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NASSAU COUNTY LEGISLATURE

PETER SCHMITT,
Presiding Officer

ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & LABOR
COMMITTEE

DENISE FORD, Chairwoman

1550 Franklin Avenue
Mineola, New York

Tuesday, February 14, 2012
2:16 P.M

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A P P E A R A N C E S :

DENISE FORD,
Chairwoman

RICHARD NICOLELLO,
Vice Chairman

HOWARD KOPEL

JOSEPH BELESI (substituted by
Norma Gonsalves)

CARRIE SOLAGES
Ranking

DELIA DeRIGGI-WHITTON

JOSEPH SCANNELL (substituted by
David Denenberg)

WILLIAM MULLER,
Clerk of the Legislature

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2 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I'm going to
3 call the Economic and Community Development
4 and Labor Committee to order. Can all the
5 legislators please come out?

6 Good afternoon, everyone. Would
7 you all join us in the Pledge lead by Rich
8 Nicoletto?

9 (Whereupon, the Pledge of
10 Allegiance was recited.)

11 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Can you please
12 take the roll call?

13 CLERK MULLER: We'll call to
14 order the Economic and Community Development
15 and Labor hearing on the Economic Hub.
16 Substituting for Legislator Scannell is
17 Legislator Dave Denenberg.

18 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Here.

19 CLERK MULLER: Legislator
20 Solages?

21 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Here.

22 CLERK MULLER: Substituting for
23 Legislator Belesi, Legislator Gonsalves?

24 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: Here.

25 CLERK MULLER: Legislator Kopel?

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2 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Here.

3 CLERK MULLER: Vice Chairman
4 Richard Nicoletto?

5 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Here.

6 CLERK MULLER: Chairwoman Ford?

7 LEGISLATOR FORD: Here.

8 CLERK MULLER: We have a quorum.

9 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you. Do
10 I have a motion to open this hearing to
11 discuss the development of the Hub?

12 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: So moved.

13 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Second.

14 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: So moved by
15 Legislator Kopel, seconded by Legislator
16 Denenberg.

17 Good afternoon, everybody. I
18 thank you very much for taking the time to
19 join us here this afternoon. I do want to
20 first open up and apologize to all of you
21 who have plans tonight for Valentine's Day,
22 I've been accused by my fellow legislators
23 here of not really being truly romantic by
24 scheduling the hearing today. But time is
25 of the essence and this is something that we

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2 need to do and I felt the sooner the better.

3 Once again, I want to thank all
4 of you for attending this public hearing on
5 the Economic Development and Labor
6 Committee, and a special thank you to those
7 who have so graciously agreed to testify
8 here today.

9 As we all know, the county is in
10 financial difficulties as decisions are
11 being made to streamline county resources.
12 While we are dealing with many difficult
13 decisions, we must not allow ourselves to be
14 so single minded in purpose by focusing on
15 only the problems at hand. It is imperative
16 that we shift our focus to the future and
17 work together to come up with a viable plan
18 to help restore Nassau County to the once
19 great county it has been.

20 This is why, despite the problems
21 we are facing, we must look to economic
22 development to help bring jobs and much
23 needed revenue to our county. The purpose
24 of today's hearing is to continue dialogue
25 regarding the development of the Nassau Hub

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2 area as well as other locations. Time is of
3 the essence as we have an opportunity to
4 secure funding through the economic
5 development initiative of Governor Andrew
6 Cuomo. But, in order to qualify, a viable
7 project must be in place. While the county
8 cannot do this alone, we need to identify
9 and partner with private industry.

10 I have all the confidence that we
11 can work together and find a plan that will
12 work. One that will compliment the
13 surrounding communities and highlight
14 central Nassau's great academic,
15 entertainment, cultural, and retail venues.
16 This could include a research center,
17 affordable housing for our young, as well as
18 other initiatives. We must keep an open
19 mind and explore all the possibilities to
20 make our dream come true for a new Hub area
21 that brings much needed jobs and revenue to
22 our county for the benefits of our
23 residents.

24 I'm going to open up to Ranking
25 Member Legislator Carrie A. Solages who is

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2 also going to have a statement.

3 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you.

4 The development of the area known as the Hub
5 is of paramount importance to the future of
6 Nassau County. A redeveloped Hub with a
7 revitalized Veterans Memorial Coliseum at
8 its centerpiece is essential to the economic
9 rebound via new revenue sources which we are
10 all seeking to achieve.

11 Maintaining these thousands of
12 jobs at the coliseum and creating
13 construction jobs, a new coliseum will
14 entail a productive future. Additionally,
15 the prospect of bringing exciting new green
16 industry jobs to the location and the
17 inclusion of the next generation housing to
18 keep our young people in Nassau County is
19 something I feel we must explore.

20 The topic of today's hearing is
21 therefore a top priority of mine as ranking
22 member of the important committee and is,
23 likewise, a top priority for all of the
24 members of the Democratic caucus.

25 So I want to thank the chair,

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2 Legislator Denise Ford, for calling this
3 hearing and for including my invited guest,
4 Mr. David Sabatino of Envision Long Island,
5 Muzzio Tallini, Vice President of the Elmont
6 Chamber of Commerce. As I look forward to
7 hearing all of the testimony today and I'm
8 sure you will enjoy the perspective of these
9 bright young gentleman.

10 I, and the entire Democratic
11 caucus, look forward to working
12 cooperatively with Chairwoman Ford and her
13 colleagues in the majority, as well as the
14 Mangano administration, and our business and
15 development leaders and partners as we
16 collectively move forward towards the Hub
17 humming. Thank you

18 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you,
19 Ranking Member Solages.

20 We do have a couple of people
21 that are going to present to us, but we do
22 have one request from somebody to speak. I
23 don't know whether or not Laura Schultz
24 would like to speak before or after the
25 presentation. Just please give your name

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2 and address.

3 MS. SHULTZ: Hi. Good afternoon.
4 I'm Laura Shultz. I live at 22 Barbara
5 Drive, Syosset.

6 Usually I stand before the
7 legislature representing a large civic group
8 in Syosset. Today, however, I represent
9 only my extended family, Islander fans who
10 live in Nassau County, from my 87 year old
11 father, who lives in New Hyde Park, to my
12 ten year old nephew who lives in Wantagh.

13 In 1958, Brooklyn Dodger's owner,
14 Walter O'Malley, after years of butting
15 heads with New York master planner Robert
16 Moses, moved his baseball team not to the
17 borough of Queens, as Moses directed, but to
18 Los Angeles, leaving a generation of
19 Brooklyn nights devastated, myself included,
20 because that's where I lived.

21 Don't let Charles Wang move his
22 team of Islanders out of Nassau County and
23 leave a generation of Nassau County-ites
24 devastated. Find a way. Find a compromise
25 that allows the Islanders to stay in Nassau

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2 County. Thank you very much.

3 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you. I
4 have to say, even though we come from
5 different sides of the island, we both have
6 a love and devotion to the Islanders. My
7 son also would probably be standing up here
8 as well to say "keep the Islanders."

9 This is what we are looking at,
10 we're looking at the ideas of trying to
11 basically build on what we have. It is my
12 hope also that we will be able to keep the
13 Islanders here on Long Island.

14 Also, just to let everybody else
15 know, that if you have anything that you
16 would like to say or add, there are slips
17 that can be filled out and handed to the
18 clerk, and you will be called up after the
19 presenters. Thank you.

20 We're going to open up now with
21 Deputy County Rob Walker who is going to
22 speak about the Hub area.

23 MR. WALKER: Thank you very much,
24 Chairwoman Ford and Ranking Member Solages,
25 as well as the colleagues and members of

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2 this committee, and obviously all the people
3 behind me. It seems much easier to be here
4 today than it was yesterday for all of those
5 that took part.

6 But, as you mentioned, government
7 is reforming. We have a time when we are
8 looking at how we save money and how,
9 unfortunately, we have to cut and streamline
10 and, in many cases, decide if we continue
11 with a program. The one thing that we are
12 missing is revenue. We talk about instead
13 of having to have to cut, its how do we
14 achieve additional revenue to Nassau County?

15 We all know basically \$1.8
16 billion or so, give or take a few pennies,
17 comes from both sales tax and property tax.
18 The rest comes from grants and state
19 pass-throughs and other things of that
20 nature. But what we really need in this
21 county in order to keep young people here is
22 economic activity.

23 It's a reason why, not so long
24 ago that county legislator at the time, and
25 now County Executive Mangano, decided to run

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2 for office. He saw a downturn in his home
3 town community in Bethpage and was faced
4 with a tremendous loss of jobs on the
5 Grumman property with the defense industry
6 downsizing and he chose to run for office
7 and chose to work with community groups and
8 members of the Town of Oyster Bay at the
9 time and the county and the federal
10 government to see to it that jobs actually
11 remained on the Grumman site and, more
12 importantly, expanded.

13 Today over 15 to 20,000 jobs have
14 returned to that location. I say that
15 because it's the same vision he has, why he
16 ran for office again in 2009 for county
17 executive where he could have returned as a
18 county legislator. He decided to run
19 because he saw the need for economic
20 activity because, without it, Nassau County
21 is doomed. We'll stay here, ten years from
22 now and say, what happened to Nassau County,
23 there's nothing left, where do we go?

24 So the county executive, in a
25 very short time in office, he met with

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2 Charles Wang and it was a great
3 conversation. I know there are many
4 Islander fans behind me, and Laura Shultz
5 happens to be a very good friend, and I
6 value everything that she says, so, Laura,
7 always good to see you, and with Charles'
8 staff to try to see what we can do as a
9 county and the county executive to move
10 forward in the process.

11 As you know, not too long after
12 that we had a referendum. The referendum,
13 unfortunately, was not passed for a variety
14 of different reasons. We don't need to go
15 into the reasons other than to say that it
16 didn't pass and we are here where we are
17 today.

18 I'm sure all of you know that the
19 coliseum and the Islanders and SMG has a
20 ground lease and a lease on a coliseum until
21 the middle of 2015, meaning that 77 acres of
22 property, the parking lot, and the coliseum
23 is devoted to that very thing and under the
24 control of both the Islanders and SMG.

25 It's for that reason why the

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2 county executive continues to work and will
3 continue to work in the short term and in
4 the future in trying to see that that
5 property is developed the right way with the
6 principals and everyone else that can
7 possibly get involved in.

8 So we continue to move the
9 process forward in terms of the Hub in
10 itself. We are finalizing the study, the
11 federal transportation study and, really, it
12 will entail all the development in and
13 around the Hub how we move people in and
14 out. Why I say that, because it's a very
15 valuable piece of work product because once
16 that's complete and accepted by the federal
17 government, it will actually open ourselves
18 up for major federal dollars.

19 The federal government actually
20 funded the study and then, in return, once
21 that study is complete, federal dollars for
22 infrastructure, where we all know one of the
23 single biggest obstacles to developing the
24 Hub is either a parking garage and/or again
25 infrastructure improvements either to the

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2 Meadowbrook or the Hempstead Turnpike area.
3 And I know Legislator Gonsalves, and also
4 Legislator Nicoletto, their districts are
5 very close and near and dear to the 77 acres
6 and they know how traffic is already, and
7 they know how traffic will be in the future.
8 So that study is very important and it's
9 nearing completion. We have scheduled
10 several community meetings to finalize that
11 plan and we move toward adoption and, again,
12 open ourselves up for infrastructure.

13 We move forward with the
14 Accelerate Nassau Now which we have
15 presented to every member of the committee
16 and should have in front of you, and as
17 Legislator Ford mentioned, very important,
18 the economic dollars, and you're going to
19 hear later from Kevin Law, he's done such an
20 outstanding job in terms of fighting for
21 dollars for Long Island, and we received a
22 tremendous amount of money, and projects
23 both in Nassau and Suffolk in terms of
24 economic development.

25 The governor has announced an

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2 additional pot of money and, why I think
3 this hearing is so valuable and the county
4 executive believes it is, is because we do
5 need to work together to move forth so we
6 can put ourselves in a position to receive
7 some of those dollars by which to see the
8 expansion go through.

9 Accelerate Nassau Now, again, not
10 only does it touch on the Hub, as we are
11 talking about today, but it touches on
12 Belmont in County Legislator Solages'
13 district which is important to have economic
14 development in the Belmont region.

15 To the east in Bethpage, County
16 Legislator Walker's district, we want to
17 continue to see work done in Grumman. So we
18 have a plan from east to west, from north to
19 south, to see economic development, but
20 there is no single most pristine property or
21 available property -- and it's a county
22 asset, probably the best county asset that
23 we have other than the employees, the
24 employees and the people that work for the
25 county and its residents, the 77 acres of

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2 land in the heart of Nassau County.

3 So Accelerate Nassau Now, again,
4 asks the state for a variety of different
5 dollars. As you know, there are different
6 pots of money, and I'm sure Kevin will be
7 able to explain it much better than I can,
8 but various pots of money that allowed
9 itself to be used.

10 We took the model, Hempstead has
11 recently passed their new zoning ordinance.
12 Their new zoning now calls for an additional
13 development from a downsize from the former
14 Lighthouse Development proposal, but it's a
15 development that calls for a variety of
16 retail, commercial, hotel, residential and,
17 again, also will tie in any type of
18 recreational development.

19 The county executive, in keeping
20 the Islanders here, is at the forefront to
21 the residents as you heard with the loss of
22 now the Dodgers from Brooklyn, when they
23 left here, and you can see the dollars and
24 cents. You only have to go so far as New
25 Jersey to see what the Prudential Center,

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2 what that has done to the City of Newark,
3 and the development and the dollars. I
4 believe it's the 10th largest grossing venue
5 in the country, in the county, and that's a
6 brand new facility built in New Jersey and
7 what it has done to New Jersey.

8 Take Yankee Stadium and the
9 development along the entire Bronx corridor,
10 you saw Yankee Stadium developed and built
11 and obviously they won a few World Series,
12 that didn't hurt, but all you have to do is
13 look at the remaining development of what
14 took place. Taking the former Bronx
15 Correctional Facility and turning it into a
16 major development in terms of stores and
17 jobs and employment for people. That's what
18 we need here in Nassau County.

19 So we are asking the state, we
20 are continuing to meet the governor, who has
21 been more than open and willing to discuss
22 our plan and we will continue to work with
23 him. We have a meeting scheduled in the
24 very near future to discuss that and to
25 discuss the plan as we move forward.

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2 Just, lastly, I don't want to get
3 so into detail, more so answer your
4 questions as to where we currently stand, we
5 also recently put out a request for
6 proposal. We've had, the one good thing
7 that has come from the referendum not
8 passing has been, there has been
9 overwhelming support from people who have
10 come forward to say what they would like to
11 see built. Some of them are local
12 developers. Many of them come from outside
13 the region and they all have different
14 ideas.

15 So the proposal that was recently
16 released February 1st, an RFP for the
17 development of a public indoor recreation
18 exposition facility at the Mitchell Athletic
19 Complex, we have private investors. This is
20 something that is 100 percent privately
21 financed. We know we lack in exposition
22 space. Anybody can go to Nassau Coliseum,
23 of which I know we are here, as you
24 mentioned, on Valentine's Day. I told my
25 wife we can have Valentine's Day at the

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2 Nassau Coliseum tonight, we'll go out and
3 take a visit, I don't know if anything is
4 playing, but the option and the availability
5 of an exposition center, we don't have one
6 really. It's the center or what our expo
7 space at the coliseum is, again, leaks a 40
8 year old building. It's not a large open
9 venue. You have the columns throughout. So
10 we are very limited in what we can have
11 here.

12 I think Governor Cuomo in both
13 the State of the State and also his budget
14 address, he talked about how New York, New
15 York is one of the last, and one of the
16 lowest amount of convention and exposition
17 space anywhere in the country. It's amazing
18 how a state as proud as we are and as big as
19 we are, and, more importantly, a county as
20 big as we are, with the high wealth that we
21 have, that we don't have the ability to
22 attract expos here.

23 I met recently, on behalf of the
24 county executive, with Mokie McGowan
25 (phonetic), who does a great job in his

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2 role, at the tourism, exposition commission,
3 Sports and Exposition Commission for Long
4 Island. He represents both Nassau and
5 Suffolk County.

6 Nassau, for the last two years,
7 we have seen an uptake in hotel stays, which
8 is great, that's what we want to see. We
9 want people bringing their money in here
10 into the county, instead of our residents
11 bringing money outside the county. The one
12 thing that was missing, he stated in his
13 report, we do not have the venues that we
14 need to have. We lose on average 50 to
15 100,000 hotel stays a year, 50 to 100,000,
16 because we do not have the facilities needed
17 to, in fact, hold these events here. What a
18 shame.

19 When people are leaving here,
20 some going as close to Suffolk County
21 because they have a little more space than
22 we do, but they have better venues, or they
23 go to New Jersey or Connecticut or New York
24 City. Many of them want to go to Las Vegas
25 I guess for a variety of different reasons.

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2 But it's a shame that a county our size does
3 not have those facilities.

