's alright.

Mayor: Okay. Alright. I'll say some of it for him. Jasper – Jasper Hurst. And just for spelling that's H-U-R-S-T everyone, 79 almost 80 years old –

Hurst: Yes, 80 in October.

Mayor: And doing great. And Jasper and I have been talking about his life here in this city. Came up here at the age of 17 from Fayetteville, North Carolina. Lived on a farm as a child, came to New York City seeking opportunity and knew that his prospects would be very limited if he stayed home.

So, he came here like so many people have over the generations at the age of 17 in 1956, and made his way, became a truck driver, did really well here in this city. And like so many other seniors the challenge for Jasper was how would he be able to afford this city that he's been a part of now for over 60 years, how would he be able to stay in the city that was his home?

And it was such an honor to be upstairs Jasper when he signed the lease on that beautiful apartment, and I had the honor of giving him the keys. And now a new chapter in his life is beginning, and he's going to have an affordable place to live for many years ahead.

Let's applaud Jasper.

[Applause]

Hurst: Can I read –

Mayor: You can, sure. Feel free.

Hurst: Good morning, again. My name is Jasper Hurst, 79 years old. I moved to New York more than 60 years ago from North Carolina. I am a retired truck driver [inaudible]. In my time I have seen lots of changes in this city including now – excuse me – afford this rent. Today I am here to welcome and introduce you to the Mayor of New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio.

And I can tell you a little bit about my affordable housing. It's so important for me. For 42 years I lived just about 15 blocks away. I lived there with my common law wife who died three years ago and her child and they rent the apartment.

My granddaughter is working to take over the lease which my name was never on and which I don't have a right to. More than that [inaudible] granddaughter to have her own life and apartment for her own self. And for me to have a safe and comfortable place to live. Today I am thankful.

I have heart troubles. I had never – I had two operations and I am not supposed to lift anything. This is the place for me that is brand new. It is a special building for seniors and is a God send for me. I am so grateful for affordable housing about a year ago. I wanted it a long ago and partly because I wanted to stay in my neighborhood.

I wanted to stay where I'm known. [Inaudible] process of affordable apartment more than one year ago. I was never – but then I got a call that I had a place to call home and today as you know I signed my lease. It was worth the wait.

Now Mr. Mayor, I thank you for your focusing on seniors and affordable housing, and I welcome you and –

Mayor: [Inaudible]

[Laughter]

Hurst: [Inaudible] to you.

Mayor: Alright, thank you so much.

Hurst: Alright.

Mayor: Congratulations.

Well, Jasper, as I said upstairs, welcome home. I am so happy for you and it's good to see a hard working New Yorker who has contributed to life in this city get the housing he needs and the housing he deserves.

That is what today is all about. It's focusing on how more and more New Yorkers get the affordable housing they need. We came here four years ago, we understood there was an affordability crisis that had to be confronted and would take a very big and ambitious plan to

address it. We knew that the people of this city demanded more action on affordability and we intended from the very beginning to give it to them.

The mandate was clear. So many people in this city feared displacement. I heard it wherever I went and they were looking for solutions. They were looking for something that changed the status quo we were living.

We understood we had to do something very different or else New York City would slip away from too many people and it wouldn't be the same place anymore.

So, the plan we put together was audacious. It was meant to be stretch goal from the beginning and we intended to meet that goal. I will tell you there were many naysayers. There were many people who said the goal was too ambitious. There were some who said the goal was this close to insane but we persevered because the times demanded it.

I want to say to those naysayers and those who said it could be done, they were wrong. The goals that we set have been achieved.

In 2017 – I am very happy to report that in the year 2017 we financed the most affordable apartments in the history of New York City in any one year. Congratulations to all who are part of that great effort.

[Applause]

And I want to say at the outset the folks here who led this effort deserve tremendous praise – our Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, our Housing Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer, and our HDC President Eric Enderlin. But their teams also, a lot of people who you may not get to meet but have worked so hard at this, these are real unsung heroes of New York City, to put together this much housing this quickly for people who needed it is an example of public servants doing something extraordinary and that changes people's lives fundamentally.

Think about what Jasper just told you. After years and years of working hard, he now has security. He knows he is in a place he will be able to afford for decades to come. He also knows that now his granddaughter will have a chance for affordable housing, and as he said, to live a life of her own.

This is amazing when you can change people's lives like this and a lot of great people at HPD and HDC and other agencies participated in getting us to this day. So, I just want – I know some of them are here, others couldn't be but let's have everyone applaud them and applaud each other for this incredible effort.

[Applause]

I also want to thank our host Michelle Neugebauer of the Cypress Hills Development Corporation that put together this beautiful building. Congratulations to Michelle and everyone at Cypress Hills.

[Applause]

And we've had a lot of support from our elected officials and I know here representing Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez is Evelyn Cruz. Thank you so much for joining us.

[Applause]

So this number – almost 25,000, almost 25,000 apartments financed in one year is really extraordinary. That means for tens of thousands of people the number one expense in their life is finally addressed and they'll be able to live in peace and security in this city.

We've done now four years of this work and the four-year total of apartments financed – 88,000 at this point, almost 88,000 have been reached in the last four years. It's extraordinary and it continues to keep us ahead of schedule on our goal of creating and preserving 300,000 affordable apartments by 2026.

This means over 750,000 New Yorkers will have affordable housing who did not have it four years ago will have it more and more with every passing month. And I like to give you those examples to help make it vivid.

The number of New Yorkers who will get affordable housing who did not have it before under this plan, over 750,000 people, is more than the entire population of Boston, Massachusetts. Quite impressive what this team has done.

Now, an important point is how many people have already benefited over the last four years. It's important to talk in terms of the numbers for financing apartments of starting construction or finishing construction. All those things matter but the thing that I think we need to talk about right away is how many people are already in the affordable housing since we started.

Well, that number is 163,905 New Yorkers who four years ago did not have affordable housing, now have it. 163,905 people.

And that has been achieved with a very aggressive effort to preserve affordable housing in place and to make sure it will stay affordable for decades in addition to building new.

Now, New Yorkers who are watching this press conference or reading about it will say to themselves, "Okay how does this work? How do I get a chance at affordable housing? How do I get to experience what Jasper just experienced and sign that lease and get those keys?"

That's what we're here to talk about today. There's a lottery process and we are making it simpler and simpler for people to apply. And the application process has been in many ways made easier.

That's what we want people to understand so those who need affordable housing know that it's there and they can apply. It's as simple as calling 3-1-1 or going to our new Housing portal, nyc.gov/LongLiveNY. And I think that name says it all. It means both that people can have long lives here in New York with the security of knowing they have affordable housing but it also means long live the New York we love, a place for everyone, a place for people of all backgrounds, of people of different economic statuses all living together in one city.

We're doing a lot more than just putting shovels in the ground. We are putting keys in the hands of New Yorkers who need affordable housing. We're making sure they can keep that affordable housing for the long term. This is how you change people's lives.

And that commitment to ensuring that people can stay long term well, it's the new affordable housing, it's the apartments we preserve but it's also making sure that people don't get evicted who shouldn't be evicted.

It's making sure people are not harassed. It's making sure they have the protections they deserve. You can get that legal help by calling 3-1-1. It's making sure that our seniors who qualify for a rent increase exemption, disabled folks who qualify, or homeowners who are senior disabled for qualify for a property tax increase exemption that they can take advantage of what's there for them now.

But we know tens of thousands of people still don't know about it. We want to make it easier for them to get the information they need and to sign up for these benefits. It all ends with the same idea – whatever it takes to keep people in affordable housing or get them to affordable housing.

All of these pieces come together for the same goal, again, on any of those needs. If you're fighting an eviction, if you're trying to find out if you can get a rent increase exemption or a property tax increase exemption, new affordable housing, or preserving the affordable housing you have already call 3-1-1 or go to the new portal – nyc.gov/LongLiveNY.

So, this is about human beings in the final analysis. The numbers are very powerful but I have always said to the team and I know this is the spirit that they work in – every new apartment means a family that is now secure and we need to think about this apartment by apartment, family by family.

We gave you that exact number of how many people have been served so far. In the coming days that number will grow again and then grow again and grow again and that means yet another family got the help they needed. That's what our mission is and that is how we keep New York, New York.

I want to just finish on this point before I give you a couple words in Spanish.

We love this place. We have to protect it. There is a magic to New York that comes from being a place for everyone. It will not stay a place for everyone unless we continue to deepen these aggressive efforts to create affordable housing and protect the affordable housing that we have.

That is what we celebrate today.

In Spanish –

[Mayor de Blasio speaks in Spanish]

With that I want to turn to a man who's been a crucial ally in this effort both in the neighborhoods that he represents and also in the City Council as a whole. And he will be even

more central to our efforts now as the new Chair of the Housing and Buildings Committee in the City Council, Council member Robert Cornegy.

[Applause]

[...]

Thank you very much, Robert.

[Applause]

Okay, let's take questions about affordable housing and then we will move to other topics. Any questions about affordable housing? Yes.

Question: The numbers when you said that almost 88,000 financed in the last four years. Do you know how many have actually opened that you – in those last four years who are living in them?

Mayor: I'll turn to Maria. So, again, emphasizing that 163,000 number was people, just first of all. Just want to make sure we're all speaking the same language. That was how many New Yorkers have been served who are actually in the apartments either because they have been preserved or they have been built and now occupied. So, that's the overall number of human beings.

Now, let's talk about –

Department of Housing Preservation and Development Commissioner Maria Torres-Springer: [Inaudible] what we call completion numbers and so since the start of the administration the total is 65,000 that breaks up to about 16,000 for new construction about 49,000 for preservation.

Mayor: Apartments.

Commissioner Torres-Springer: Correct.

Mayor: Yes, Mara.

Question: Do we have any breakdown in terms of that 65,000, how many were for seniors versus veterans versus families or single people?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: So, we do have demographics on that and we'd be happy to follow up specifically for those units that were marketed through our lottery system.

Mayor: And as you know, Mara, in the last budget we added additional focus on seniors, on veterans, and obviously worked to reduce some of the income levels as will with the \$2 billion we put into the last budget.

Commissioner Torres-Springer: And to just give a couple of highlights if that's helpful because we do certainly take the work to help vulnerable populations very, very seriously. Of the

total 87,000 that have been financed to date, the number of senior homes is 5,500 and for formerly homeless households, that number is 7,200. Those are both numbers that are – we're financing at a faster clip than we ever have before.

Mayor: Okay, David?

Question: Two questions. It appears that in the numbers [inaudible] the City spent \$1.1 billion last year that's out of \$3.3 billion total of City dollars that are going this program. So, that looks like at least from these numbers that the spending has increased [inaudible] deals that the City is putting forward or [inaudible] more affordability or some combination of the two?

Deputy Mayor for Housing and Economic Development Alicia Glen: It's a combination of several things. One is we're doing more, right. So the more units you do the more total number of dollars you're spending. And then also recently we have made some programmatic changes which increase some of the amount of subsidy level particularly to compensate for the fact that we are serving more lower income people. So the change in the unit mix plus the fact that we're doing more units will give you a broader number.