4 So that RFP, we have private
5 investment to answer it on February 28th.
6 We are confident, again, many people have
7 come forth with that wish to privately
8 develop. We will have that proposal
9 answered on February 28th. It will be
10 reviewed and then subsequently sent to the
11 legislature which we believe, again, you
12 will have 100,000 square foot indoor sports
13 and exposition facility right there in the
14 Hub that hopefully will be a start for many
15 more things to come.

16 On top of that, the last thing I
17 was going to mention, I thought the last
18 thing I was going to mention was the
19 exposition facility, but also the minor
20 league ballpark. We have the interest,
21 again, of the Ducks who presented their RFP.
22 They were selected. We did not move, as you
23 know, with that selection process, but Frank
24 Bolton, the owner of the Ducks has continued
25 on his desire. It is a model that has

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2 worked in Suffolk. It brought a tremendous
3 amount of jobs during the season, low price
4 entertainment. Again, people staying here.
5 Suffolk County received economic impact in
6 hotel stays. 70 different nights of hotel
7 stays for all the team's players, on top of
8 that, the dollars that are spent in the
9 community, jobs for our residents, and he's
10 actually submitted his own proposal to the
11 state economic development corporation on
12 top of that also through the governor's
13 initiative to receive dollars by which him,
14 and possibly the county, but more so the
15 state partnering and seeing that we get a
16 minor league ballpark developed.

17 So we are still moving forward in
18 all those fronts. Again, I can probably sit
19 here and talk for hours about where we are
20 going, but instead it's more important to
21 answer your questions.

22 LEGISLATOR FORD: Thank you very
23 much, Deputy County Executive Walker. I do
24 have a few questions and then I'll allow the
25 other legislators an opportunity.

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2 With this request for proposal
3 that we just received, I want to touch
4 briefly on that. I understand, like when
5 you talk about the exposition center, I
6 understand the need for it, but as we look
7 at the Hub and maybe when we look at
8 Belmont, we have to still take a look at the
9 fact that Governor Cuomo is looking at
10 Aqueduct to have a private industry invest
11 \$4 billion into an convention center which
12 will be an exposition center as well over
13 there.

14 What would be the impact if we
15 did a center in Nassau, would we lose a lot
16 of business to that convention center if it
17 is built in Aqueduct?

18 MR. WALKER: We don't believe one
19 bit at all. In fact, you're talking about a
20 four million square feet that the governor
21 was proposing, about \$4 billion. Obviously
22 that has to get off the ground, take a while
23 for construction.

24 The main thing for us, we have a
25 lot of people that have smaller conventions.

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2 Take the Marine Trade Association where they
3 are holding right now, they are utilizing
4 the coliseum when they can, if they can.
5 Again, it's becoming harder to manipulate
6 their way through with boats and other
7 things of that nature. They would be here.
8 So a Long Island business community that
9 wants to publicize their abilities and what
10 they offer.

11 You have sports groups that have
12 no indoor facilities whatsoever that are
13 looking to host tournaments and things of
14 that nature. So ours will be multi-faceted.
15 On top of being an exposition facility,
16 small concert venue, things of that nature,
17 you're also going to be able to host indoor
18 tournaments.

19 If you look now, we have not one
20 indoor facility by which you can actually
21 hold tournaments. People instead are
22 traveling across the country to warmer
23 weather just so they can be playing in the
24 cold weather months. Now they can
25 participate here.

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2 So we envision this as a complete
3 multi-faceted facility, the Long Island
4 people are looking for space now that do not
5 have space that are either looking, again,
6 why this has come about was because we
7 actually had, again, two private ventures
8 that have come forth and were looking for
9 property. They said we can't find property
10 big enough to do this. We want to buy
11 property or whatever the case may be and we
12 can't find it. We have a great facility.
13 Great parking. The start to an area where
14 it can expand into Museum Row. People are
15 now going to show up in this area. They
16 already have the need. They have addressed
17 the need and now we have to help them make
18 that come to fruition. So we do not believe
19 one bit it will be impacted at all, possibly
20 even help, because if there's going to be
21 conventions, you know, if you look at any
22 type of operation, it seems like the more
23 you have, sometimes the better off you do.
24 You talk casinos. It's not just
25 one casino, you want three or four. It

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2 drums up competition. People get excited.
3 They want to be in the area. They're going
4 from one to the other. I don't win here,
5 but I can win there. I look at the Giants.
6 I much rather see them play away because
7 they actually seem to win more on the road
8 then at home. You get that superstitious
9 attitude towards what you do.

10 So we do not believe one bit at
11 all that it will -- it will actually impact
12 both positively and drum up more recognition
13 and foresight for people coming here.

14 LEGISLATOR FORD: One of the
15 issues, I think, even with the Hub area, the
16 coliseum, that the space, the parking spaces
17 are limited basically to I think 6,000.

18 MR. WALKER: It's 6,000 or 6,500.
19 What is required in the Town of Hempstead,
20 the parking, 6,000 or 6,500. I don't
21 remember the exact number.

22 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: But even with
23 the expansion, and the one thing I have to
24 say, when they were doing the Lighthouse
25 Development, that was something that I

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2 myself did support. I thought it was a good
3 idea. I know the density, perhaps the town
4 of Hempstead wasn't too thrilled with that,
5 but even some of the components of that,
6 when you look at, when you're saying
7 rebuilding the coliseum, make it an indoor
8 sports arena, the exposition. With the
9 close proximity to Hofstra University, which
10 now has a medical school, one of the things
11 I really truly liked about the Lighthouse
12 Development, was that within that they also
13 had not only an indoor basketball court and
14 stuff like that, for practice and for games,
15 but also I believe they had a sports
16 medicine research center, I think it was
17 something like that. Something where it's
18 beyond just playing sports. It's good. It
19 attracts a lot of people.

20 MR. WALKER: They had a
21 widespread education component built into
22 their plan.

23 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Is there any
24 opportunity for providing something like
25 that at this site, or is this something,

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2 based on the proposal that it's not
3 something that we can include?

4 MR. WALKER: No, I think, again,
5 each person, whoever the responders are
6 going to be able to, in terms of this RFP,
7 are going to really put forth their greatest
8 interest and see what they believe will
9 work. The way it's structured, again, they
10 will be paying a rental component to the
11 county. The county will obviously receive
12 any type of sales tax from people that are
13 going to be shopping in the area, or, more
14 importantly staying over and things of that
15 nature.

16 But I believe the more widespread
17 and the more that you can include into a
18 project the better off you are. The more
19 level of flexibility you have, the better
20 off you are. Somebody that only wants to
21 come in and entertain or even focus on one
22 aspect or one group of people never seem to
23 work. They have to look at it in a
24 widespread holistic approach. The greater
25 good is to serve the greater amount of

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2 people for them as private ventures, and us
3 as having people come to the community.

4 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: So more
5 variety. My last question, I guess, or
6 comment, and then I will hand it over to
7 Rich Nicoletto, is that one of the things we
8 do face here in the county is the lack of
9 housing, especially for our young people.
10 We need to keep them here.

11 This, to me, would be an ideal
12 location because of the close proximity to
13 the stores and even with the coliseum being
14 there. But if it's something that cannot be
15 built, how can we tie something like this
16 and how can we sort of connect the Hub to
17 the Belmont area? Like, if we are going to
18 expand and perhaps even do casinos at
19 Belmont, I don't know what the plan is at
20 that point, at that location, but how do we
21 add that component into all of this
22 development?

23 MR. WALKER: That's a great
24 question. I think that's what I said
25 before, you start really from the east to

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2 the west, from the west to the east, to the
3 north and south. The greatest flexibility
4 that we're going to have is because we are
5 going to have that transportation component
6 complete. There is nothing better than
7 having the railroad system, the bus system,
8 up and running and flexible being able to
9 handle the greater need, and, more
10 importantly, people moving in and out of the
11 area.

12 So we've already looked, and the
13 final draft of the plan for the
14 transportation movement in and around the
15 Hub includes how we link better to the
16 railroad system. We have a great railroad
17 system not too far away from the coliseum
18 site, however, there is really no easy way
19 to get from any of the train stop locations,
20 either Mineola, Westbury, they're only a
21 mile and a half, two miles, maybe three
22 miles away, Hempstead Village. You have a
23 lot, a great flexibility in terms of the
24 amount of railroads that are there, or stops
25 or stations, but how do you move people from

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2 the station into actually the 77 acres and
3 into the Hub area? We are looking at that.

4 The renaissance with the
5 development of the village of Hempstead, we
6 have tied into that as well, looking at how
7 their development is going to proceed and
8 how we can tie a greater flexibility in
9 terms of traffic and moving people in and
10 around the whole Village of Hempstead area
11 into the Hub. It's connected. They're
12 linked. We'll figure out a better way to
13 move people in and around, expanding bus
14 service, and bus operations.

15 The greatest thing we have,
16 Belmont, literally on a train station right
17 at Belmont, unfortunately some of those
18 stops were cancelled, but, again, to make
19 Belmont a destination year round, which it
20 should be, it should be a crown jewel, we
21 have met with the state and also investors
22 and private developers that are interested
23 in developing Belmont, we are going to
24 proceed again with them. We offered our
25 full support to the state as they go forward

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2 with this. We have very limited control.
3 It's not our property. It's state property.
4 Nor do we have zoning controls with the Town
5 of Hempstead.

6 But the greater input that we can
7 have to help drive it home, we're going to.
8 Because, I think, again, to have that three
9 corridor and say everything in between will
10 get developed, but when you look to Belmont
11 to Bethpage to Grumman, and everywhere in
12 between, you start developing at those three
13 locations, people are going to come, because
14 you're going to have more people working
15 here, they're going to look to expand on
16 housing opportunities.

17 You take the Town of Hempstead
18 zoning that was passed, does call for
19 housing, does call for retail. It really is
20 a good plan. How are we going to get this
21 done? All of us collectively are going to
22 have to work, the legislators, the elected
23 officials in the towns and the villages and
24 the developers and the Islanders and
25 everyone come together, and I think we can

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2 have a very good outcome.

3 Time is ticking. We don't have a
4 lot of time to see something happen. I
5 think it takes everyone's best wishes, the
6 county executive, and I know I heard it from
7 everyone here pretty much at different
8 times. We want to keep the Islanders here.
9 I have a picture when I was three years old
10 sitting inside a Stanley Cup. I was a
11 little afraid of Bobby Nystrom, I tried to
12 run away from him but, whatever the case may
13 be, we want to keep the Islanders here. We
14 believe it's a great venue.

15 And for those Islander fans, the
16 concerts, and the circus and Disney on Ice,
17 monster trucks, and whatever the case may
18 be, this is what we want. This is what our
19 residents -- our residents live here to have
20 some quality of life. They shouldn't have
21 to travel to New York City to actually see a
22 venue. The amount of money that it would
23 cost to get to New York City, it's much
24 better to have them spend it right here in
25 Nassau County where they live and can enjoy

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2 with their family.

3 So times are ticking. We want to
4 make sure it stays here and we're working
5 tirelessly to see that happen.

6 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: And the clock
7 is ticking because I know last year we
8 missed the opportunity of getting state
9 funding and we want to make sure we do a
10 good proposal, we come up with great ideas
11 and develop this area properly, but I would
12 like it because we are on the radar of
13 Governor Cuomo and I want to make sure we
14 keep his attention and get some of that
15 money.

16 I will now ask Legislator
17 Nicoletto to ask his questions.

18 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Good
19 afternoon, Rob. The RFP that is in front of
20 us which you were discussing before, that's
21 solely for the Mitchell Field Athletic
22 Complex, right?

23 MR. WALKER: Correct.

24 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: This RFP
25 doesn't apply to the actual coliseum

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2 property?

3 MR. WALKER: Correct.

4 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: What is
5 the intention of the administration in terms
6 of the coliseum property? Are you going to
7 put out an RFP for that or are you doing
8 something else?

9 MR. WALKER: Again, as I
10 mentioned before, the current ownership has
11 a lease until 2015 on this site, June, the
12 middle of 2015. So it's not as if you're
13 starting it in January of 2015.

14 Conversations and discussions continue. I
15 think it's important, again, if we want to
16 have development and we want to keep the
17 Islanders here, we have to act now.

18 So depending on the outcome of
19 those discussions, as I said, those
20 discussions are fluid, they are ongoing, and
21 the decision will be made at that point as
22 to what's the best course of action based
23 upon financing, based upon timing, a host of
24 a variety of issues how we will go forward.

25 Do we go forward and have

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2 something submitted to the legislature
3 because we were able to reach a good deal
4 for the taxpayers and a good deal for the
5 residents of Nassau County and something
6 that the county executive wants to present?
7 Or do we reach a point where there is no
8 going forward and we have to think of other
9 measures? And at that point, as you
10 mentioned, it is the point of an RFP or an
11 RFQ, but right now we are working diligently
12 with the Islanders. Again, they have a
13 lease until 2015. We can sit back, all of
14 us and can say, all right, we are going to
15 hope for the best and we'll see how things
16 may fall and we can do something in 2015.
17 We don't believe that's prudent. No one
18 wins with that.

19 But, again, we want to make sure
20 that it's something that both the 19
21 legislators and the administration and the
22 residents of Nassau County are going to say,
23 you know what, this is good, let's move
24 forward, and we'll continue working, but the
25 time is now. Those conversations will

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2 continue and they need to continue.

3 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I
4 mentioned 2015 a number of times and that is
5 the date that the lease ends. However,
6 realistically, the Islanders are going to
7 have to do some planning. So it's not as if
8 the date the lease ends they are going to be
9 able to decide to move somewhere else, we
10 are really looking at 2014, because if
11 they're going to move somewhere else, or
12 they're going to stay here, they're going to
13 have to make some decisions I would guess at
14 least a year in advance of the end of the
15 lease.

16 MR. WALKER: I would say probably
17 even by the end of 2012, at the latest, the
18 Islanders are going to make a decision. I
19 don't want to speak on behalf of them. I'm
20 sure they don't want to discuss their
21 options, but they are looking at their
22 options and I think they have every right to
23 and, if I was the owner, I would be doing
24 the same thing.

25 But, right, time is of the

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2 essence. They have to make a decision. If
3 they're going to move somewhere else that
4 does not have a stadium, it's going to take
5 them two and a half years to build a
6 stadium. So we are looking at a time period
7 of -- something's happening in 2012. A
8 decision has to be made by all involved,
9 2012 is the year. It cannot be any longer
10 than that.

11 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: So would
12 it be fair to say that the administration at
13 this point will at least have some sort of
14 proposal on the table at some time this year
15 or conceptually what you want to do with
16 that property to keep the Islanders here?

17 MR. WALKER: 100 percent.

18 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Would you
19 agree that it remains a very viable option
20 to finance whatever goes in there with
21 private monies, or perhaps state monies
22 without dipping into the county's finances,
23 because the taxpayers have clearly said that
24 they don't want Nassau County tax property
25 money going into the property?

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2 MR. WALKER: I can say this, the
3 county executive is -- we listened to, as
4 all of us did, there will be no public
5 financing of Nassau County to build a
6 coliseum. Residents do not want that. They
7 have said it over and over again that this
8 is not a time for public financing of
9 coliseums. We will work with anybody to
10 make sure that we have the -- financing
11 options could be available, but, again,
12 county dollars, as you mentioned --

13 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: But state
14 dollars are on the table as well as --

15 MR. WALKER: State federal
16 dollars to assist with financing from
17 various entities, those are going to remain
18 on the table. We spoke to all levels of
19 government, the state, the feds, and also,
20 again, looking at financing options that we
21 can present and we will continue to do that.

22 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: I believe
23 it can be done that way and I think
24 obviously you would agree also.

25 MR. WALKER: 100 percent.

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2 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: With
3 respect to the RFP you mentioned before, you
4 went into a little detail, the Mitchel Field
5 Athletic Field Complex. I think you need to
6 make sure that the surrounding property
7 owners are on board with this. I remember
8 back in the days of the Goodwill Games, or
9 even before that, the county had put in
10 extra seating for the Goodwill Games and
11 there was a lawsuit filed on behalf of an
12 adjacent property owner that eventually had
13 to be settled by reducing the number of
14 seats.

15 So as you go forward with your
16 plan, just in terms of legalities, you're
17 going to have to either make sure they're on
18 board or make sure that the county rights
19 are adequately protected.

20 MR. WALKER: I agree.

21 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Lastly,
22 just in terms of the Belmont property, it is
23 in the midst of a residential neighborhood,
24 and I will state for the record, whatever
25 development, if any, has to be consistent

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2 with that neighborhood, and I personally
3 don't believe a casino is right for that
4 location.

5 MR. WALKER: I would say this
6 with Belmont, more importantly, again, we
7 have zero control over what goes on with
8 Belmont. We do agree with you 100 percent.

9 The conversations we had with
10 other developers have consisted of a minor
11 league -- a soccer stadium and also economic
12 development external of a casino. A casino
13 was not even mentioned by any of the
14 developers that have come forth. So, again,
15 I think it's very important, it is, to
16 community, and I always use Bethpage when
17 discussing the county executive.