And so the projected spend going forward is, you know, inches up a little bit more each year but last year it was \$1.1 billion and I think on a go-forward basis we're projecting somewhere between \$1.2 billion and \$1.3 billion over the next eight years of the plan.

Commissioner Torres-Springer: That's right. What continues to be true however which has been the history of affordable housing but is important to make sure we're stretching every dollar is the leverage that for each City dollar that is invested in affordable housing more than five dollars in State, federal, private is leveraged. And so that continues to be a model that works and we'll certainly continue to rely on to make sure that we can make the best use of every tax dollar.

Question: Second – different question. The IBO put out a report a few weeks ago really looking at the deal that was done at Stuy-Town Cooper –

Mayor: Peter Cooper –

Question: Thank you. And what they found were that essentially a third of the preserved units there could be attributed to the plan but that essentially that the 5,000 units that are claimed by the City, not all of those could be realistically said to have benefitted from longer [inaudible] –

Mayor: Let me let the experts speak in a second but first let me say, God bless the IBO. I don't understand how they're doing their math but I also don't understand their misinterpretation of history. Stuy-Town and Peter Cooper not so many years ago was on the verge of being entirely privatized in the previous administration. It was in great danger. It took an aggressive effort to ensure long term affordability.

I don't understand why they could possibly think if it weren't for intervention that it would – that we would not have lost those units.

Housing Development Corporation President Eric Enderlin: Yeah, I can add to that. We found that report to be very, very frustrated and I in particular found it to be frustrated. I had

worked on Stuy Town for over ten years going back into the prior administration. I can tell you that we missed some opportunities to do what we got to do this time. And you know we went over that report beginning in the summer with IBO a few times and had a lot of conversations.

I understand some of what they did which is very kind of academic. They talk about apartment years and people don't live in apartment years, people live in apartments. And what we said at the end of the day – we got 5,000 units under a regulatory agreement. We got them to add a piece that talks about the difference about rent-stab and apartments that are regulated under a new regulatory agreement which we did.

So, our position is that regulated 5,000 apartments and that we should count those.

And the second step that we asked them to do which they didn't do is to look at the economics of that and again we got over two-to-one value on that. When you look at what we spent to preserve those apartments versus the value of the affordability that's preserved long term there, it's over two-to-one, two-and-a-half-to-one.

Question: Just to follow up – why is it wrong to look at the apartment years? It seems [inaudible] you're looking at not only [inaudible] but how long will it stay affordable?

President Enderlin: It's not wrong and we have a lot of expertise with that. It's almost like what you would do with hotel nights or that kind of an economic impact study. We understand that but the problem is we did protect 5,000 apartments. You don't know which of those apartments are going to go vacant or for what reason at any point. If you look at the history all of those were coming out of regulation very, very quickly and what we did was we stopped that.

And so, that is a deal that you would any time you had the opportunity to do that deal both on the economic side and on the regulatory side.

The second thing and I would encourage people and we ask them to do that, give us a better proposal and you get answers back like well, what if you dealt with each apartment as it came up. You can't. You have to put a block of apartments under a regulatory agreement. You protect all of them.

It's true that some might not roll off during that term, that is true. But you get the ones that do roll off and you have absolute protection on the others. And once you address that regulatory question that you look at the economics and we win on both of those counts.

So, we would defend that all day.

Mayor: And I also think, David, the consent of the governed is important here. If you ask people in Stuy-Town and Peter Cooper if they feel this preserved their affordability, I can guarantee you they'll say yes.

They were deathly afraid of privatization and again they looked right down the barrel of that back in 2005. This was very important to maintaining what would have been a great example of a working class and middle class community in a kind of affordable housing that worked. It was not going to work in the future if we didn't step in.

Let's see if there's any other questions of affordable housing. Yoav?

Question: Just wanted to see if we can get an update [inaudible] the total cost of the plan given the increase numbers and has it changed since the time that the expansion to 300,000 units was announced, or not?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: No it has not so the total projected city capital subsidy for the total plan or the new plan stands at about \$13.5 billion and we have as was mentioned before – expended about \$3.3 billion. So that piece of the total cost remains the same.

Mayor: Yes Grace.

Question: Jasper made the point that one of the things he likes about this neighborhood is the fact that he lives not far from here for many years and I know the City and the affordable housing lottery sets aside certain, in many developments, a number of apartments for locals to get them priority.

But some people have argued that that priority for locals actually perpetuates segregation in certain city neighborhoods and then perpetuates segregation in the school system at large. And I'm wondering if there has been any internal discussions about getting rid of that or if you view the preference for locals to be problematic in any way?

Mayor: Remember that it splits 50/50, where 50 percent of the units are available to people from all over the City and obviously people come in from all over the City and take advantage of these opportunities. But there is also a recognition that – a very human reality that people want to live in their own neighborhoods and close to their loved ones, their friends, their houses of worship, their kids' schools. I think we can do both at the same time in a fair way.

And I also think if you think about a lot of our community boards, which is the basis, you know, for the mechanics of this, a lot of them are very diverse. So, I think we can achieve more than one goal but if you ask the people who want to live in their own neighborhood, they obviously need some right to do that. Anyone want to add?

Okay. Yes Juliet?

Question: The affordable apartments that are new – how are they eligible for the lottery? Are all of them eligible for lottery and who can apply to the lottery?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: So not every unit goes through a lottery system because some in particular for supportive housing and for formerly homeless households there's a referral system that we use together with other agencies, DSS ectera.

But certainly a very significant portion go through the lottery. There is a portal, Housing Connect, which right now has about 900,000 profiles on it. So New Yorkers seeking affordable housing – we have really sought in the last several years to make the process of applying as easy as possible. That includes not just technology upgrades but also working with community based

organizations. We call them housing ambassadors so they can really in many ways hold people's hands as they navigate the process.

Mayor: Yes but to be clear the vast majority of the units go through the lottery because as you know the supportive housing plan is building up now but that has not been yet a big piece of what we've done. Maria is absolutely right. There are some, certainly exceptions but I want to make sure that New Yorkers know that the vast majority of those units are going through the lottery and they should apply.

And I have got to tell you I understand anyone who applies – there's a lot of competition for the units as with so many other good things in life. But people win all the time. I can't tell you how many people have come up to me on the street and say I won the housing lottery, I'm moving in or I moved in already, my life has changed. Jasper, a real live example of someone who's life has changed because of it. So you know, you can't win it if you're not in it, you know, we want to encourage people to apply. Go ahead Rich.

Question: Mr. Mayor, what are the odds of winning?

Mayor: The odds are – these guys can give you the math. Look, there's a lot of competition. But it's also growing – the number of units is growing all the time. I mean this is what I want people to keep in mind. This is a plan, so you heard – 163,000 people have been reached but the projection we have is there is another 600,000 people who will be reached or more – who will be reached by 2026. So it's just going to keep growing and growing and growing.

And there's lots of other ways that thank god, people have affordable housing in this city – whether they are in public housing or they are in rent stabilized housing. Our goal is to try and address the whole picture but on the plus side – think of it this way, there's 600,000 more people who will benefit over these next years. That's a really good reason to get in it. I would say the odds are a lot better than winning the lottery. Go ahead.

Question: Do you guys narrow off hand what percentage of the preserved units have been lotteried? In other words, how many people have moved out of preserved units, presumably there are people that live in them currently [inaudible].

Commissioner Torres-Springer: Right as they, for our typical preservation projects there are vacant units when we do that project and then as the units turn over they are subject to lottery. I don't have them right now but we can come back on the specific number of units.

Question: What percentage of the lottery is preserved versus new construction?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: Right, we will get back to you on that.

Mayor: Just one other point and we are doing – just so everyone knows we are doing media questions now. The, so I don't know everyone who is and is not media but just want to make sure everyone gets that.

The preservation, just want to emphasize because it is really important in the context of the discussion of gentrification and how to address it – when you preserve a family that's already in

the neighborhood in place – that’s obviously a direct response to the challenge of gentrification. As you heard, when you fix a whole building there’s always going to be units that are vacant and there’s going to be units that turn over. So we are achieving more than one goal at the same time. But the power of the preservation when it is the family who is already in the apartment is it’s one of the purest, clearest responses to the challenges of gentrification because you are keeping the family already in the community in their community on an affordable level.

Let’s see are there other media questions on this? Affordable housing? Going once, going twice – I know Jasper has something he wants to add the end but wait one more question before we turn over.

Question: So wait did you answer on the requirements – I know it’s a lottery based system but are there any, you know, requirements that people should know of before they try to apply?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: Right so, there are eligibility requirements. It depends on the unit. There are income eligibility requirements, and other rules as it relates to say assets and ownership. And so really what we recommend is people create a register under Housing Connect and they will be able to work with them very closely depending on their situation so they apply for the right types of units. And also the new portal, Long Live New York, is a great opportunity not just to connect to the lottery system but to make sure that New Yorkers know about the really wide range of other services that will help them in terms of housing stability.

Mayor: Let’s just play that one more second. Maria you said we help them, just give our colleagues a sense of if someone seeking clarity or needs answers to questions what we do.

Commissioner Torres-Springer: So we work with them one on one so that they know for example how to calculate their income and that they can share that with us in a very clear way. That they have a good understanding of all the documents that are required in the process that they know what to expect after they get the call but before they are interviewed for that unit. And for those who are in the system the other significant piece of our service to them is that we also connect people to financial counseling. And so it is credit repair and other issues. And so we really try to make sure they are applying to those units for which they are eligible but we are also connecting them to other services that are beneficial to them.

Mayor: Can you just help us one more time with who does that – who does that assistance? Who actually between HPD or non-profits or whatever, who actually does the talking to the applicant?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: Our housing ambassadors. So a lot of not-for-profit organizations are working with us and those are the ones who work with New Yorkers one on one on their application – on navigating the housing connect.

Mayor: And how do you find those people Maria?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: You can call 3-1-1. You can call 3-1-1 and you’ll be connected to all of those services.

Mayor: Now Maria are you saying you will be connected to an actual human being if you need help?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: That's correct Sir.

Question: Alright so [inaudible] requested?

Commissioner Torres-Springer: So if you call – if you call 3-1-1 you say I'm looking for affordable housing, then they will – and help filing out the form, I have a question about eligibility, then the 3-1-1 system will connect you to one of our housing ambassadors who will be able to provide, in real time, advice on how to navigate the process.

Mayor: Now I want to invite some crowdsourcing here, that I'd love all of you to go check out the website. There's been a conscientious effort to make it simpler and more user friendly, but when you're talking about a plan for affordable housing, you know, there is – you do need to have documentation there are obviously really sensitive financial issues that have to be considered excreta. Would love to hear back from you all in print, on air, or at one of these gatherings what you see working and what you see not working in terms of the ability of any average New Yorker to navigate it because we're continuing to perfect it.

But one of the things that I'm excited about it is as we find with so many other things where you try and get customer assistance in the case of what we're doing on affordable housing, you can actually get to a human being who can help you. Which I find is often the breakthrough moment for a lot of people, when they can talk to someone on the phone or sit down with them and work through. So, we would love – we would love a critique of the website.

Well maybe they wouldn't love it, but I'd love it. It's democracy Alicia, it's good for you.