18 Why the county executive was so
19 successful when he was a legislator in the
20 Grumman property was because he brought all
21 the community interests together, brought
22 all the community leaders together and the
23 town and said, what do you want? What can
24 we handle? What can the streets handle?
25 What do you as residents like and dislike?

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2 There was housing components built in, thee
3 was manufacturing, there was Lilly Popcorn,
4 there was car dealerships, some governmental
5 use. So it has to fit into the character of
6 the neighborhood and the neighborhood has to
7 want it. Every one is crying for economic
8 development, but you don't need economic
9 development that is wrong economic
10 development that we regret the minute it
11 opens.

12 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: Nice to
13 see you again.

14 MR. WALKER: You too.

15 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: I have two
16 or three questions. The first one is, what
17 criteria has been established for us to
18 qualify for state funding for
19 transportation?

20 MR. WALKER: You know, there's
21 all different criteria again that you have
22 to meet. With us, the most important
23 dollars that we think, because as great as
24 the state dollars are, which no state, no
25 governor or legislature has passed and put

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2 the amount of economic dollars into the
3 ability for townships and villages and
4 counties and private owners to actually
5 compete for. No governor has done what
6 Governor Cuomo has done. It exceeds it
7 probably 10 fold the amount of money that's
8 available which we cannot thank him enough.

9 The money we really open
10 ourselves up for, with the federal dollars,
11 is endless. The amount of money that's
12 available after using the federal studies,
13 and, again, this was a federally funded
14 study that has come forth through the county
15 and, again, we are completing the talks
16 directly about transportation. All of that,
17 the money that is really an endless amount
18 of dollars, and how to compete again for
19 that is first you have to have the federal
20 study. You have to have a show of what
21 you're doing. In fact, if you do not have
22 that federal study, you're not even eligible
23 to receive any of the federal dollars.

24 So it's basically implementation
25 dollars from a plan they asked for us to

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2 develop, and, again, signed off throughout
3 the way dealing with the FTA and Federal
4 Highway Administration and all the federal
5 agencies. So those dollars, and, again,
6 when you talk about any type of development
7 that's going to take place in the 77 acres,
8 you're going to need to do some work on
9 Hempstead Turnpike, and we all acknowledge
10 that.

11 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: Without a
12 doubt.

13 MR. WALKER: You're going to need
14 to do work on the Meadowbrook corridor. We
15 all know that. You're going to need to do
16 some work internally of the 77 acres. You
17 have to move people in and around. Right
18 now it's very easy to move around. You have
19 a giant asphalt parking lot that you can
20 move around any way you pretty much want.
21 So that's going to have to be dealt with.

22 You're going to have to do some
23 work probably in and around Merrick Avenue,
24 in and around some of the other streets,
25 some of the traffic, some of the

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2 intersections. You might have to look at
3 Nassau Community College. You do have the
4 influx of students. You know, everyone
5 talks about Hofstra, we always leave out
6 Nassau Community College. Nassau Community
7 College is such a great asset that we have
8 right in this location. And then, more
9 importantly, museum row. We all know that
10 some of those museums are suffering, that
11 they need to be attracted with people, so we
12 will be eligible for that.

13 The state has eligibility again,
14 and I'm sure Kevin will get into it a little
15 bit more. But the most important part for
16 the state, I believe, is to have a project
17 that is ready to go. Not to take -- what
18 did they call the ARRA projects, ready to go
19 again, literally shovel ready, you have
20 these great shovel-ready projects that you
21 never received federal dollars for because
22 you then couldn't comply with the federal
23 requirements, and what counties do it
24 different from the other counties and how
25 you lose money and everything else.

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2 What I think has been great about
3 this is that, they looked at every project,
4 the uniqueness of every project, and what
5 projects they think can really get in the
6 ground soon. Not tomorrow but very soon.
7 But they are real projects that the governor
8 isn't saying, I'm announcing this project,
9 you know, the Hicksville project that's
10 right around the downtown of Hicksville with
11 the think box, thought box, is such a great
12 project. He's ready to go. The person
13 behind the idea already has companies that
14 are lined up. He was able to receive
15 dollars because it made sense. Every one is
16 ready to come in, they're looking just for
17 the avenue by which to get construction
18 underway and do it.

19 So we are in a position, the more
20 shovel ready, or the progress that we make
21 that we either have the approvals of the
22 town, if the town needs be or we have a
23 contract that the legislature passes, or
24 whatever the case may be, the more we have
25 that's solid, the more the state and the

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2 governor is saying, look at this, Nassau
3 County, they're ready to go. The economic
4 development, the Regional Economic
5 Development Council has approved this,
6 they're ready to go. 19 county legislators
7 in a bipartisan fashion stood up and are
8 saying, we are ready to go. You have the
9 Islanders standing behind, the building
10 trades, who we need to have people -- I
11 already mentioned, we know about the
12 building trades. 40 percent in many cases
13 unemployment. Everybody stands together and
14 says, we have a plan, we are ready to move.
15 Then the governor is going to say, I'm going
16 to put some money into it. Because if I'm
17 the governor, if I don't have that, I'm not
18 putting money forward to say, let me give
19 Nassau County \$10 million, 20 or \$50 million
20 and hope something happens. This governor
21 has done everything right and he's moving in
22 the right course and it's for that reason
23 that we have to get our ducks in order and
24 ready to proceed.

25 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: Okay. Now

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2 I have attended the stakeholders meeting on
3 the Nassau County Hub study and the final
4 draft which came up with two alternatives.
5 One, of course, was the so-called Premium
6 Bus and the other was Street Car. Do you
7 think that that study will pass muster with
8 the state?

9 MR. WALKER: We do. And
10 throughout the way, more importantly, is the
11 federal government in that case. Throughout
12 the study, we've had the FTA involved, and
13 the process is involved. It really is
14 taking a life of its own because we
15 listened. The whole idea of the study is to
16 listen to people. When you have community
17 opposition, eliminate. Because you know if
18 you have community opposition and, I think
19 what is the worst thing that has happened
20 with the entire Hub, and the development of
21 the Hub, is that we always have created
22 community opposition.

23 Instead of actually building
24 people and putting people together in a room
25 and developing a concept that everybody

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2 agrees upon, we're going to keep going
3 backwards. That's what this -- the Hub has
4 been such a political football,
5 Republican-Democrats, Democrats-Republicans,
6 who didn't want to do this, and who didn't
7 want to do that, and who suffers? Every one
8 suffers. The development of Nassau County,
9 the economic development is not a political
10 issue. It's about bringing jobs and having
11 people put to work. That's what the county
12 executive has laid out very clearly. He
13 believes it's about putting people to work,
14 finding the right development at the right
15 cost, in the right locations and letting
16 everybody sit there in an open transparent
17 process of what we can develop and what we
18 can't.

19 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: The
20 objective of that study was to connect the
21 west with the east and the north with the
22 south. And one of the major highways is the
23 Hempstead Turnpike area, and very recently I
24 think in the past few days we saw an article
25 in Newsday regarding Hempstead Turnpike and

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2 the many accidents that occur there. That
3 has to be a very major component of any
4 transportation plan that is submitted to the
5 state. Really and truly. Because I live in
6 that area. I know what it's like to try to
7 get from one end to the other. There's no
8 such thing as peak hours anymore. It's all
9 day long.

10 MR. WALKER: 100 percent.

11 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: And it
12 becomes a heartache for the people who live
13 in the residential communities. So there is
14 a great deal to digest insofar as
15 transportation modes for this particular
16 site.

17 I'm going to change gears at this
18 present time. The Mitchell Field Complex,
19 the development of the Mitchell Field
20 Complex, how do you see that to be a
21 catalyst for the coliseum property?

22 MR. WALKER: Because people see
23 movement, people need to see activity and
24 need to see us moving forward. For so long,
25 all we've done, and I mean this from every

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2 level of government, we throw out a proposal
3 and this is what is going to happen, and
4 then the next month it's a new proposal, and
5 the next year it's a new proposal, and five
6 years later it's a new proposal, and another
7 seven years go past and it's a new proposal.
8 People need to see start seeing activity and
9 to say that something is real. We need to
10 put the shovel in the ground and say we are
11 moving forward. So this becomes a catalyst
12 to say, you know what, we can get something
13 done. And the more where you can get
14 something done -- you know, a lot of people
15 blame us in government, the reason why
16 people don't want to come forth and work
17 with us, and I mean the private industry,
18 the developers, even small businesses,
19 because they say, the government process,
20 it's too long. It doesn't make sense. Why
21 am I doing this? I want to open this store.
22 I need you to get nine licenses. And then I
23 get my nine licenses, and then they say, you
24 know what, I missed one, that the eighth one
25 you really didn't have to have but now you

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2 need to get another 10th one.

3 People don't want to do business
4 with government when they see their
5 investment, they see their dollars,
6 especially now. We know less and less
7 people are investing. People are worried,
8 but there are people standing on the side
9 line that have the dollars and want to
10 invest. They want to come somewhere and
11 know that their investment and the dollars
12 that they start spending are actually being
13 spent in good use and they going to see an
14 end game. When there is no end game,
15 they're not coming.

16 I can say that. The one good
17 thing that has come out of the referendum is
18 that so many people have come forth and
19 said, you know what Nassau County, you're in
20 a heartland. You have a great resource and
21 great asset. We think we can do something.
22 We think we can do something.

23 So that has been stymied for so
24 long. We believe we can move forward. We
25 have to move forward as Legislator Nicoletto

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2 has mentioned, time is ticking. We have to
3 move forward very quickly. He gave the
4 timelines. Again, by starting to see some
5 activity, people are going to say, you know
6 what, Nassau County is for real. They're
7 putting their money where their mouth is and
8 they're making things happen. In this case,
9 we're not putting money, we're putting our
10 property. We're able to receive dollars
11 from it, we're able to put people to work,
12 able to achieve economic activity. If
13 nothing happens, in 2015, if nothing
14 happens, and we have nothing, believe me,
15 the status quo is no longer the status quo,
16 we will have nothing for years. Somebody is
17 not coming in in 2015 and all of a sudden
18 operating or building. It's going to take a
19 long time to build. Roughly over \$200
20 million in economic activities associated
21 with what goes on in and around Nassau
22 County Coliseum.

23 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: I'm just
24 going to close by saying that I think all of
25 us up here and those of you out there

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2 believe that we need to create jobs and we
3 need to increase revenues and, more
4 importantly, I think we have to make Nassau
5 County the county it once was. We need to
6 make it the attraction for others to see
7 what Nassau County has to offer.

8 So we have a lot of work to do
9 but I think we can do it.

10 MR. WALKER: Likewise.

11 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Good
12 afternoon, Rob. I remember back in the '50s
13 and '60s, even into the '70s, going to
14 Yankee Stadium and they had a terrible view,
15 a view that was obstructed by pillars and so
16 forth, and they rebuilt it. It was pretty
17 nice for quite a long time. Is that not a
18 possibility for this coliseum?

19 MR. WALKER: Anything really is a
20 possibility. You look at it now, to
21 actually rehabilitate the coliseum, you
22 would probably actually spend, because it's
23 so old, and it's so antiquated the way it
24 is, you would probably spend, and I believe
25 going back to the Lighthouse Development,

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2 and I know Mike Picker is here, I don't know
3 if he's speaking or can answer this
4 question, I believe it was roughly 325
5 million to \$350 million just to rehabilitate
6 the coliseum because it's in such poor
7 disarray. It's much easier to do it on a
8 baseball stadium because of the way baseball
9 stadiums are designed. My little bit of
10 knowledge from going through this process.
11 But for a coliseum, an indoor facility, it's
12 much harder to retrofit. In fact, if you
13 look at what's going on at Madison Square
14 Garden, they're spending over a billion
15 dollars building, or retrofitting the
16 Garden. It's beautiful. When they are
17 finished with the -- I think it's over a
18 billion dollars when it's finally finished,
19 but for looking at these dollars and cents,
20 again, it was roughly \$325 million, \$350
21 million to retrofit and probably anywhere
22 near the same amount of money to build a
23 brand new coliseum.

24 When you build a brand new
25 coliseum, that's when you can put in all

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2 those other bells and whistles by which you
3 can look at retrofitting later on in life
4 because you're already seeing that going
5 forth.

6 When coliseums were built 30, 40
7 years ago, there is no look to retrofit. It
8 was, here it is, we're building it, this is
9 great, let's get in the ground, let's play.
10 You look at the cost of what the coliseum
11 was then, somebody was talking about \$35
12 million or \$40 million to build the original
13 coliseum. It's good business to be in.

14 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I think
15 everybody agrees that probably there ought
16 not to be any county money going into this
17 thing. The federal and state dollars, they
18 would cover I guess the infrastructure
19 costs, because there would be tremendous
20 infrastructure costs. Do you think it would
21 cover all of it?

22 MR. WALKER: Yes, we believe --
23 it all depends on the level of development,
24 what exists. We all know it's not just
25 about a coliseum, it's about an overall

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2 development of the entire 77 acres.
3 Depending on what that development
4 ultimately is decided, and ultimately
5 approved by the Town of Hempstead, will
6 impact what type of work you need to do.

7 Building a new coliseum, if you
8 decided to build a new coliseum tomorrow,
9 the coliseum is operating, the old coliseum
10 comes down, there is really no
11 infrastructure needed because it's the same
12 thing we have today, although, as mentioned,
13 we know we have a traffic concern, but that
14 traffic concern is actually sometimes less
15 traffic during the games than they are
16 during the off game hours, or off facility
17 use hours. So you wouldn't need immediate
18 infrastructure. Where you're going to need
19 that infrastructure is going to be based
20 upon the remaining development of that
21 acreage.

22 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Wouldn't you
23 want to put in a garage, I've heard that
24 said, instead of acres and acres of parking?

25 MR. WALKER: 100 percent. That

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2 is the one holdup with development.
3 Everyone that we have met with, and
4 listening to everyone, you need to have a
5 parking garage on that site. The good thing
6 about it is, the parking garage doesn't have
7 to go in tomorrow. The parking garage can
8 go in prior to the remaining development.
9 You can develop and build a parking garage
10 at that same time. Or, again, you would
11 stage development. I believe the Lighthouse
12 Development was going to be a ten year
13 build-out, an eight to ten year build-out.
14 You would have the same thing, I'm sure,
15 with any type of development here. So all
16 of that is built into your overall
17 construction development plan.

18 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Now everybody
19 wants the Islanders to stick around. Do you
20 have a backup? What happens if, for
21 whatever reason, Charles Wang gets a better
22 offer somewhere else and goes?

23 MR. WALKER: If Charles -- I can
24 say one thing. Charles has been nothing but
25 saying he wants to stay here in Long Island,

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2 here in Nassau County, this is where his
3 home is. But it is up to him and all of us,
4 you know, collectively to keep them here.
5 If they decide to leave again, as mentioned
6 before, there are several options available.

7 You have another potential use
8 could be another team coming in, who knows?
9 It could be a basketball team, I don't want
10 to guess because there has been no
11 discussions that way. You could see a venue
12 that doesn't have hockey, has other
13 operations. Totally speaking
14 hypothetically, it could be just a concert
15 venue. It's totally unknown at that point.

16 Again, the contract would expire
17 2015, at that point they decide to leave.
18 The county would go out and solicit options
19 via an RFP, an RFQ.

20 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: But the
21 options that we are looking for probably
22 today would only involve, in other words,
23 with the RFP or RFQ that we put out there,
24 would only contemplate a development with
25 the Islanders in it, or is it kind of open

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2 ended?

3 MR. WALKER: An RFP is open
4 ended. You want to pursue all options.
5 Again, this is what has happened in the
6 past. Everything was just literally laid
7 out. This wasn't supposed to be. You take
8 away the flexibility. Again, people propose
9 things that, they're either unrealistic or
10 realistic. You have community opposition.
11 Immediately you have community opposition.
12 People start taking steps back and instead
13 of moving the ball forward, or in this case
14 moving the puck forward, we always move it
15 backwards. We always regress instead of
16 moving it forward for so many years.

17 Again, this has been a political
18 football for so long because people were
19 able to say, I like that in that proposal,
20 and I like this in that proposal, and I like
21 that in that proposal, I like this, I don't
22 like this, I don't like that, and I don't
23 like this, and then nothing ever moved
24 forward.

25 MR. WALKER: Yes, cherry picking.

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2 But I'm glad to hear you are going to have
3 it open ended because that enhances your
4 bargaining power in both directions.

5 MR. WALKER: Yes. And, again,
6 hopefully we may come back and say we didn't
7 have to because we have a good financial
8 deal in place that we want to present to the
9 legislature and we move forward.

10 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: You know, you
11 made a really good presentation before about
12 the economic benefits of having the coliseum
13 there and perhaps some additional
14 development. I think it's a double whammy
15 though if things do lie fallow for a while,
16 you are going to lose a lot of what you've
17 got now, and that would be considerable too,
18 wouldn't it?

19 MR. WALKER: 100 -- the status
20 quo doesn't remain anymore. 2015 there is
21 no status quo. The status quo is over. We
22 have an empty 77 acres. No property.

23 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: And a lot of
24 the hotels and a lot of the businesses
25 around there right now would probably be

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2 lost, wouldn't they?

3 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Legislator
4 Solages.

5 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: The first
6 point for clarification, this report is
7 dated October 14th, 2011, is that the
8 correct date?

9 MR. WALKER: Yes, this is what
10 was submitted. This was the date, the
11 deadline, the due date for Accelerate
12 Nassau, yes.

13 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Can you tell
14 us more about the possibility of partnership
15 with the state with regards to the Belmont
16 Park?

17 MR. WALKER: Sure. Again, we're
18 very limited in terms of right now,
19 basically we have to control. It's
20 state-owned land. The Town of Hempstead
21 zoning, depending on what will be developed
22 or how the state wants to proceed, either
23 with the State Economic Development
24 Corporation, or, again, working with us.

25 What we asked, again, if the

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2 state did not want to move forward on the
3 development, we would be glad to take the
4 property and work with the town in terms of
5 developing the property, utilizing proper
6 zoning and with the neighborhood, and
7 developing something with a developer
8 ourselves, or partner with the state in
9 terms of supporting them on any initiative
10 that they in fact want.

11 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: I'm glad
12 before you mentioned that the referendum
13 last year on August 1st was a great learning
14 experience for all of us and that we learned
15 that the county, the residents are tired of
16 us just bonding away our future, continuing
17 to use the county's credit card for the
18 future generations, like the young people
19 here in the audience pay for these projects.

20 You mentioned before that the RFP
21 at the Mitchell Field complex calls for 100
22 percent private financing?

23 MR. WALKER: Correct.

24 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: That's
25 correct, great. Can you give me a promise as

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2 to this project, that it will also be
3 private financing and not public financing?

4 MR. WALKER: The coliseum?

5 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Yes.

6 MR. WALKER: The county executive
7 has said very openly that there will be no
8 public dollars coming out to pay for the
9 coliseum.

10 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Great. My
11 last question is, have you considered how to
12 attract green industry as part of the Hub
13 development, such as solar energy, fuel cell
14 technology, energy efficiency, pollution
15 control?

16 MR. WALKER: One of the greatest
17 things for those of you that do or don't
18 know, we actually have a plant right outside
19 the coliseum, right between the coliseum and
20 Nassau Community College, which the county
21 is going to have the opportunity to, in
22 fact, buy. I believe 2016. Right along the
23 same time as, I think within six months of
24 the coliseum and the SMG lease expiring.

25 We have the opportunity to buy

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2 that. That actually heats, it's a lot of
3 steam use and other things such as that. We
4 have worked tirelessly on green industry and
5 the manufacturing here in Nassau County
6 figuring out ways to manufacture either
7 geothermal, solar, whatever it may be, fuel
8 cells. We met with companies in terms of
9 attracting them. The IDA, which I know
10 you're going to hear from later is going to
11 talk about the jobs that they have kept,
12 1,300 new jobs, retaining 800 jobs. They're
13 working again with other companies in terms
14 of making sure that they continue to be
15 here.

16 But, again, all this comes back
17 to taxes. The county executive and the
18 legislature has not raised taxes two
19 consecutive years, two consecutive no tax
20 increase budgets. The reason why I say that
21 is because we have to attract business. In
22 order to attract business, we have to use
23 our resources that are available.
24 Businesses cannot afford to pay what they
25 are paying. They definitely cannot afford

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2 to pay more. So we will continue to proceed
3 in that fashion, and also use the IDA to, in
4 fact, develop jobs.

5 Part of this in the plan talks
6 about actually having some type of
7 bio-science center, bio-educational centers,
8 utilizing Hofstra and Nassau Community
9 College. We really have the 77 acres
10 surrounded by the greatest facilities you
11 could possibly need. People that can get on
12 the train to come here that could see and
13 work, manufacture, roads, moving people by
14 freight. There's so many great
15 opportunities available with the Hub and we
16 will continue to look at that. We have
17 actually met with two companies that have an
18 interest in expanding and building here,
19 solar energy right here, and we will
20 continue to work with them on that.

21 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you.
22 I will defer my questions to Legislator
23 Denenberg and, also, in the interest of time
24 for the other speakers. Thank you.

25 MR. WALKER: Thank you.

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2 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Mr.
3 Walker, thanks. Rob, good to see you. You
4 know, I was thinking as I was listening to
5 Legislator Nicoletto, the first hearing I
6 ever chaired, and Legislator Nicoletto was
7 right next to me, was the Nassau Coliseum
8 hearing, and at the time it was County
9 Executive Gulotta, and the ownership was
10 Milstein & Gluckstern. We were reviewing an
11 SMG proposal to redevelop. I think
12 Legislator Nicoletto looked back at my notes
13 and whispered to me, "wouldn't it be
14 something if we're still here a decade from
15 now?" I hate to tell you we both are.

16 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: That was a
17 conservative estimate.

18 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: I think I
19 said to you no way. But, unfortunately, we
20 don't have -- not that we thought we had
21 that luxury, you said it very, very well we
22 don't have that luxury. I agree with you.
23 You say by the end of 2012 the team would
24 have to make the decision based on any
25 progression we're having in the Hub area as

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2 to whether it's viable to remain here or go
3 somewhere else.

4 MR. WALKER: Correct.

5 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: So I would
6 agree with you, and I just want to
7 understand the documents.

8 MR. WALKER: Better make sure we
9 put that on the record.

10 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Yes. I
11 wanted to make sure that that was on the
12 record. And I think that that's important
13 to all of us.

14 The request for proposals that
15 was just issued this month February 1st for
16 the development of the public indoor recs,
17 and exposition facility, that, as
18 Legislators Nicoletto and Ford both said,
19 that's for Mitchell Field itself, the
20 Mitchell Athletic Complex itself, correct?

21 MR. WALKER: Correct.

22 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: And we're
23 not looking to give anyone the existing
24 outdoor stadium, the rifle and pistol range,
25 or the current softball fields?

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2 MR. WALKER: No.

3 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: So just
4 briefly, what kind of proposal are we
5 looking to get in terms of this when you say
6 first class facility, accommodating a wide
7 range of community, sport rec, exhibition,
8 what are you looking for?

9 MR. WALKER: As you mentioned,
10 you have the rifle range, it's run by the
11 parks department, it's a public pistol rifle
12 range. That's remaining there. You have
13 the front, for those when you drive in, you
14 have on the right, you have a small butler
15 building that's utilized right now by an
16 outside contractor, and some by the county.
17 That's staying there.

18 The stadium that was built for
19 the international games for the disabled
20 back in 1984. And then you have four
21 softball fields just to the west of that.
22 That's remaining. We have two baseball
23 fields on the east, I guess, the eastern
24 portion of the stadium. One of those fields
25 are going to remain. We believe one of

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2 those fields, again, enclosed, it's roughly
3 about 100,000 square feet. You can fit a
4 little more than that. You can close one of
5 those facilities based upon various
6 proposals that come in. You can enclose one
7 of those baseball fields. They would become
8 the exposition and sports facility. Again,
9 everybody -- I don't want to tell people
10 what they should propose, so I will be
11 careful in my words, other than to say, just
12 listening to people who have expressed the
13 interest, is a multi-faceted facility for
14 both sports, sporting activities, sporting
15 events, tournaments, leagues, camps and then
16 also expos and small concerts would take
17 place in one of those facilities.

18 We didn't want to expand upon the
19 property, the footprint on the property
20 that's currently not in use. This is a site
21 that's already utilized. They play
22 softball, baseball, soccer, in those
23 facilities. You would still be able to do
24 all those activities plus -- and the most
25 important part, use it in the winter and,

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2 again, what I said is, I know from many
3 people that they're traveling out of state
4 to go to expositions constantly. They would
5 definitely come here. Some actually might
6 be participating in the proposal with
7 various vendors. They may or may not.

8 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: So just to
9 short circuit, we're looking for, it could
10 be more than one facility, or certainly --
11 but you're looking for something that would
12 be covered, an indoor facility, but it also
13 could be outdoors as well?

14 MR. WALKER: It's going to be
15 indoor. We want it to be indoors.

16 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: And it's
17 one facility that could include this
18 multi-faceted sports usage, correct?

19 MR. WALKER: Yes. That's our
20 request, that it be a multi-faceted indoor
21 facility.

22 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Thank you.
23 Just let me understand and then just a few
24 questions.

25 The Accelerate Nassau Now, Nassau

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2 County's job creation retention plan,
3 partnership with New York State, the one
4 that was a project proposal dated October
5 14th, 2011, this document was to show
6 various development in the three areas of
7 concentration that you gave in your
8 presentation in order to secure state funds?

9 MR. WALKER: Yes, this was a
10 state application process. You had to
11 actually submit an application. It's the
12 same application for everybody. It had to
13 be submitted and this was that document.

14 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: The state
15 response is how much money we could get if
16 we do projects that fit within this
17 proposal? I just want to understand the
18 process, how much can we get?

19 MR. WALKER: Yes. Kevin will
20 probably be able to explain it a little
21 better because he was the co-chairman of one
22 of the regional council, but basically what
23 the state did, they moved money around from
24 various departments from various
25 departments, tax credits, housing credits,

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2 transportation dollars, pretty much there's
3 a host of different criteria by which you
4 can apply, and there's various pots of money
5 assigned to all of those different areas of
6 grant availability. That makes it the
7 easiest terms to try to describe it. I'm
8 sure Kevin will be able to explain it much
9 better than I could.

10 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: So this
11 was our way --

12 MR. WALKER: We had to submit our
13 application. We submitted our application
14 based upon, again, one of the problems I
15 mentioned before, not a problem, but we need
16 to have solid framework of what everyone is
17 doing going forth. By which that would then
18 become an application or the second round of
19 funding by which we're building this.

20 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: What was
21 the result of this, do we know yet? I
22 understand what you're saying, but --

23 MR. WALKER: We have not --
24 there's been no dollars received from this
25 grant application.

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2 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Not yet?

3 MR. WALKER: No.

4 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: But we are
5 hopeful, right?

6 MR. WALKER: Yes, there's another
7 whole round of funding. There's other
8 dollars that have been added to the pot.

9 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Let me
10 just then ask, if you turn to page ten of
11 this, and I know this was our application to
12 try to at least get us in line or hope to
13 secure state funds that we would need for
14 any of these development to augment, I would
15 guess private funding.

16 On page ten you have -- we're
17 talking about the Hub area and redevelopment
18 of county property is anticipated to include
19 the following elements. So what you have
20 here listed, just to be short, mixed use
21 development for job creation, a new Nassau
22 Coliseum, a multi-purpose expo center, which
23 you elaborated on, a track and field
24 facility, a minor league baseball park,
25 public parking space, street-scape

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2 improvements which we all have heard is a
3 major impediment to getting the multi-use
4 development that we want, transit access,
5 new multi-purpose parking structure,
6 sustainable technology. So I assume what we
7 would want in here too has some high tech or
8 green type jobs and High Tech, correct?

9 MR. WALKER: Yes, but it's in
10 there actually.

11 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: What about
12 residential, is that in here too?

13 MR. WALKER: It says mixed used
14 development 5.4 million square feet of
15 development, sports entertainment,
16 residential, office, hotel, retail use, yes.

17 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: So what is
18 to stop us before the end of 2012 to put
19 what you have on page ten and 11 into a
20 request for proposal similar to the RFP that
21 we have for February 1st, 2012 just for the
22 Mitchell Athletic complex, but an RFP that
23 would go out, that would require a new
24 arena, as well as an anchor tenant, the
25 mixed use that you detail here, all under

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2 the guise of what the Town of Hempstead said
3 they would allow, which was far less than
4 the lighthouse and many developers said it's
5 not self-sustaining, they would need,
6 because of how scaled back it is, they would
7 need a public element which hopefully could
8 come from the state?

9 Do you envision an RFP this year
10 before the end of 2012 who can develop what
11 the town allowed under our guidelines for
12 mixed use for High Tech or green jobs and an
13 anchor tenant, a new coliseum, and maybe the
14 minor league ballpark?

15 MR. WALKER: There is nothing
16 stopping us except for one thing, is that
17 the Islanders and SMG has a lease till 2015.
18 So you put out an RFP, and they decide not
19 to respond. Now you're sitting there with
20 selecting a respondent that can't do
21 anything until 2015, can't start until 2015
22 unless the Islanders become part of the RFP,
23 part of their process. So that's one
24 impediment, which is a rather big one.

25 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: But if you

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2 require an anchor tenant, wouldn't that mean
3 that someone would have to either partner
4 with the Islanders or somehow figure out a
5 way to get another team when we know the NHL
6 commissioner said another team is not
7 coming.

8 MR. WALKER: Yes. And one
9 exception, no one has to respond. You don't
10 have to have a response, and then we are
11 back in square one. But I do understand
12 what you're saying.

13 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: I don't
14 think it stops us from sending out the RFP.
15 I liked what you have on page ten and 11.
16 And if we're saying to the state we want to
17 do this to get the state funding, an RFP
18 might push it along and help -- in fact,
19 help the team, not hurt the team, because
20 someone responding, whether it's in
21 partnership with the team or otherwise,
22 would have to come forth with the anchor
23 tenant if a new coliseum is included.

24 MR. WALKER: I understand what
25 you're saying. There is no impediment other

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2 than, again, we are trying to have the
3 negotiations and the conversations with the
4 Islanders who has the lease until 2015, and
5 see how we move the ball forward.

6 I would rather you ask the
7 questions of them, how they would feel about
8 it. I don't want to speak on their behalf.

9 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: I just
10 want to thank you and certainly this is
11 scaled back from something we all up here
12 both supported. A lot is made of
13 non-bipartisan, but 19 nothing we went for
14 the Lighthouse Plan. We've had
15 bipartisanship to try to create jobs here
16 long ago. You and I were on the same video
17 when it came to the lighthouse.

18 MR. WALKER: Yes, we were.

19 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: So thank
20 you.

21 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
22 much, Deputy County Executive Walker. Will
23 you be able to stay for a while in case
24 there are other questions?

25 MR. WALKER: Yes, I would be glad

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2 to. If you don't mind, I'm going to go to
3 my office and I can listen and I can come
4 back down.

5 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Perfect. We
6 know where to find you. Thank you. I know
7 that we did get a slip from Mr. Michael
8 Picker from the Islanders, but I'm going to
9 ask if he could hold off as we would like to
10 hear from Kevin Law and he has a time
11 constraint and Kevin has waited patiently
12 and we'll ask him to come up.

13 While you're coming up, Kevin, I
14 just want to also point out that Stuart
15 Rubinowitz who is cochair of the regional
16 council that was developed by Governor Cuomo
17 is not able to attend. He was indicated
18 that he was invited and I have to publically
19 say that we forgot, or his invitation was
20 lost in the mail, so to speak. So,
21 unfortunately, he had other plans otherwise
22 he would have joined us here as well.

23 But I thank you, Kevin, for being
24 here and I'll turn the mike over to you.

25 MR. LAW: Great. Thank you very

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2 much, Legislator Ford, and thank you for
3 inviting me and holding this hearing. The
4 next time Rob Walker offers me the
5 opportunity to speak before him, I am going
6 to accept, and if he had told me I'll be
7 only 90 minutes, I will say, I will
8 definitely take you up on that offer. But I
9 won't be that long. But I do want to make a
10 couple of points.

11 First, I'm wearing my hat as the
12 president of the LIA and then some
13 additional comments as the cochairman of the
14 Long Island Regional Economic Development
15 Council.

16 First and foremost, I think it's
17 critically important to keep the Islanders
18 here on Long Island. When I say "Long
19 Island," I mean Nassau or Suffolk County,
20 not Queens or Brooklyn, which is
21 geographically part of the island, and
22 preferably here at the Nassau Hub. And that
23 is our preference.

24 We are a region of three million
25 people. We should be able to support one

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2 professional sports team in our region and
3 I'm hoping that we can. Having a state of
4 the art facility enhances the quality of
5 life for our entire region and our business
6 community. Newsday just recently did an
7 article on the 40th anniversary of the
8 coliseum. It was neat to look back at some
9 of the stories and I remember many of them,
10 whether it was the four Stanley Cups,
11 whether it was the various concerts Doctor J
12 playing with the Nets in the ABA. I have
13 taken my boys when they were little to the
14 circuses there. It's something that's great
15 for the overall quality of life for all Long
16 Islanders, including the business community.

17 I think people need to recognize
18 that it's much easier to keep a professional
19 sports team than to let one go and then try
20 to lure another one into the region.
21 Especially when the two candidates would
22 probably be either hockey or basketball, and
23 published reports show that the
24 commissioners of though respective leagues
25 have said, bringing in another franchise is

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2 not likely to happen. We already have two
3 professional basketball teams in the region,
4 and I've seen Commissioner Betman quoted as
5 saying another team would likely not come
6 here.