So, Jasper, again we're so happy that your journey has led you to this day and to knowing you'll have an affordable apartment. I know you wanted to say one more thing. You have the last word.

[...]

Thank you. I like – good way to start the New Year. Thank you Jasper. Okay we're going to move to other topics. Media question?

Question: Yes.

Mayor: Okay, I'm sorry. I didn't see the credential before. Go ahead.

Question: Congratulations on your apartment, it's wonderful, but I'm here with a longtime NYCHA resident Ms. Jeter, and this weekend her ceiling collapsed and she is displaced now. She has no place that has a bed for her family and I mean these programs are great but what – who can help these residents in a quicker manner to get back –

Mayor: Yes we have to and we'll do that today. We have to get her and her family the help they deserve. There's no question about it.

Question: She wanted to ask you a question.

Mayor: I'm sorry, we're going to stick to media questions. I'm happy to see her after, but we're happy to get her the help right away. She deserves that help. We're going to get it for her and get her a new apartment in the process.

Question: New apartment, not her apartment?

Mayor: We're – again I'm speaking broadly because we have to look at all the details but we're going to make sure she gets help right away and we're going to make sure she ends up in an apartment that's appropriate.

Okay, yes?

Question: I do have a follow up question –

Mayor: Please.

Question: – on that case. Ms. Jeter is not the only tenant in that particular public housing development that has complained about NYCHA's response to many complains. If they've complained about shoddy repairs – not saying that they're not actually repairing, but actually just patching up problems. But I'm wondering what your response is to that considering that they aren't the only ones that this is happening to. And also the fact that they pay \$1,400 a month to live in this apartment. They've had three collapses within 11 months. When they were –

Mayor: Okay, don't – the – one thing at a time because I just want to be able to answer each of your questions. So, so – and again I'm going to ask everyone as we start a new four years together, please I will happily take your follow up question but just let me hear one thing at a time so I can properly follow and answer it.

First of all, if the repairs are not made properly obviously I don't tolerate that. There's a difference between our employees doing their best in an imperfect situation to keep boilers going or to make the best repairs they can make given that there's been billions of dollars that wasn't invested that should have been over the years. That sometimes what people find is they're up against a really tough situation, they do the best they can with the resources that they have and they make a good repair. That's what we're looking for. Any repair that's not made properly is not acceptable and we need to fix and we need to hold people responsible.

On the bigger question, look if I find – and we've done this, we've found some developments where management did a great job with imperfect resources, employees did a great job keeping things going while we've tried to increasingly put more and more investment into NYCHA, remember in the last budget \$1.3 billion that's – there's I don't think been a City budget in decades that put \$1.3 billion into the capital needs of NYCHA.

But we've also found developments where the managers are not doing a good enough job and we have replaced those managers. So I can't comment on this one because I don't know the details. But I want to give you my ground rule, if we ever have a situation where a manager is not properly supervising and making sure their employees are doing quality repairs that manager is probably got going to be there much longer. Do you have a follow up?

Question: My follow up is they pay \$1,400 a month to live there, they've been placed in temporary housing in another public housing development with no furniture. Now they're displaced and are living on the floor while the homeless are being put up in hotels. Some may argue that that certainly doesn't sound fair for hardworking families.

Mayor: We certainly want people to be in a decent situation. Do you want to talk to this Alicia because obviously we will follow up on this case and make sure they're put someplace that's appropriate or given the help they need.

Deputy Mayor Glen: I mean generally speaking when a NYCHA resident is displaced from their unit because of the terrible situation that happened in the Jeter apartment our protocol is to identify another unit in the Housing Authority that is the appropriate size and we will immediately make sure that that apartment is more habitable. We understand there are some issues there and I also understand that ACS and some other agencies are in the process, as we speak, of providing them with additional furniture. It's certainly not a perfect situation but we are responding to it.

It is not our policy, generally, to take families and put them into hotels. We have a methodology in place at the Housing Authority to keep families as close as we can to their developments so their children can continue to go to school etcetera. So, the City policy is not to put those families into hotels. We think it's a better solution to keep them in their developments and their neighborhoods rather than increase the number of families who are living in hotels as we're trying to take more and more families out of hotels.

Mayor: Okay other questions? Mara?

Question: There's a 1010WINS report over the weekend that the City is planning to use a building on East 58th Street in Manhattan, it's a hotel, to house homeless men, I believe. How does this further the goal of transitioning the city out of hotels and why wasn't the neighborhood notified – community notified?

Mayor: Again my understanding is the neighborhood has been notified. This is the beginning of a process, moving to using that building. And my understanding is that will be a long-term facility not short-term pay by the day hotel. But again, the notification process that we laid out about a year ago is what we're following now.

Question: Follow up to that, how many other similar facilities are in the works? In other words, this was an actual hotel that is now being transitioned to full-time use as a facility to shelter homeless individuals. How many other similar facilities are in the works? Can we get a list of that?

Mayor: Look, the plan is 90 shelter facilities. Some will be purpose built, some will be conversion of existing buildings. But what they will have in common is a couple things: they will be permanent shelter facilities, not pay by the day hotels, not cluster sites, they also will be constructed or rehabbed with the intention of converting them down the line to something else as we continue to compress our homeless shelter system. So ideally the day comes in the future when those buildings start to be turned into either permanent affordable housing or permanent

supportive housing. But for now they will be long-term shelter facilities so we're not dealing with all the problems that we had with clusters and hotels.

Question: But can we get a list?

Mayor: Well we're going – we've made very clear, the goal is 90. A number of them have already been announced, are in the works, or in some cases opened. As we are ready to announce each one we will have that community notification process according to the rules we set up.