7 So as often been said today, the
8 clock is ticking on the Islanders. I think
9 during the referendum, and we supported the
10 county executive on that, I think it's time
11 for a lot of the rhetoric to end. I think
12 we do need people to work together. When I
13 say that, I mean the county, the Islanders,
14 the private sector, and the Town of
15 Hempstead, because it's both a quality of
16 life business image issue for our region, as
17 well as -- and we need to recognize this is
18 a very significant real estate transaction.
19 A lot of the issues here surrounds the real
20 estate.

21 Obviously the lighthouse struck
22 out. The referendum struck out. We can't
23 afford strike three. We need to come
24 together and work together. The density for
25 the Lighthouse Project was obviously too

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2 high. The public wasn't thrilled about the
3 amount of public investment being asked for
4 them in the summer, but something needs to
5 give, and I think people need to be willing
6 to compromise. There needs to be
7 flexibility including at the town level
8 because my good friends at the Association
9 For a Better Long Island, who we have a
10 strategic alliance with, and we're together
11 on so many different issues, and we're on
12 the same page on so many different issues
13 for our region, they have indicated that
14 under the current zoning, you can't get the
15 rate of return on investment necessary to do
16 this. So I think there's going to be need
17 to be flexibility on all parties here.

18 I really want to commend County
19 Executive Ed Mangano for his leadership and
20 trying to think big and come up with a plan
21 that would work. Mayor Bloomberg wasn't
22 successful in trying to get the West Side
23 Highway built in New York City but that
24 didn't stop him from thinking big and being
25 a fighter for his city. So, again, I

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2 commend Ed Mangano for trying to think big
3 and to come up with a plan that would work.

4 Let me now put on my hat as the
5 cochair of Governor Cuomo's Long Island
6 Regional Economic Development Council that I
7 chair with my good friend Stu Rabinowitz
8 over at Hofstra. Stu and I have offered to
9 sit down with the county executive, Rob
10 Walker, any of the legislators. We want to
11 see something happen here. So we want to be
12 a partner on a plan that can financially
13 work. As was mentioned, the governor has
14 called for another round of funding for the
15 ten different regions of the state to
16 compete for.

17 The good news is, unlike last
18 year, we don't have to come up with another
19 plan. A big part of the process last year
20 was coming up with a strategic economic
21 development plan. Our plan was one of the
22 four that won a best plan award. Remember,
23 there are ten regions throughout the state
24 and we won one of the best plan awards.

25 Importantly, we included in that

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2 plan the re-development of the Nassau County
3 Hub as a reasonably significant project that
4 is incredibly important to our region. So
5 it's already in the plan. It's already been
6 approved. Our plan has been approved by the
7 state. So that's the good news.

8 What didn't happen and what was
9 alluded to during Mr. Walker's testimony, is
10 that we identified 13 transformative
11 projects for funding and the Hub was not one
12 of those 13 projects for funding.

13 I'm hoping, and Stu and I are
14 both hoping that that can happen this year.
15 We don't need to come up with another plan.
16 What we will be doing this year will be
17 competing for the funds with the other
18 regions. So we want to work with the county
19 and come up with a plan for the Hub that we
20 can support on the council for some state
21 funding.

22 But I think we need to keep
23 something in mind. I think nobody wants to
24 talk about it. At the end of the day,
25 there's a limited pot of money even at the

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2 state level. So we will fight as hard as we
3 can for our region to win again and, think
4 about it too, there are six regions that
5 didn't win, so we're hoping to win again.
6 So I know those six who didn't win are also
7 looking to win, but the governor set up two
8 pots of money. There is a \$200 million pot
9 of money for competitive funding and an \$800
10 million pot that includes a lot of state
11 agency funding that would not be applicable
12 to our Hub, which includes some NYSRDA
13 energy, grants, it includes some department
14 of transportation, includes some housing
15 funds, but there are some funds throughout
16 all the different agencies that, for a mixed
17 use project, might be able to work.

18 So, Stu Rabinowitz and I, we want
19 to be partners with the county. We want to
20 be able to support a plan this year that can
21 work. But I think everybody also needs to
22 take a step back, not box themselves in. I
23 think the town is going to need to be
24 flexible because at the end the day they
25 need to control the zoning, they are going

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2 to need to be flexible on what is permitted
3 and what's not and what they'll allow. I
4 think the Islanders need to be flexible, I
5 think the county needs to be flexible too.

6 Yes, the referendum failed. The
7 referendum failed because I think you went
8 to the voters for \$150 million, but if you
9 came --

10 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: 400.

11 MR. LAW: Right. It was the
12 parking garage that was the \$150 million. I
13 think everybody needs to be flexible. I
14 think the best thing that can happen is if
15 we all got in a room together to try to work
16 something out. The county, the town, the
17 Islanders, the private sector, and we are
18 certainly willing to play a role with that.
19 Let's stop the rhetoric, let's stop boxing
20 ourselves in with the positions. Let's come
21 up with a plan that can work and that we, at
22 the regional council level, can support,
23 because Stu and I said we'd like nothing
24 more, and even though we gave a lot of
25 projects in Nassau County some funding last

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2 year, it was pretty equally balanced. We
3 didn't set out to do that. But we certainly
4 did approve some projects in Hempstead, the
5 Thought Box alluded to, the Cancer Facility
6 at Cold Spring Harbor, in Plainview or
7 Woodbury. We want to do something here. We
8 would like nothing more than to do so
9 something here.

10 Those are my comments, and I will
11 be happy to answer any questions, and I
12 thank you Legislator Ford for this
13 opportunity.

14 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Kevin, I want
15 to thank you very much and I remember how
16 excited I was, I actually attended the press
17 conference that Governor Cuomo gave last
18 year when he announced the Economic
19 Development Grant, and then when he named
20 both you and Stu Rabinowitz as cochairs of
21 our regional council.

22 For me, I thought that it was a
23 great vision on the part of the governor to
24 commit that kind of money to New York State.
25 I think that his vision of economic

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2 development knowing that we need once again,
3 even on the state level, for revenue and for
4 job creation.

5 So I'm eager then to work with
6 everyone and to keep an open mind because we
7 in the county should piggyback off of the
8 enthusiasm of the governor and try to work
9 with him and try to work with everybody to
10 create something.

11 For me, that I know, I was
12 disappointed last year that the Hub was not
13 picked as one of the projects for state
14 funding. What is the time frame? I don't
15 know if there is a time frame, or if
16 anything has to be done by a certain time
17 for this year's funding, you know --

18 MR. LAW: Yes. We just had a
19 meeting. Our first meeting was last week,
20 our first meeting of the year. The
21 lieutenant governor chaired it. We are
22 learning more about what the process is, and
23 not everything is cast in stone yet for this
24 year, but there is a possibility that there
25 will be two rounds of funding. One in the

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2 spring some time and one towards the end of
3 the year.

4 So we should assume that's going
5 to be the case. That may not be the case.
6 But let's assume that's the case, so the
7 sooner we can get something in the better.
8 There is now a new consolidated funding
9 application. The county did submit one last
10 year. I believe that's going to need to be
11 revised. I think the whole thing -- a lot
12 of it could be cut and pasted, so it should
13 be a whole big burden on the county, but
14 it's going to need to be more specific than
15 last year's submittal.

16 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: How do we get
17 everybody in the room? Because, I'll tell
18 you, you throw a challenge at me, and I'm
19 one of these people, I'll invite everybody,
20 and we are going to probably -- we were
21 talking about having another hearing as
22 well. But I understand, because even with
23 the Lighthouse Development, that it took so
24 long, when we first heard about with then
25 County Executive Tom Suozzi proposed the

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2 idea to us, and then it took years, like he
3 had to do a RFP, we had to come up with who
4 he was selecting, and then waiting for a lot
5 of town meetings with the town. And I
6 understand their concerns. I'm not
7 criticizing. But how is it that we can get
8 it so we can streamline everything because,
9 I, like you, I'm tired of rhetoric. I
10 really want to see something done. I think
11 that we are wasting time, we're wasting jobs
12 and we're wasting money.

13 MR. LAW: Of course you want
14 everything to be transparent but you can't
15 negotiate a deal in a forum like this. So
16 it's going to have to be something
17 different. I'm not sure. I'm saying we've
18 offered to the county executive, we want to
19 work with him. If we can play a role in
20 bringing the various parties together, we
21 would be happy to do that.

22 I think it's critical that we do
23 something that includes keeping the
24 Islanders here.

25 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Most

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2 definitely.

3 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: You said
4 that we won, meaning the Governor's Regional
5 Council that's chaired by you and Stuart
6 Rabinowitz, won in terms of one of the four
7 best plans for funding, correct?

8 MR. LAW: Yes.

9 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: So how do
10 we now get, just bottom line, how do we get
11 redevelopment of the Hub, and I'm sure you
12 saw what Accelerate Now was, I think
13 virtually all of us, like a lot of the
14 features of the redevelopment that's cited
15 in that plan, the mixed use development, the
16 bio, or high tech innovation center, new
17 coliseum for hopefully the Islanders, the
18 expo center, the mixed use, all of that.
19 How do we get that as a plan that can win
20 funding this year, and how much funding
21 could we expect at best from the state?

22 MR. LAW: I'll answer that in a
23 couple of different parts. First, some
24 background. We, as a council, developed
25 criteria that had to be approved to judge

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2 the applications on. There were different
3 levels of criteria, but the ones that were
4 most -- again, to use a term that's been
5 overly used over the last couple of years,
6 as close to shovel ready as possible. More
7 imminent than theoretical. The good news
8 is, we included the Hub as something we
9 thought were certainly transformative for
10 our region in the plan. That's the good
11 news. We didn't fund it in terms of the
12 projects that were awarded.

13 I think, without going into our
14 deliberations, as a council, specifically, I
15 think, generally I can share with you, and
16 to compare it, we approved \$5 million or \$6
17 million for our Ronkonkoma Hub project,
18 which tries to tie in the McArthur Airport
19 with the Ronkonkoma Railroad Station which
20 is the most frequently used, or most
21 populated railroad station in the island.

22 There, the two towns, Islip and
23 Brookhaven, had already gone through the RFP
24 process and were on the verge of selecting
25 the developer. So it was further along. We

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2 weren't there yet with Nassau, so I think
3 that was probably the primary reason why it
4 didn't make the cut list.

5 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: So then,
6 just two more questions. Would an RFP,
7 similar to what I mentioned to Deputy County
8 Walker, I mentioned before an RFP that would
9 go out to the public which would require
10 this mixed used development where you had
11 the residential, hopefully you had the High
12 Tech or the green energy business, the
13 convention center, or expo center, a new
14 coliseum with the anchor tenant, if an RFP
15 was out there, I would envision that,
16 hopefully, if we got some bids, we would be
17 looking for big private investment, but also
18 any private investor responding being that
19 it be under the restrictions of what the
20 town of Hempstead would allow, probably
21 couldn't be viable if it was 100 percent
22 privately funded. We would need a public
23 element.

24 Is that something that would put
25 us more -- would give Nassau County a better

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2 opportunity to get this state funding?

3 MR. LAW: Well, I'm not going to
4 prejudge an application before us, but I
5 think the more progress that can be shown,
6 moving the Hub project forward, would be in
7 the interest of the county.

8 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Final
9 question, what's your council, on the
10 Accelerate Nassau proposal right now, from
11 October 14th, 2011, to get money for this
12 application to result in getting we would
13 need to do more or it can stay as is?

14 MR. LAW: That's something I
15 would like to sit down with the county
16 executive and discuss with him. I think
17 we're talking about -- there's not a lot not
18 to like in the plan. I think it's a matter
19 of fine tuning, and prioritizing the laundry
20 list of proposals contained therein.

21 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: A common
22 denominator in that that you were able to be
23 successful obtaining state funds, not just
24 the plans, but where those plans that
25 actually went to funding, in each case I saw

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2 that an RFP was out there, a developer or
3 someone had been picked, or was -- not
4 necessarily shovel ready like tomorrow they
5 could go out, but the project, the details
6 of the project were there, a developer was
7 there, and you knew that the funding would
8 go and the project was going to happen. So
9 I do think that an RFP process needs to be
10 moved. Is that a yes?

11 MR. LAW: Let the record reflect
12 he shook his head yes. It depends. Again,
13 I'm not going to tell the county executive
14 what to do. I think it all depends on what
15 is in an RFP. You don't want to put out an
16 RFP just for the sake of putting out an RFP
17 if no private developers are going to
18 respond to it. This becomes a circular
19 process that we've been engaged in for a
20 while. So that's why you need the Town of
21 Hempstead at the table because at the end of
22 the day, what are they going to allow --

23 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Up to a
24 certain extent they told us, right?

25 MR. LAW: Well, I think that's

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2 why there needs to be flexibility.

3 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: If it's
4 not viable, right?

5 MR. LAW: If a developer is not
6 going to be able to get more than what's
7 under the current zoning is allowed, that
8 means public investment has to be higher.

9 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Correct.

10 MR. LAW: So if we're trying to
11 reduce the limited public funds, that's
12 means we're going to have to see some
13 increase on what's permitted there.

14 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Right.
15 Something between Lighthouse density and the
16 density that's in their plan right now might
17 be necessary. And that was my comments. I
18 think everybody needs to be open minded and
19 flexible, all parties.

20 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Final
21 question. The MIS that Norma Gonsalves and
22 Legislator Ford both mentioned which you are
23 familiar with, I have seen you at those
24 meetings, is that something when it comes to
25 the transportation alternatives, light rail

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2 or bus rapid transit, is that something that
3 is also a possibility for state funding or
4 only at the implementation stage?

5 MR. LAW: It sounds like that's
6 further down the road. Very important. And
7 also, my good friend John Cameron, a Long
8 Island Regional Planning Council, working on
9 a comprehensive economic development
10 strategic plan which is necessary in order
11 to attract additional federal funds, so we
12 have a plan now that allows us to tap state
13 funds, we need these plans that you referred
14 to and that John is working on to tap some
15 federal funds because the infrastructure
16 improvements necessary to accommodate the
17 growth that's going to be required to give a
18 developer a return on investment, we are
19 going to need those funds to help mitigate
20 the infrastructure impacts.

21 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Thank you,
22 Kevin.

23 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Just to
24 reiterate, a small amount of public
25 financing then should be reasonable to us?

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2 MR. LAW: I think everything
3 should be on the table.

4 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Absolutely.
5 Thank you very much, Mr. Law.

6 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Legislator
7 Gonsalves.

8 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: Thank you,
9 Mr. Law, for being here.

10 You talk about flexibility on all
11 the parties involved, the county, the town,
12 the state. There is one other element that
13 needs to be addressed. The town's plan was
14 a plan that was listened to by the powers
15 that be primarily because the community
16 surrounding the coliseum property did not
17 appreciate the density of the original
18 lighthouse proposal. I think at this point
19 in time you keep saying that the town and
20 the county and all the powers that be should
21 come to the table.

22 There's another element and
23 that's the community. The communities that
24 are directly impacted by it, and I'm talking
25 about East Meadow, Uniondale, Westbury, and

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2 of course Carle Place, and we can even go
3 into Hempstead as a result. The people
4 spoke and the town of Hempstead listened to
5 what the people had to say. They were not
6 in favor of the density originally proposed
7 by the lighthouse.

8 So I don't know what kind what
9 kind of movement there can be as far as the
10 town is concerned without addressing the
11 communities first.

12 MR. LAW: Legislator, we always
13 have to ascertain the impacts to the
14 community, to the environment, and try to
15 address them in a plan. I come from this
16 perspective, from a more regional
17 perspective, as head of the LIA and head of
18 the Regional Economic Development Council.

19 This property is a regional
20 asset. It's great for the entire region,
21 but that doesn't mean there aren't localized
22 impacts that should be addressed. So I'm
23 not disagreeing with you.

24 LEGISLATOR GONSALVES: Well, I do
25 believe it is a regional gem for Nassau

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2 County, but I also think that the
3 communities at large need to be part of the
4 that table that you're talking about.

5 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I agree also,
6 but I understand too that whatever
7 development, any changes that we make at any
8 site or any area will have an impact on the
9 neighborhood. So we're hoping too that not
10 only will the Town of Hempstead, of course
11 we do need to have them at the table, but
12 hopefully we will be able to convey to the
13 residents in the area as well that we are
14 going to keep them in mind with whatever we
15 do decide to develop there which is very
16 key.

17 MR. LAW: Legislator, I want to
18 just thank you and commend you again and
19 really commend the county executive. I
20 don't want the county executive to stop
21 thinking big. I think he's trying to do the
22 best job he can, and he knows that he can
23 count on our support to try to move the ball
24 forward with this project.

25 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: And I thank you

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2 very much because I always admire your
3 leadership skills, and I have to say that
4 and I was thrilled when you were named as
5 cochair for the Regional Council of Economic
6 Development.

7 MR. LAW: Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: And I know we
9 are in good hands with you. I thank you
10 very much for your comments.

11 MR. LAW: Thank you, and Happy
12 Valentine's Day.

13 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: You too. We do
14 have a slip from Michael Picker and we would
15 like him to get up and speak and I know if
16 Mr. Cameron can just hold, we will have him
17 right after Mr. Picker. Mr. Picker.

18 MR. PICKER: Thank you,
19 Legislator Ford, and your fellow committee
20 legislators for orchestrating today's
21 hearing. I will keep my remarks brief.

22 The Islanders and the Nassau
23 County coliseum have been a fabric of Nassau
24 County and the Uniondale community since
25 1972. A decision was made more than 40

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2 years ago to bring professional sports to
3 Nassau County and also provide a venue that
4 the residents can enjoy for concerts, family
5 shows, trade shows and exhibitions.

6 I can't tell you how many people
7 have come up to me over the years and talked
8 about their memories of the coliseum. The
9 old barn as they called it was built to
10 support Long Islanders and their life-style.
11 Are we sure we want to throw all that away?

12 Besides entertainment, the
13 coliseum has provided good jobs,
14 construction jobs in the early '70s, plus
15 temporary and permanent work in the venue,
16 and at the surrounding businesses over all
17 these years. When people work, they have
18 money to support their families, pay their
19 mortgages, pay their taxes, and spend
20 dollars at local businesses.

21 Last year, more than 2,300
22 individuals received a paycheck from the
23 activity just at the coliseum. We need to
24 keep these people working. If a new arena
25 is built, there will be almost 2,000

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2 construction job years of work. This work
3 will generate almost \$150 million of
4 earnings. A new facility projects over
5 3,000 ongoing jobs and another almost \$150
6 million of annual earnings. Jobs mean a
7 healthier economy, and a healthier economy
8 means better revenues for Nassau County.

9 It's also estimated that the
10 first year of a new facility, sales and
11 entertainment tax revenues will be
12 approximately \$9 million. Without a new
13 facility, these economic factors go away.
14 Should we all throw this away too?

15 I could go on and on with facts
16 and figures. But it's clear as day that a
17 decision to bring a venue to Nassau County
18 was right when it was made back in 1972, and
19 a new venue is needed not only to keep the
20 Islanders in Nassau County but to provide a
21 facility that can compete against all the
22 new facilities that have cropped up in the
23 New York New Jersey area for all the
24 entertainment options.

25 Our economy can't afford to lose

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2 what we have, and we need a venue to spur
3 financial growth, as well as be a catalyst
4 for the development for the area and to
5 continue our quality of life right here on
6 Long Island.

7 Time is of the essence and I
8 believe if we work together across party
9 lines, we can get this county and its
10 residents what it deserves, a new state of
11 the art venue, retention of the Islanders,
12 concerts, and family shows, retention of
13 existing jobs and revenue streams, and the
14 creation of new jobs and revenue streams.
15 Thank you.

16 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
17 much. And I know, Mr. Picker, I don't think
18 that anybody would disagree with you that
19 there is a need to keep the Islanders here.
20 They are a team that's been here for over 40
21 years, could be longer, 1972, and actually
22 my memory is that probably when they were
23 first playing at the coliseum, my brother
24 invited me to the game with him. As a young
25 teenager, he was totally embarrassed over

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2 the fact that I had no clue what was going
3 on with hockey at that time, and he never
4 invited me again. But I still remember it.

5 Yes, the job element is one
6 thing. When we talk about that it's one
7 thing having the Islanders here but if they
8 do leave, what happens to the coliseum and
9 that site, not only what you said, 2,300
10 jobs would be gone, but also a lot of the
11 businesses surrounding that community, the
12 delis, even the hotel. You would see the
13 restaurants, everything, that will be lost
14 and, at this point, as we said, the county
15 is -- we have problems with our finances.
16 We need to start bringing in revenue, and I
17 believe one way is of course through
18 economic development, sales tax revenue, but
19 also job growth especially in the private
20 sector is very very important.

21 I think, once again, I think we
22 all share your passion of keeping the
23 Islanders here. But I am going to turn it
24 over because some of the other legislators
25 do have questions.

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2 Legislator Nicoletto.

3 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: This may
4 be obvious based on your remarks, but the
5 Islanders want to stay here at the coliseum?

6 MR. PICKER: Absolutely, from day
7 one, whether it be the Lighthouse Project or
8 the failed referendum, the commitment has
9 been to Nassau County and that's -- if
10 everything works out, that's where we would
11 like to stay.

12 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: That
13 remains today?

14 MR. PICKER: That remains.
15 Nothing's changed.

16 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: The
17 coliseum as the home of the Islanders is the
18 Islanders first choice?

19 MR. PICKER: Nassau County and
20 that area is the first choice.

21 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: You're
22 willing to work with, assuming you are
23 willing to work with the county executive,
24 the state, or whoever it takes to stay
25 there, right?

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2 MR. PICKER: We are currently
3 talking to the county executive as Rob
4 Walker brought up, except as I mentioned in
5 my remarks, time is of the essence. We can
6 not be talking any more about what, ifs,
7 can, should, et cetera. Unfortunately, at
8 this point in time since the Lighthouse
9 Project first was discussed in 2003, we are
10 at the end of that road. As it was brought
11 up in earlier conversations, it's a two and
12 a half, three year build project, if the
13 Islander lease expires, which it does, in
14 July of 2015, if you work your way back, you
15 realize that we have to make a decision
16 soon, and we would love for that decision to
17 lead to a new building here, not only again
18 for the Islanders, but to bring the other
19 acts and entertainment options that are so
20 important and we're so used to here in
21 Nassau County.

22 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you
23 very much and we hope that we can work with
24 you and get this done finally.

25 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Legislator

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2 Kopel.

3 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Thank you.
4 Mr. Picker, good afternoon. I'm trying to
5 understand, and please help me, with the
6 economics of all of this. Right now the
7 Islanders have the rights to the coliseum?

8 MR. PICKER: Correct.

9 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: If you rent it
10 for third party events, that revenue comes
11 to the Islanders?

12 MR. PICKER: No, what happens
13 now, SMG is the facility manager at the
14 facility. The Islanders are just a tenant
15 at the facility today. They have a lease
16 that goes through 2015. SMG, on behalf of
17 the county, books other events, obviously
18 the Islanders play 41 regular season games
19 there, there is obviously many more dates
20 available to use the facility.

21 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Right. So in
22 a new scenario you would anticipate the same
23 type of arrangement, in other words, where
24 the Islanders would be a tenant of another
25 entity that would go and build it?

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2 MR. PICKER: Yes. What has been
3 proposed and which we will look to
4 accomplish is, that an entity controlled by
5 Charles Wang will be -- run the arena
6 through, again, for lack of a better way of
7 saying it, ArenaCo (phonetic). Right now,
8 the Islanders would be a tenant to ArenaCo
9 and commit to 30 years on Long Island.
10 Another 30 years. So you would have the
11 Islanders here until 2045.

12 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: So the ArenaCo
13 would be owned by Charles Wang?

14 MR. PICKER: Correct.

15 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: That ArenaCo
16 would be responsible to renting out to other
17 tenants as well?

18 MR. PICKER: Correct. To
19 bringing acts to, entertainment options to
20 the facility.

21 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: And ArenaCo
22 would then have a ground lease with the
23 county?

24 MR. PICKER: That's open to
25 discussion, but clearly that's an option

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2 that could be done. Obviously when you take
3 into account all the different economics,
4 you have to decide whether it's a sale of
5 the land or it's a 99 year lease or
6 something along those lines.

7 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: So obviously
8 I'm not trying to get into too much detail
9 or to negotiate anything over here, it's not
10 my role obviously. But, in your view, I
11 guess, would the Islanders together with any
12 other events, just put it that way, any
13 other tenants and events, would that be
14 enough to pay for the ongoing carrying costs
15 if you fully capitalize, in other words, the
16 cost of the construction of the contemplated
17 new arena, would these revenues carry it?

18 MR. PICKER: I won't negotiate.

19 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I'm don't mean
20 that --

21 MR. PICKER: And I'm trying to be
22 cognizant of what you're asking and why
23 you're asking it. It probably has to be a
24 combination of a lot of different things
25 which some were mentioned today, state,

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2 federal, county. There's all participation.
3 We have to come together to figure out how
4 to make this work.

5 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: In other
6 words, I'm talking about, if you put the
7 infrastructure aside, additional roads,
8 additional transportation, which is probably
9 the role of government, I think nobody
10 argues about that, what I'm trying to
11 understand is, will the arena support itself
12 in your view?

13 MR. PICKER: It would need public
14 financing in some way and that could come
15 from the state or federal government and/or
16 other options that are out there.

17 What I want to make sure
18 everybody understands, all the
19 infrastructure that is being discussed is in
20 our opinion really a phase two. We have to
21 make a decision on the coliseum itself
22 because the Islanders have to make a
23 decision on heir own. And building it, it
24 won't be built until 2015, and then we have
25 to take down the existing coliseum. So

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2 you're really not talking about development
3 on that site until probably 2016.

4 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I'm not
5 worried about the infrastructure. I agree
6 with that. I guess what I'm getting at, the
7 arena itself, that's what I want simply to
8 understand. The arena itself, I would
9 understand you getting support such as,
10 let's say, an IDA type of situation where
11 there might be tax abatement, where there
12 might be some interest rate advantages by
13 virtue of an IDA ownership and loan.

14 Are you thinking or contemplating
15 of public investment beyond that?

16 MR. PICKER: I think there has to
17 be a combination of various things to make
18 this work. Private investment by itself
19 probably doesn't do it just for the
20 coliseum. You have to understand, when you
21 sell a concert ticket, that revenue does not
22 go to the building. That goes to the
23 entertainer. They basically rent the
24 facility from you. They pay you a fee but
25 it's like --

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2 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I understand
3 that.

4 MR. PICKER: So I'm just saying,
5 it's a combination of a lot of things, what
6 we heard and what we've seen over the years,
7 we put together in working on a plan with
8 the county executive, and hopefully we can
9 bring that to fruition, which would mean it
10 would come in front of the legislative body
11 to see if we can work that out, and we're
12 hoping to do that sooner than later.

13 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: So putting
14 aside the emotional issue of keeping the
15 Islanders, what would justify public
16 investment would be the additional jobs, in
17 other words, it would be the ancillary
18 revenue coming to the public entities?

19 MR. PICKER: Yes, well, at first
20 what you would look at is a retention issue.
21 It's not just a job creation issue. We've
22 got to be cognizant of the issue of numbers
23 that are there today. No matter what we
24 talk about, it has to be factored in that if
25 the team is not here, the venue doesn't

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2 stay. Then the numbers we were just talking
3 about, unfortunately, are not employed at
4 that facility, and if there's other options
5 out there in Nassau County or in Long
6 Island, that would be great. If not,
7 unfortunately those people don't have
8 paychecks.

9 So first there is a retention
10 issue. By solving the retention issue, you
11 then allow it to grow after that because
12 once you have a new \$350, 400 million venue,
13 you can now develop around that to start the
14 growth that Nassau County so desperately
15 needs, but you have got to do phase one
16 before you get to anything else.

17 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: So how is it
18 just out curiosity then that such venues as,
19 I believe Yankee Stadium, besides the
20 infrastructure, wasn't that financed
21 entirely by the team?

22 MR. PICKER: No, there's a lot of
23 work that needs to be done. They're not
24 financed entirely by the team. There are
25 different ways they have used, the city has

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2 used, whether it be for Citifield or Yankee
3 Stadium or New Jersey did at the Prudential
4 Center where the Port Authority was involved
5 in that venue, and even Brooklyn has
6 different ways that they received public
7 assistance to work with their private
8 dollars. And it has to somehow be a private
9 public partnership in order to get this done
10 and we believe it can be done, and I hope
11 that we'll have a successful thing to take
12 to the leg.

13 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I look forward
14 to seeing the proposals and the numbers.
15 Thank you.

16 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: I agree that
17 it has to be a public private partnership.
18 Can you just further emphasize the revenue
19 that we gain through the entertainment tax
20 revenue and to the sales tax revenue?

21 MR. PICKER: Projected for the
22 first year of a new building, it's projected
23 to be approximately \$9 million a year.
24 That's assuming the entertainment tax stays
25 at the dollar and a half that it is today

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2 and the sales tax stays at its current
3 percentage.

4 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you.

5 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
6 much. I'm going to yield the floor to
7 Legislator Denenberg soon. But I know when
8 we touched upon, even when you said phase
9 two with the infrastructure. For me, what I
10 found very commendable about -- even with
11 the study with the Lighthouse Development is
12 that there was focus not only on Hempstead
13 Turnpike, but also Charles Lindbergh
14 Boulevard and to provide a different access
15 into the arena, into that whole property.

16 One of the things I guess when we
17 look at, not only with the coliseum, provide
18 the Islanders a home, but I think even with
19 the original development under the
20 lighthouse, and I don't know if this is
21 something that the team is also looking at
22 as well, where you can expand on the
23 footprint or on the coliseum, like they were
24 going to provide restaurants and other types
25 of shops or whatever, because I think one of

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2 the complaints that a lot of the residents
3 have in regard to, whenever there is an
4 Islander's game, or a concert, everybody
5 goes there at 7 o'clock at night and
6 everybody leave at 11 p.m. The nice thing
7 about the lighthouse was that people could
8 go there at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, walk
9 around, have dinner, and then go, thereby
10 lessening the amount of traffic.

11 Is this something still that you,
12 as a team, you're looking at when you speak
13 with the county executive, and I'm not
14 trying to put you on spot, but is this
15 something where you're looking more for a
16 different type of package with the coliseum?

17 MR. PICKER: Absolutely. That
18 again would be part of phase two. You would
19 do complimentary product around the
20 coliseum. A coliseum will bring near two
21 million visitors a year to the site. When
22 you have that kind of foot traffic, you can
23 do certain things. It supports businesses
24 around. Obviously we own the Marriott
25 Hotel. We understand what it is on an event

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2 night and a non-event night. Champions, we
3 hired more staff at the facility at the
4 hotel when there's an event night. That we
5 know works for the surrounding venues also,
6 Borrelli's Restaurant, et cetera, that have
7 stepped forward in the past. We will look
8 to do a similar thing. You mentioned
9 before, and I don't know if it comes to
10 pass, but potentially sports technology was
11 what you were looking for before.

12 Charles obviously was involved
13 and was the founder of Computer Associates
14 and looking from his technology love with
15 his marriage of sports, if we can do that,
16 and add higher paying jobs to the area, and
17 different things, that's what we want to do.
18 We have to jump start this area.

19 As Charles has said before, this
20 is not going to solve anything. But it's a
21 catalyst to get our area moving. We can't
22 go backwards anymore. Rob used the term
23 status quo. It's not even status quo. It's
24 backwards and we're not happy with what we
25 have now. We've got a time frame to make

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2 decisions and we've got to work together to
3 make this happen.

4 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Sometimes maybe
5 it's good when our back is against the wall
6 where we don't -- like we don't have time to
7 sit around and discuss it, because I think
8 everybody is tired of the rhetoric. I think
9 we really want to see something happening.
10 I, for one, like everyone else, want to see
11 the Islanders stay here. I hope I will get
12 to go to a game in their new arena. And I
13 promise not to embarrass anybody.

14 MR. PICKER: No problem.

15 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Legislator
16 Denenberg.

17 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: First,
18 Mike, I want to thank you of course for your
19 friendship throughout the years, but,
20 moreover, for the Islander's commitment to
21 Nassau County. I think it's really very,
22 very commendable considering what we've been
23 through.

24 But the bottom line, certain
25 things I think are somewhat urgent. Rob

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2 Walker said, and I agree with him, that
3 realistically to keep the Islanders who,
4 where the lease is up 2015, a decision and
5 an agreement as to the future home of the
6 Islanders here in Nassau County would have
7 to be made by the end of 2012 according to
8 Mr. Walker. I agree, would you?

9 MR. PICKER: I would agree.
10 Maybe even sooner than the end of 2012. We
11 don't put specific time lines on this, Dave.
12 We know what we have to do. We're pushing
13 the envelope and we hope to have that answer
14 and hope to be sooner than the end of 2012.

15 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Now we
16 went from a grand vision or the lighthouse,
17 whether that was Charles Wang or Suozzi or
18 the Suozzi Wang combination which would have
19 been 100 percent privately funded but had
20 density and mixed used development, High
21 Tech, convention that, if I'm hearing you
22 right, supported an ability for a private
23 developer to fund the whole development
24 because they can make enough to realize a
25 return on their investment.

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2 Then we went to let's build a
3 coliseum alone on 100 percent public funds
4 and that was rejected. I personally think
5 right now, I was calling an RFP with mixed
6 used along the lines of what the town has
7 expressed it would allow, and page ten and
8 11 of the Accelerate Nassau.

9 So if I'm hearing you right,
10 that's still something that the team would
11 want to be part of, but all you're saying
12 is, it would always have to be phrased in
13 because the arena would have to come before
14 at least part, if not large part of the rest
15 of the development.

16 MR. PICKER: Correct. Just think
17 of the 77 acres. We need to build a similar
18 size or bigger sized facility next to the
19 current coliseum. You are going to have
20 materials being stored. You're going to
21 have different things going on. There is no
22 way that that development can be built out
23 until, A, the new arena goes up, and, B, the
24 existing facility which, again, has an
25 asbestos issue, various things to deal with,

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2 and the ground is replaced so we can
3 properly build on it.