We don't have – bless you – we don't have the perfect – to the best of my knowledge the perfect list of where all 90 will be because we're working, in some cases, years ahead to keep building them out. But as we get locked down on any location we will then announce it publically according to that timeline.

Juliette?

Question: Yes, in researching this shelter in calls to the Community Board 5 and calls to the local Council member and calls to the police precinct, nobody was notified of this. So what notification are you referring to –

Mayor: If – if –

Question: – who knew what because they did not know anything.

Mayor: If an enterprising radio station figured it out ahead of the normal notification process, kudos. But the notification process was going to begin on the timeline that we announced previously. So the point is, we provide formal public notice and then we proceed with the steps to actually creating and opening the shelter.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: I'll get folks to give you the details on that.

Question: [Inaudible] DHS told me June – January 9th of this year. But when I made calls after that to the Council member, to CB 5, to the precinct, nobody was aware of this.

Mayor: I will have my folks follow up with you on exactly what happened. But I want to say that's about a week ago. If there was any lag in the process it's still well, well in advance of when anything was going to be open. So, I appreciate the question but I want to just emphasize, I think the answer is pretty straightforward. We have committed to a certain timeline, that's what the timeline is going to be on each of these. We've committed, we told you upfront and I told you well before the elections there would be 90 new shelters, they'll be in every kind of neighborhood. In that part of the East Side of Manhattan is a neighborhood that has done very well but they also – I'm sorry West Side, they also have to participate in this effort to ensure that we have enough shelter. We're going to keep doing that with that notification, we're going to keep building out that structure.

Question: So why are seven other facilities in the Midtown area being shutdown?

Mayor: Well it's the –

Question: [Inaudible] DHS

Mayor: Again, I'll let DHS go over specifics with you but I want to give you the broad picture. We will, over the years to come, continue to open new facilities while shutting down old facilities for the very reason we laid out, and go back if you haven't looked at it in a while, go back and look at the Turning the Tide Plan from about a year ago. The goal is to be out of all pay by the day hotels. The goal is to be out of all cluster sites. To establish a coherent and appropriate shelter system where the conditions are right, where we're getting the best impact for the taxpayer dollar, and to continue to maintain that system looking for every opportunity as we do better overtime to start to compress it and convert those buildings to other needs.

But we've made explicitly clear we expect to be getting out of the kinds of facilities that we think are either not appropriate like the clusters, or too costly like the hotels. That's going to be a constant movement as we open new facilities.

Question: And what about input from the community itself? I was getting calls to say we didn't not only know about this but we didn't have any input into what would be at that location?

Mayor: So what we've said very clearly – look I think you can safely say Juliette if you go all over New York City and just the simple question to people 'would you like to see a homeless shelter here in the neighborhood?' the answer will be pretty much no across the board. We have the authority to open these facilities where we deem appropriate. We do give the notification. That's an opportunity for community concerns to be raised so that we can address them.

I've also said to elected officials and some have taken us up on this, we need to do this on a substantial scale – 90 facilities all over the city. If you have locations that you believe are the right kind in your neighborhood, come forward, and we'll work with you.

And there's been some instances where that's been very productive.

Question: But if people didn't know about it [inaudible] –

Mayor: Look, again, but listen to what I'm saying. We've made that clear to everyone that it's quite clear there's a lot of communities where we have to open more shelter. I'm going to turn to other people after this because we've done debate club here.

The elected officials who want to help us figure out locations, there's plenty of opportunity to do that but we have to keep moving on our plan. When it's publicly announced we have an opportunity to figure what will be done to make it work best for the community. If someone has an alternative location at that point, we're going to look at that too.

But we have to keep moving forward a plan and we cannot afford to keep waiting. Yoav –

Question: Mr. Mayor, I just want to get back to the Jeter family's case just to see kind of what went wrong in two instances. One – how did the family – NYCHA [inaudible] another apartment? How does it happen that they're put into an apartment with no furniture?

Mayor: Yeah, I don't understand that, Yoav. I really don't and it's not acceptable to me. I agree obviously with the Deputy Mayor. We want to keep people who are in public housing in public housing rather than going to a whole different facility. But we have to do it the right way.

Look this was a crisis situation obviously and we need to know more to understand why it happened to begin with. But I don't like the way it was handled and I want to do better by this family, and God forbid other families in a situation like this, we want to better by them.

Question: The same question just about – they said they complained since January about the leaking ceiling and that it was never properly –

Mayor: I need to look into that. Obviously, I want to get all the facts and if something was reported and not acted on that would be very troubling to me but let me get more facts on that before formally responding. Way back –

Question: Hi, great. We have [inaudible] bunch of stories in the last few weeks about NYCHA residents having no heat. I want to know how the City is responding to this and what is the City going to do to help correct this.

Mayor: Yeah, again, I'll keep saying it to give you guys perspective. We have 400,000 people in public housing and tens of billions of dollars of investment that was not made for decades. We have a physically unacceptable situation but none of us can make that situation change overnight. It's going to be a long tough battle putting the funding into NYCHA over years and years and years as much as we can, trying to get resources from elsewhere as well.

Someday we may be able to get the federal government back in the affordable housing business but as you know they have been moving away from that for decades. We have asked the State for more help. We haven't seen a whole lot of help. There's – you know, hope springs eternal. We got a request, for example, for \$100 million to the State of New York from the last budget process to help us with the boilers. We're still waiting for an answer from the State on that.

We've put hundreds of millions of dollars into fixing boilers and creating new boilers. We intend to do more. But I've also been honest with people that the reality in a lot of buildings in that our employees who do a really good job at this have to keep outmoded equipment going and we don't have an easy solution to that.

Most of the time the repairs are made in a matter of hours. There's a few developments today in Manhattan that are having a problem right now. We do expect them to be resolved in the course of the next few hours.

That's what I've been seeing. Even though we had one of the coldest streaks in many decades. Generally when the problem occurred the folks who work at each development were able to get them up and running within hours. I don't like that there's the problem but I do want to give them credit for that quick turnaround in most cases.

We're going to be doing other things as we go forward to try and support our residents and make sure that we have as few of these problems as possible but it is against the backdrop of a physical plant that's outmoded in a lot of these developments.

Question: But a lot of times it gets fixed within hours but then again they have no heat [inaudible] –

Mayor: I want to clarify that because I actually asked the Director of Heating in great detail – some of you may know I was out at Woodside Houses a couple weeks back and had a very long dialogue on these topics.

The Director of Heating for the whole system. No, when the buildings retain heat for a certain amount of time. God forbid the heat goes out, the buildings retain heat for a certain amount of time. When the heat goes back on, obviously it takes a while to get up to full speed.

It's not good. I don't wish this for anyone but I do want to say if as is true in most cases they can fix it the same day, thankfully there will be time while the building still remains relatively warm.

But guys I got to be honest with you, we have an imperfect situation here. I too would love a perfect solution. It would cost billions of dollars that we don't have right now but we're going to try to consistently improve the situation. We'd like that money from the State. We're going to keep putting money in but I do want to give NYCHA credit for handling a really tough situation well in the vast majority of cases.

Yes. Grace.

Question: There was a video of a confrontation that took place last week in Far Rockaway, Queens with a number of police officers and a driver, in which the driver was Tased but the video seems to make it seem as though the police control of him but nevertheless continued to Tase him while he was on the ground. I'm wondering if you've seen the video, if you are investigating, or have questions or concerns about [inaudible] –

Mayor: There's clearly an investigation of anything like that. I have not seen the video. I will look at it but anything like that deserves a very careful investigation. No question about that.

Question: And one follow up. Is there anything further that you have discovered of the last few days about the police's reaction to the immigration protest near City Hall last week? I think you said on Friday –

Mayor: Look, yeah, no, I've been talking to the Commissioner about it. There is an investigation that we still a little more time on there too. As I think, indicated to you guys that that was a very unusual series of events there including I think very provocative actions by ICE and a medical problem in the middle of all this for the individual involved.

So, I think we had a really challenging reality there and the police did the best they could to deal with it. That being said, we're obviously going to look at the actions of each officer and decide what we think and what the relevant response will be.

Question: Just a follow up on that question. Have you looked at any of the footage? There's a lot of footage of the arrests from the Ravi Ragbir protest last week –

Mayor: Yes,

Question: Are you troubled by what you saw? I mean, you know, Councilman Williams being sort of pushed over the hood of a car and wincing in pain. There were a lot of videos of Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez sort of being carried into a paddy wagon. And there's some photos of officers putting him in what looks like a headlock or something like that. Are you concerned about the level of force that was used to arrest them and other people?

Mayor: Look, everyone knows what we're trying to achieve in the way the NYPD relates to all New Yorkers and all communities. That being said, this was a very challenging situation with a lot of unexpected factors and I think it deserves a full investigation. So, I'm always concerned when I see a situation that people feel uncomfortable with.

That being said I don't want to comment in any definitive manner until the investigation is over because there's a lot of moving parts to this one.

Question: Who's conducting the investigation [inaudible] –

Mayor: It's NYPD – has a protocol whenever there's an incident that raise questions and they're applying that protocol. Rich?

Question: Mr. Mayor, the Governor appears on the cusp of revealing his congestion pricing program –

Mayor: The cusp of revealing. Very dramatic.

[Laughter]

Question: Some details of which apparently have somehow leaked out –

[Laughter]

And I'm just wondering whether or not –

Mayor: I'm shocked to find there's gambling happening in this establishment.

[Laughter]

Question: I'm just wondering whether you've heard any of those details, how you would react. And also the name if the committee is, as I understand it, Fix NYC which has an implication [inaudible]. Just wondering how you react to that particular name of the committee as well.

Mayor: It's great to be in the safest big city in America with the most jobs we've ever had in our history, the biggest population we've ever had. I think there's a lot of great things happening in

New York City. There's a lot we need to improve in terms of our infrastructure and the best way to do that is with a millionaire's tax. That would give you immediate revenue.

You know they used to say, "Oh the millionaire's tax is so far away." They are in session now. They could approve it and the money is there and that would give us reliable long term revenue to address the problems of the MTA.

That being said, I've always said, show us a plan on congestion planning and we'll look at it and give an honest answer. I have not seen the formal plan. I don't know what the leaks are. I haven't seen them.

But if there's actually for the first time in many months a real plan, bring it on and let's look at it and I'll be happy to respond to it. David?

Question: Just want to follow up on the protest question. Have any of the officers involved [inaudible] desk duty or anything like that to your knowledge?

Mayor: I don't know that. Happy to get back to you but I don't know that.

Question: And then what was your reaction when Councilman Jumaane Williams said yesterday that he was planning on challenging the Lieutenant Governor. What's [inaudible]?

Mayor: You know at some point I'll talk about this election year in this state. I'm not ready to do that yet. I've worked with Jumaane Williams, obviously, well and respect him but I'm not ready to do that yet expect to say we need a Democratic Senate and it's time for the IDC to come home right now. But on other matters, I'll reserve judgement.

Question: [Inaudible]

Mayor: Again, I'll reserve judgement.

Unknown: Last two questions.

Question: So, speaking of IDC, Jeff Klein has recently been accused of sexual misconduct. Do you think there should an investigation or that he should step down either as IDC leader or from the Senate all together?