4 So that's the phase and we've
5 decided to look at this completely in two
6 phases because of the time line for the
7 Islanders has forced us into the two phase
8 approach and we look at the development as a
9 secondary issue but a very important issue
10 because it helps the economic side, not only
11 with building a new coliseum, but obviously
12 for the good of Nassau County to create the
13 jobs and tax roles. Obviously the current
14 venue is not on the tax roles, but if you do
15 private development around there, that's
16 stuff that would help Nassau County.

17 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Thank you,
18 but now we got the date that it really is
19 pressing. We got the vision which can still
20 be mixed use development to maximize the
21 venue, the people that come into the venue,
22 residential, job creation, convention
23 center, two phases, but now we get back to
24 the funding. If I heard Kevin Law right
25 that from a practical standpoint, and we

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2 would certainly want some flexibility from
3 the town to allow more of a return on any
4 private developer's investment, but we're
5 talking about something if it was a public
6 private partnership for the development,
7 there is private funding, but there has to
8 be a public element. Hopefully we are on
9 time and thorough enough to get some state
10 funds, but we are looking to the public and
11 hopefully people will understand that if
12 there's a large amount of money coming from
13 a private investor from the state, we can't
14 absolutely rule out that the county might
15 have to come forward with something to
16 protect its future.

17 MR. PICKER: Again, I won't speak
18 to specifics, but what I will say is,
19 collectively we believe it can work by
20 everybody coming together. This may be a
21 different look --

22 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: I think
23 that's what Kevin was saying too.

24 MR. PICKER: This could be a
25 different look at than the first two. You

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2 mentioned the lighthouse, the lighthouse
3 clearly was funded through private dollars
4 through the development aspects, but it also
5 was contributing a specific amount to Nassau
6 County for not only roadways, there was a
7 bus contribution and we saw how the buses
8 turned out, but that was also contemplated.

9 The referendum, although it
10 failed, and clearly there was money being
11 put up by the taxpayers, there was a revenue
12 sharing back and there was always that side
13 of it where money would come back into the
14 county.

15 Now we've decided we're going to
16 have to go out this different way, which is
17 bring everybody together up front;
18 Democrats, Republicans, county, state,
19 local, et cetera, put it all on the table
20 and get that agreement before we come out to
21 the public and say, here's a solution that
22 we have so we don't have any more of that
23 fighting through the media.

24 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Until we
25 have something concrete, a proposal, whether

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2 it's through an RFP process or otherwise, my
3 point, until we have a proposal, we don't
4 know what the private sector is willing to
5 come forward with, and then how much the
6 state is willing to come forward with. It
7 would be great if it's -- instead of the \$2
8 billion Lighthouse Project, because it's so
9 scaled back, for argument's sake, it's \$1.2
10 billion, 60 percent of what it was, and a
11 private developer together with the team,
12 offers 700 or \$800 million, and the state
13 comes up with the rest, all of us up here
14 would love it. But I think that we've got
15 to get it on the table and got to get it
16 started and have to have a real application
17 to the Empire State Development before we
18 can even go to the public.

19 MR. PICKER: Correct. And you
20 have to remember the \$700 billion number,
21 again, we're just looking to build a new
22 facility now, which is nowhere near that
23 amount of money. It's probably in the 350,
24 \$400 million number. That's what has to be
25 solved right now. We believe it could be

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2 done.

3 All I can ask everybody up there
4 is to continue asking about this project
5 because it is important and the clock is
6 ticking. We don't want to have to come one
7 day and say, hey, listen, unfortunately this
8 is at decision that's made. We would like
9 to come one day and say, here's what we can
10 get done here, right here in Nassau County
11 to keep the Islanders here for the
12 foreseeable future.

13 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Thank you
14 very much and thanks for all your time and
15 your commitment to jobs and our future.

16 MR. PICKER: Thanks, Dave.

17 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you.
18 We'll try to move a little more quickly. We
19 do have John Cameron who is chairman of the
20 Long Island Regional Planning Council.

21 MR. CAMERON: Thank you,
22 Legislator Ford. I thank the subcommittee
23 for the opportunity to address you today on
24 the issue of the Hub development.

25 As Legislator Ford had indicated,

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2 I chaired the Long Island Regional Council
3 and we work on issues of significance for
4 Long Island in planning, advocacy, and
5 actually dealing with the challenges and
6 opportunities as we referred to them here on
7 the council.

8 We, on the council, have been
9 monitoring and actually been involved in
10 somewhat in an advocacy role for the
11 development of the Hub for a number of
12 years.

13 As many of you may realize, we
14 developed a 25 year sustainability plan
15 which was developed in four thematic areas,
16 the economy, tax and governance, environment
17 and infrastructure and equity.

18 One of the strategies developed
19 as a result of that was to ensure that major
20 projects of regional significance are
21 developed in order to insure that there is
22 economic development on Long Island here.

23 The council consisted with what
24 Kevin Law had alluded where the REDC
25 designated this project as a project of

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2 regional significance. We actually predated
3 them on doing this a few years ago,
4 designating the Hub as a project of regional
5 significance, not only for Nassau County but
6 for Long Island.

7 I think it would be worthwhile if
8 I sort of reflect on some of the facts so we
9 can sort of distill this down. There's been
10 a lot talked about on numbers,
11 responsibilities, et cetera, and to
12 reiterate what, not only what Rob Walker
13 said, and Kevin, and Michael Picker, is that
14 I think we need to sort of everybody to be a
15 little flexible on how this is going to get
16 developed.

17 If you look going back a number
18 of years, we had the Lighthouse Proposal
19 which, as many people had felt, was maybe
20 too onerous or too large in scope for that
21 site. That being said, is that I think most
22 people liked the diversity of the multi-use
23 aspect of the project. Everybody really
24 loved a lot of the elements of the project.
25 Some people had just felt it was too dense

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2 in the development.

3 But I think where there was a lot
4 of misinformation was back then, and I think
5 a lot of aspersions were cast towards
6 Charles Wang on the density of the
7 development and the lack of flexibility, if
8 you look at the amount of money that needed
9 to be contributed for public funds, for this
10 to be a purely privately financed project,
11 it needed a major significant project. I'm
12 not going to defend the density of the
13 development, but what I can tell you is, in
14 order to throw off the capital necessary to
15 privately finance this project, and that
16 time, that was the deal. Tom Suozzi charged
17 Charles Wang with coming up with a project
18 that could be purely privately financed, and
19 Michael Picker alluded to just some of the
20 aspects of it, on public infrastructure that
21 was necessary, to givebacks, to a number of
22 other public uses, there was a convention
23 center back then. There was like a half a
24 billion dollars of public improvements that
25 were necessary.

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2 That privately funded project got
3 turned down, turned down by the town of
4 Hempstead. The town of Hempstead
5 subsequently came back with a density, a
6 zoning for the Hub area that they felt could
7 be viable, that the infrastructure that is
8 provided could tolerate this type of
9 development.

10 The development community
11 basically said there is insufficient density
12 and type of use here in order for this
13 project to be privately financed. In order
14 to throw off sufficient capital to build a
15 new coliseum.

16 As a result, the development
17 community pretty much had passed on a
18 proposing to develop this site. What
19 happened is, the county then -- and I
20 support County Executive Mangano, tried to
21 move forward to say listen, this is not
22 Charles Wang's coliseum. This is a publicly
23 owned coliseum. The county owns the asset.
24 What gets lost in the wash here, and we've
25 all heard the dialogue that was out there,

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2 let the Islanders fund it, let Charles Wang
3 fund it. He is a tenant. I'm not
4 advocating for one side or the other. I'm
5 just trying to focus in on the facts. He's
6 a tenant. He doesn't own the coliseum.
7 It's like you need a new roof on your
8 two-family house and you go to the tenant
9 upstairs and saying, do you mind putting a
10 new roof on this house? We need it. He
11 says, I'm just renting here. Well, he just
12 rents here. I realize they're the major
13 tenant, but we can't forget the fact that
14 this is a county owned facility.

15 So the county went out with a
16 public referendum and it was turned down by
17 the public. The public said, we're not in a
18 position today. We don't want to fund \$400
19 million of taxpayer dollars for a new
20 coliseum. We all know the climate has been
21 very bad. The economy last year, this year
22 it's a little better. But last year the
23 climate was bad and there was a lot of other
24 things that were going on. This was not the
25 right time.

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2 So we've had the opportunity
3 here. We've been to three movies. We've
4 been through the private sector movie where
5 we said, okay, that was too dense. The town
6 of Hempstead says, we can't tolerate that.
7 We had what could have been a scaled down
8 private sector scenario developed by the
9 Town of Hempstead for that zoning that they
10 would tolerate, and that didn't get received
11 well by the development community, and then
12 we had a public sector movie that was turned
13 down by the voters.

14 So what we're saying is, for this
15 to be successful, we need a hybrid. You
16 heard each of the speakers saying, and let's
17 not dig our heels in. Let's be flexible.
18 But let's also be realistic. What was
19 proposed in the lighthouse development I can
20 tell you, I have the advantage, I have an
21 engineering company that not only works for
22 government, worked for private sector,
23 worked for developers. So I have an
24 opportunity to see what's happening. What's
25 been happening over the years. I think

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2 Michael Picker will tell you that what was
3 proposed years ago under the lighthouse
4 project. If that was proposed today in the
5 Town of Hempstead and the county said, you
6 can have it today, you know what, you
7 couldn't throw off sufficient capital to
8 build a new coliseum and build it outright.
9 They had over 2,000 condos proposed in that
10 development. But you know what's happened
11 in the last number of years, subsequent
12 number of years, the condo market is gone.
13 So you couldn't finance it. And it's not
14 just you couldn't finance it, but the
15 capital that is thrown off from a condo
16 project, where you may be able to sell a
17 condo per unit for \$100,000 or more in
18 thrown off capital to develop this, rental
19 is about half that. That was over 2,000
20 units. The Town of Hempstead says we'll
21 permit 500 units. We're not even close.
22 The dollars are not there.

23 So what was even proposed back
24 then, if you look and say, what could go at
25 the site here? Well, the town has allowed

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2 some mixed use, you say it's sort of a nice
3 development and Kate Murray said she's
4 flexible but we don't have the density there
5 to throw off sufficient capital. You know
6 what I'm saying? Whether you have that, or
7 even go as far as to the Lighthouse
8 Proposal, there is not sufficient private
9 capital to do this solely without any public
10 dollars.

11 You look at what could go there,
12 we all like high tech, that's great. Is the
13 private sector going to finance it?
14 Hopefully. You got North Shore LIJ and
15 Hofstra with the medical school, you got
16 Nassau Community College, Hofstra. These
17 are great assets that we can hopefully work
18 in conjunction with to develop a smart
19 growth for the Hub.

20 But if there is not sufficient
21 capital it's not going to get built. We can
22 talk about the greatest plans in the world,
23 and I can tell you on the regional planning
24 council, we do this all the time, is we can
25 say, wouldn't it be wonderful to have this

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2 over there? Well, you know what, if
3 somebody is not going to fund it, it's not
4 going to happen.

5 So you look and say, okay, the
6 residential has been scaled way back.
7 Commercial, let's build some more offices,
8 just what we need. You're not going to
9 finance it because there is right now,
10 presently there is a glut of class A office
11 space, not only in the county or Long
12 Island, but in the Hub. You have vacancies
13 over at RXR Plaza, you've got them across
14 the street at the OMNI, you've got them on
15 Charles Lindbergh. There is an excess of
16 class A office space. So nobody is going to
17 build an office building there.

18 You say retail. Let's put some
19 major retail in the Hub site. You ever look
20 around at what is going on on Old Country
21 Road? First of all, you got Fortunoff
22 closed. You got the Source Mall which is on
23 its last legs. You have the Raceway Cinema,
24 malls, those shopping centers, they're
25 there. You had a home expo go out, and have

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2 new development taking place there. Plus on
3 Old Country Road the former Avis site you
4 got 350,000 square feet going in with equity
5 one. So you're going to say, are you going
6 to put major retail? Oh, yeah, by the way,
7 what's a half a mile away, it's called
8 Roosevelt Field, which is also planning
9 other expansions. So you're not going to
10 see major retail there at the coliseum.

11 What about industrial? What are
12 the arteries around here? This is not the
13 LIE. We are surrounded by Hempstead
14 Turnpike and Meadowbrook Parkway.
15 Meadowbrook Parkway does not allow truck
16 traffic. So industrial is not viable there.

17 So we say, what can we do here?
18 Well, we got a coliseum. People say, you
19 know what? I'm not an Islander fan. Let
20 the Islanders leave. People say that. I'm
21 an Islanders season ticket holder. It has
22 nothing to with this.

23 But I'm just saying, when you
24 say, let the Islanders go, just accept the
25 fact that you're saying, let the coliseum

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2 go. We say, let the coliseum go, then you
3 say, and Michael Picker says, it's not just
4 the new jobs you're creating, you're letting
5 the existing jobs go.

6 Where does approximately half the
7 budget come from? The county which has
8 financial challenges today. What do we have
9 today? Half it's budget comes sales tax
10 revenue. So you're talking about one of the
11 major sales tax revenue generators in Nassau
12 County. Well, we are just going to let that
13 go too.

14 It's not even like we're talking
15 about growing the economy, we're talking
16 about shrinking the economy. So the point I
17 want to say is, it's not going to be totally
18 privately financed based on this new
19 development that's got to be there. It's
20 got to be a hybrid. And we say, where are
21 we going to get the money from? God bless
22 Kevin Law, he looks like the candy man. But
23 if you look at what does the REDC do, the
24 Regional Economic Development Council, and
25 God bless Governor Cuomo, but it was

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2 masterful. What he did was, he took
3 existing budget monies and he allocated,
4 what he did was, he established a
5 competition which was wonderful. All of a
6 sudden we start talking about, what are the
7 best projects to get the money? So we took
8 a billion dollars, we spread it around the
9 state and we were fortunate enough to be one
10 of four winners, okay, one of four winners
11 in the state.

12 You know what? The largest
13 awarded projects for one of the winners Long
14 Island? Wyandanch community, \$6 million.
15 That's the largest on Long Island. The
16 largest in Nassau County, the village of
17 Hempstead, \$5 million.

18 So I just wanted to throw a
19 little reality here, we're talking, hey, how
20 about another two or \$500 million? Where is
21 this coming from? We developed, on the
22 Regional Planning Council, we developed, as
23 part of our sustainability plan, we modified
24 it and morphed it into an alternative
25 planning document for federal funds so we

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2 can access federal funds, Comprehensive
3 economic development strategy funds through
4 the EDA. That could enable us to access
5 potentially some federal funds. We
6 submitted it as one of the eligible
7 projects, the infrastructure around the
8 coliseum, the roadway network, okay, which
9 can probably exceed \$100 million, \$100
10 million for infrastructure there.

11 Michael Picker was talking
12 earlier, and he said, he talked about for a
13 modified coliseum, a renovated coliseum was
14 over \$300 million, Rob Walker alluded to it
15 earlier.

16 A new coliseum, what is that
17 going to cost? It's probably a half a
18 billion dollars. The Barclay's Arena,
19 they're talking about now about a half a
20 billion dollars for an arena in Brooklyn.
21 They just built it over there. Where is
22 this money coming from? I want to say, and
23 Michael talked about it, he said, like,
24 nobody wants to get pinned down on the
25 numbers because it can't get funded purely

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2 privately here without some municipal
3 governmental contribution.

4 One last thought. Don't forget.
5 And Michael talked about this. If we get
6 the coliseum going, the second phase would
7 involve the development of the rest of the
8 site. David alluded to the mixed use that
9 we would love to see there, but don't expect
10 that that development is going to throw off
11 sufficient capital to build a new coliseum,
12 not to mention replacing the 6,500 on grade
13 surface parking spots that are there.
14 That's another 150 to \$200 million. So
15 we're talking some big numbers here.

16 Michael Picker, God bless Charles
17 Wang and the Islanders. They've hung in
18 here longer than I think people ever thought
19 they would because obviously he wants to be
20 here but, on the other hand, he's a business
21 man. He can't wait any longer. We're just
22 saying, whatever has to be done, if we could
23 impart some urgency, just say, Listen, get
24 the heads in the room. Whatever needs to be
25 done, it's absolutely going to require some

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2 federal funds, some state funds, but I
3 wouldn't look to the REDC if the maximum
4 they gave out was \$6 million for a project,
5 we need to start talking about some other
6 possible funding and our other elected
7 leaders to try and see about possibly some
8 additional funding.

9 Then, also, the county should
10 just take a step back and say, listen, this
11 is our asset here. We need to do something
12 about it, rather than just throw the burden
13 on the developer, so thank you.

14 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
15 much. Actually, after all those other lofty
16 speakers, I guess you are the voice of
17 reality. I appreciate it because I think we
18 truly have to understand the challenges that
19 we face, as we move ahead with this project,
20 of course, the funding is something of the
21 utmost importance.