Mayor: There should absolutely be an investigation immediately. Look, we're in a very powerful moment in history and a lot of truth is coming out and thank God for it. And I really admire all the people who have come forward and primarily obviously women who have come forward and you know in many cases at real risk and have changed the assumptions of our society literally in the course of months.

I think it's an extraordinary movement. So, any allegation needs to be fully investigated and then the results – and by the way the President of the United States needs to be investigated too and I don't understand where that formal investigation – why that doesn't exist.

I mean everyone's looking at the Russia probe. That's great. Where is the probe into many allegations of sexual harassment? I think if a charge is leveled at any public official there needs to be a full investigation.

Question: [Inaudible] step down –

Mayor: There needs to be – same thing I said about the President. The decision on that should come at the result of the full investigation.

Question: Can I just share one of the suggestions of congestion pricing that the Governor leaked himself?

[Laughter]

Mayor: You're a voice of honesty.

Question: He had mentioned something about having tolled zones within the city instead of having them at the bridges and tunnels. What do you think about that?

Mayor: I want to look at the whole thing. I appreciate – I mean that is something that we were getting some gleaning of but I want to look at the whole plan first of all. I'm sorry I can't see you right now. There you are. Here, I'll move my microphone so I can actually talk to you.

I want to see the whole plan because I think it's important to understand how it all works together. But I also want to remind you of the ground rules I've set.

First of all, I believe the millionaire's tax makes sense under scenario if you're talking about a long term verifiable source of revenue for the MTA. Second – the questions I have about congestion pricing. How do you make sure it's not a regressive tax where folks who have lots of resources are all too happy to pay to come into Manhattan and other people who don't have so many resources can't?

How do you make sure it's fair – if it particularly affects Brooklyn and Queens – how do you make sure it's fair to Brooklyn and Queens? What is Brooklyn and Queens get back in the equation?

And lastly, how do you deal with hardship situations most notably, there are a lot of medical facilities in Manhattan? Here's the most obvious example, there are lot of medical facilities in Manhattan that literally there's no alternative to them in New York City, that they are the specialists in certain areas. If you're a person of limited means and you need to go to those appointments on a regular basis, what does that mean for you? Is there going to be some kind of hardship accommodation, for example, for that kind of situation?

So, I look forward to seeing the whole plan. Are those questions that, you know, there may be real answers for? I want to see if the plan addresses those questions.

Question: Mr. Mayor, what are the next steps for the monuments commission's plan to erect a new statue to honor indigenous Americans? Is there a timeline on that?

Mayor: You know, they've just done the report. I think it was a very good report. I want to see a plan as quickly as possible. I think the additive approach – I mean here's the contribution I think this commission is making to the bigger discussion here in the city and elsewhere, and I really want to thank Darren Walker from the Ford Foundation and Tom Finkelpearl for their efforts and everyone else on the commission.

As we address our history, one of the things we have to do is recognize all the people who weren't recognized and have an honest reassessment of who actually built American and who contributed and who suffered in the process. To have an appropriate commemoration of the Native American experience in this city is very important. I want to see it move as fast as possible.

In terms of the next practical steps, we can get back to you on that but I think that was a really powerful recommendation.

Question: And just as a follow up, I spoke to a historian [inaudible] well known, he said and has been telling me for some time that he hoped the City would also propose other new monuments. He mentioned honoring someone like David Ruggles who was a black abolitionist or [inaudible] who is a women's suffrage and labor leader.

I mean are you interested and planning to open that process up to maybe include other actual figures?

Mayor: Yeah. I think, look, this is a beginning to address some of those particular concerns that were brought up previous to the commission and during the commission's hearings and research. But the additive concept is an ongoing one. I think the world of Eric Foner. I think those are great ideas.

Now, we have to figure how many and where and who's paying for all this but if you say should the city – the most diverse city in the world in all we do reflect our people and our history accurately? Of course and that's going to take years to do properly.

We've tried to do it in some small ways to begin. We've had art exhibits at Gracie Mansion where we tried to portray the whole population of New York City throughout its history, the art exhibits at City Hall. There's things that we're trying to do to start this process and I know a lot of other cultural institutions have been doing the same.

But if you say as people walk around the city, should they see a clearer and better and more honest reflection of all of our people in many ways, of course.

So, the commission gave a road map for some of the first steps but I think there's other logical ones that follow if you're really going to be additive.

Question: Mr. Mayor what do you make of Governor Cuomo's plastic –

Mayor: By the way I love your hat. I'd like everyone to look at that hat.

[Laughter]

If I ever wear something like that, please make fun of me.

[Laughter]

Question: I wanted to ask you about Governor Cuomo's plastic bag task force. What do you make of [inaudible]?

Mayor: I have not seen that report. I have made clear that I think a ban is the right way forward. We've tried a previous approach and it didn't find favor in Albany but the question at hand is we can't keep putting plastic bags into our environment, so what are we going to do. I think a ban makes a lot of sense.

Question: [Inaudible] to the new MTA boss and any advice you can give him?

Mayor: Sure I can give him advice.

[Laughter]

First of all I look forward to working with him. My door is open. Want to work closely together. Look, despite disagreements with Albany we work every day with the MTA. We work with them to create Select Bus Service and in so many other ways that have been productive.

So, in terms of the new leadership, my door is open. I still think the best way to fix the MTA long term is with a millionaire's tax. Jillian, final one. Go ahead.

Question: Just a follow up on Mara's question. Are there any people that you would like to see a statue or a monument to in New York City?

Mayor: That is a great question. Let me give that one some thought. You will be the first to know.

[Laughter]

Thank you, everyone.

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