22 As you said, even when we look at
23 New York State, and I guess, even from
24 there, looked at like \$100 million to the
25 city of Buffalo --

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2 MR. CAMERON: Billion.

3 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Billion, I
4 wouldn't mind a little bit of that given
5 over here to Nassau County. Even when I
6 look at the money they want to invest over
7 in Aqueduct, \$4 billion, I wouldn't mind a
8 little bit of that sent a little bit east
9 over to the Hub area.

10 But I think, too, that it is
11 something that we have to look at, like, not
12 only do we look at New York State and the
13 money that they can possibly give to us
14 toward this development, and I think even
15 Kevin Law had even alluded to that as well,
16 that only a portion of that can be used
17 basically for that area but then there's
18 also other money that's allocated for
19 transportation so we have to look at whether
20 or not state or federal funding, where we
21 can get some of that public money without
22 having to ask the taxpayers to go into their
23 pockets. Although I think a lot of them do
24 fail to realize that we do own the coliseum
25 and that it is a Nassau County facility.

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2 So I thank you very much.

3 Legislator Kopel.

4 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: John, how are
5 you?

6 MR. CAMERON: Very good, how are
7 you?

8 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Good. I
9 understand what you're saying, but I am a
10 little bit concerned that we might be
11 fighting last year's war again.

12 We've already gone to this
13 particular well, the particular well I'm
14 alluding to is county funding of this
15 particular kind of development. I kind of
16 expected that it would be a close call. We
17 might win it by a little bit, might lose it
18 by a little bit, whichever side you're on.

19 I was kind of a little shocked at
20 the resounding defeat that it did suffer.
21 So if we're talking -- and I do appreciate
22 the whole -- and we're in a conundrum here.
23 What do we do? We're worried about losing
24 what we've got. We'd like to attract new
25 things. But it seems that the -- seems

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2 pretty clear that the tax payers are just
3 dead set against any talk of investing
4 actual dollars. Yes, we can talk about an
5 IDA kind of thing, we can talk about --

6 MR. CAMERON: Actually IDA could
7 be problematic because the state, after the
8 Yankee Stadium financing, has precluded that
9 for sports arenas.

10 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Ready to go.

11 MR. CAMERON: But if I may,
12 Howard, while the taxpayers said they didn't
13 want to write a check for \$400 million, you
14 talk to financial people and they can tell
15 you, there could be different ways of
16 structuring things, and it could be -- well,
17 it's tax abatements, other types of
18 developments. There's other scenarios.
19 There's infrastructure which is really,
20 that's a municipal governmental
21 responsibility.

22 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: Well,
23 infrastructure I get. That's --

24 MR. CAMERON: But I think that
25 the state and the federal government, you

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2 look at it right now, we have US Senator
3 Schumer, who is one of the highest ranking
4 senators in congress.

5 We also have Senator Dean Skelos
6 who is the majority leader in New York State
7 Senate. We say, listen, how do we find a
8 way to skin the cat? You say the county
9 taxpayers said that they don't want to write
10 the check for this. Well, what can we do?
11 I think you need to sort of work with the
12 Islanders, because the Islanders right now,
13 frankly, they're there until 2015. We can
14 sit and the county can go out for RFPs, but
15 if there's actually somebody looking to do a
16 new coliseum, I would think they're probably
17 already talking to the Islanders. They
18 should be talking to them if they're serious
19 about it.

20 I think right now you need to
21 sort of find out, what is the hurdle and how
22 do we get there? If you look and say, maybe
23 there is different funds we can access
24 federally, statewide, I'm just -- I don't
25 think that we should put all our eggs in one

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2 basket.

3 LEGISLATOR KOPEL: I would agree
4 if we can access state and federal funds
5 that would be a great thing because,
6 frankly, I think the state is choking Nassau
7 County altogether. I think the state is
8 sucking a lot of money out of Nassau County
9 and not putting nearly enough money back.
10 In terms of schools and that's why our taxes
11 are so high.

12 We're just going in circles here
13 and I don't want to do that. I am very
14 concerned about how we would get there and I
15 would love to see the numbers that get us
16 there. State and federal aid, great. I'm
17 all for it. Nassau County dollars, I don't
18 see how it gets there. I'm very concerned
19 about that.

20 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you.
21 Legislator Denenberg.

22 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Hi, John.
23 Regarding what Kevin Law said and Michael
24 Picker said, in terms of flexibility, we had
25 a plan that was 100 percent private funding,

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2 the town didn't like the density. Times
3 have changed. Then there was a plan that
4 was just the arena and 100 percent public
5 funding. You're saying, or I think you're
6 echoing what was said, and correct me if I'm
7 wrong, Kevin Law strongly urged that we need
8 flexibility in terms of looking as much as
9 we can get from private, as much as we can
10 get from public, across the board.

11 MR. CAMERON: Right. I agree.

12 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: John, I thank
13 you very much.

14 MR. CAMERON: You're welcome.

15 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: We're just
16 going to go out of order a bit and I'm
17 sorry, and I know we have other people who
18 are scheduled to speak. But we do have
19 Christopher Squeri from the New York Marine
20 Trades Association. I think he was going to
21 speak.

22 MR. SQUERI: Good afternoon,
23 ladies and gentlemen. My name is Chris
24 Squeri. I am the Executive Director of the
25 New York Marine Trades Association. We are

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2 the owners and producers of the Long Island
3 Boat Show at the Nassau Coliseum as well as
4 the Tobay Beach Boat Show down in Tobay
5 Beach.

6 The coliseum, although it's very
7 old, it's -- some may use the word dump, but
8 we romantically call it our dump. That has
9 been our home since the building opened.
10 The boat show has been there since day one.
11 We've gone through bad times and good times.
12 We're starting to see ourselves come out of
13 bad times right now and I can see us gaining
14 some momentum.

15 We just finished our show this
16 past weekend and we worked very well with
17 the Islanders in the last few years, very
18 much in cooperation. We both had events at
19 the same time, Saturday and Sunday. We saw
20 great chemistry in between what we are
21 trying to do.

22 Our biggest concern is, if there
23 is no coliseum, or no RFP, or no one to do
24 an expo center at the Mitchell Complex, or
25 that facility is not able to take boats and

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2 do boat shows, we lose a lot of income. I
3 guess it could be said for all the events at
4 the coliseum is that, how do you measure the
5 impact? Mr. Cameron, Mr. Law, I think they
6 said it very well in terms of, we need to be
7 flexible, we need to compromise somehow, we
8 need to look at things outside the box.

9 The referendum that didn't pass,
10 although it was very important that the
11 taxpayers have a voice, I don't think they
12 realize how much the county will lose in
13 terms of sales tax revenue. It goes farther
14 than sales tax on the ticket prices for any
15 of the events, including the boat show
16 tickets.

17 It goes deeper on the parking
18 that Nassau County takes a certain
19 percentage of that was enacted. They also
20 get a certain surcharge on tickets, the
21 county gets. The county also gets sales tax
22 on all the food items and everything else
23 that's purchased there. We look at it and
24 we see there, Suffolk County people come to
25 Nassau Coliseum to spend their money.

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2 Queens and Brooklyn people come to spend
3 their money in Nassau Coliseum. If there is
4 no Nassau Coliseum, there is no expo, we
5 lose all that money. We lose it. It's
6 gone. Nassau and Suffolk County people will
7 take their business to the city, to Jersey,
8 and if there is ever a place ever built in
9 Suffolk County, the county itself, and I'm a
10 county resident on the south shore. I don't
11 want to see us lose that revenue.

12 When we look at it, I'm going to
13 take it a step further. When we have a boat
14 show, and, modestly, we probably sold about
15 50 boats, roughly, give or take, from what
16 our feedback was. The sales tax on those
17 items, half of our sales during the course
18 of a year are usually generated through boat
19 shows. So all that sales tax, it's an
20 event. It gets people excited. It gets
21 people to purchase items. It gets people to
22 do things that they're not doing. It's part
23 of the whole -- introducing people to the
24 boating lifestyle. If we don't have a
25 coliseum or an expo, we are going to miss

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2 out on all that.

3 That being said, the exposition,
4 our X hall at the coliseum was supposed to
5 be a parking garage when they built it in
6 1972. It's now our exhibition hall with
7 columns every 20 feet from each other. It's
8 not the easiest place. One way in, one way
9 out. I spend a ton of money in labor to
10 make sure that it goes in and out in a
11 timely fashion because there's one way in,
12 one way out.

13 The convention center that was
14 supposed to be there back, planned, was
15 supposed to be on that plaza but, because we
16 ran out of money, we were left with the
17 parking garage as an X hall.

18 So when we look at that, we are
19 also missing out on bringing outside
20 dollars, since we don't have a true expo
21 hall. Nassau Coliseum, the Hub, is in the
22 center of three airports. Yet, we don't do
23 any trade shows, any conventions, we have
24 nothing. So we gain nothing. I think it's
25 a real shame that we are losing out on a lot

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2 of outside dollars to come into the county.

3 So, with that, I'm going to give
4 up my time because I know everyone else is
5 waiting. I have to pick my child up from
6 daycare. So I thank you for your time. If
7 there's any questions, please let me know.

8 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I thank you
9 very much and I think that that was
10 something to a certain degree was lost on
11 the residents of Nassau County last year,
12 how important, and the loss that could be
13 sustained if the Islanders did move out and
14 the coliseum did close down, especially with
15 the trade shows.

16 I think we share your vision, the
17 same thing I think with the deputy county
18 executive when he spoke about having the
19 exposition center over at the Mitchell Field
20 area and stuff like that. So let's hope
21 that we will be breaking ground soon and
22 he'll be able to have a new place where you
23 can show your boats.

24 Thank you very much.

25 MR. SQUERI: Thank you.

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2 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: The next
3 speaker and, I'm sorry, I know we're running
4 out of time, but we're going to ask Mr.
5 Richard Bivone our chairman of the Long
6 Island Business Council to come up and
7 please speak.

8 MR. BIVONE: Good afternoon, and
9 thank you for allowing me to speak today. I
10 live in the Town of Hempstead all my life.
11 I actually live walking distance from the
12 coliseum, which was always separated from
13 what we consider the Hub project. I must
14 say, John Cameron, you hit it right on the
15 head, the first part of reality here, a
16 reality check on what really is happening.

17 Municipalities live or die on
18 economic development. You must do something
19 to keep businesses here in Nassau County.
20 Yes, we are going through the worst times
21 ever since 2008, probably since the
22 depression. What we need to do is think out
23 of the box but we have a political football
24 that keeps on going back and forth depending
25 on who's in power, whether or not they like

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2 a project, they don't like a project. I
3 mean that respectfully. I understand the
4 politics behind it. We need to create those
5 jobs. The coliseum that we have now, yes,
6 it's old, it works. The team itself, I
7 support the team. I really do. I think
8 it's great having the team here, but the
9 team wins on the team, not the building, but
10 we do need to rebuild the building, we need
11 to develop the area around it.

12 The one thing that I do disagree
13 with, knowing the process very well, if the
14 Town of Hempstead wasn't against the
15 development, what I think they wanted back
16 then, in all the times that somebody came
17 forward, was for the developer to prove the
18 project. To be able to stand there in front
19 of the town, the people that own the
20 property, the county, and say to them, if I
21 build this, it's going to work. If I build
22 this within the next five years to ten
23 years, what's going to happen is it's going
24 to create the economic engine that we need
25 here in Nassau County.

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2 Developers must answer the
3 questions of water, transportation, traffic,
4 fire safety, police. They must add all of
5 that in as part of the component for proving
6 a project. One thing with all the projects
7 I have seen and worked on, that the
8 infrastructure alone on the coliseum project
9 is very important. You can't build anything
10 unless the infrastructure is in place,
11 unless we have the road improvements to the
12 Meadowbrook Parkway, to Hempstead Turnpike,
13 the water to be able to sustain the amount
14 of capacity and usage which really wasn't
15 proven.

16 That's what I think people got
17 really leary about and frightened over the
18 time, and then, all of a sudden, we had this
19 definite private company coming in and
20 saying, I'm willing to develop. But people
21 get frightened all of a sudden, they start
22 voicing their opinion in front of the
23 elected officials, and what are the elected
24 officials supposed to be there for, to
25 protect their property values, to protect

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2 what their investments are, to protect their
3 community. Some people didn't want it to
4 look like New York City. They didn't want
5 the suburbs to be urban, but, yes, we do
6 need to move forward, we need to come up
7 with that balance with that compromise.

8 But understanding something that
9 we need a mixed use, but the numbers don't
10 work. Unless there's some federal money,
11 and I don't know where we got this endless
12 money statement from because, quite
13 honestly, I thought that the United States
14 Government was close to \$3 trillion dollars
15 in debt, so I would like to know where that
16 endless money is because I think there a lot
17 of people out there that don't have the
18 jobs, and online saying, give me some of
19 that.

20 And then, if the numbers don't
21 work, how do you do it? How do you have a
22 private company come in to say they have to
23 develop this, but yet the infrastructure is
24 not in place.

25 To make the statement that

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2 government is not going to invest in
3 something is wrong. There has to be a fair
4 balance to it where the federal government
5 comes in and puts money into it. The state
6 comes in and sees the opportunity and says,
7 you know what, shovel ready, let's get that
8 money and use it in the proper fashion, and
9 then the county has to come in say, you know
10 what, is our property. We need to invest in
11 our property because I really believe that
12 the taxpayers, the people, although there
13 was an overwhelming defeat on the
14 referendum, I think if it was presented in a
15 way that the people were to understand that
16 there was a partnership that truly worked,
17 that this project would have shovels in the
18 ground and we would be developing it now if
19 it was proven out and if it was able to
20 work.

21 I've said this before in front of
22 the Town of Hempstead and I will say it
23 again, we always talk about that we need
24 jobs in Nassau County and we need jobs here
25 on Long Island. Well, you know a way to

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2 create that is that when you do approve
3 something, that whatever agreement that you
4 approve, that you make a specific statement
5 in that agreement that says, all labor will
6 come from Nassau County. All labor -- if it
7 can't come from Nassau County, it will come
8 from Suffolk County. If there's a specialty
9 that someone has to go down to Texas to get
10 somebody, because that's the only person in
11 the country that does it, that's fine, they
12 get a waiver.

13 But the end result is, that's how
14 we put workers in place to build something
15 new, to create the economic engine that we
16 need in Nassau County. I believe that
17 whatever is built must work. It must work
18 because we'll read it in Newsday in five
19 years from now and say, how did it happen?
20 How did we allow this to get the way it is?
21 I think that's wrong. Everybody wants
22 something. We just have to sit at the
23 table, close the door, not in a public
24 forum, other than hearing what the people
25 have to say, and try to iron out all the

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2 issues, get them on the table, work it out,
3 come out to the public and say, here's the
4 best plan that works for the people of
5 Nassau County and put all other politics
6 aside. Thank you.

7 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Richard, thank
8 you very much. I think you're right. I
9 really do. I think it's very sobering when
10 we look at this and there is no endless
11 money, but I think -- but now is the time
12 that if there is a funding stream coming
13 from the federal government and the state,
14 now is the time for us to try to capture
15 some of that money.

16 MR. BIVONE: Seize the
17 opportunity now while we can.

18 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Right. And we
19 also have to caution ourselves not to rush
20 into anything because we don't want to have
21 it five years from now saying, what were we
22 thinking and squander. I don't believe we
23 should squander opportunities or money
24 anymore. I think we have to be wise about
25 everything that we do.

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2 I'm going to let Richard
3 Nicoletto say something, but I also, for
4 you, I wholeheartedly agree with you that if
5 we're going to invest in the Hub and do this
6 work that, for me, I want to make sure that
7 it is the Nassau County residents that get
8 first crack at those jobs. They're the ones
9 that their tax dollars will eventually pay
10 for it. They live here. They'll spend
11 their money here and I think that at times
12 it pays to be a little bit selfish so, yes,
13 I would have to say that I work for Nassau
14 County.

15 MR. BIVONE: I worked for the
16 City of New York as a fireman and I retired.
17 When I went to work, part of the labor
18 agreement that I had back then was that I
19 had to pay city taxes for 20 years. Not
20 only did I have to pay city taxes, but also
21 my wife, who wasn't working in the City of
22 New York, had to pay city taxes. So it was
23 an agreement, but I have loved my job so I
24 knew, I understood that that's what I wanted
25 to do and we need to create that here in

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2 Nassau County because that's what brings
3 jobs back.

4 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: And people
5 don't realize that for the benefit of being
6 a fireman and working in the city and living
7 in Nassau County, there were times that we
8 paid more to the City of New York in income
9 tax than we paid in property taxes in Nassau
10 County.

11 MR. BIVONE: That's why I'm glad
12 that's over so I can pay it here.

13 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Richard
14 Nicoletto.

15 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Thank you
16 for your presentation, Rich. Yourself and a
17 bunch of other speakers have really danced
18 around the question of where this
19 governmental funding is going to come from
20 and left floating out there is this concept
21 that it's coming from the county.

22 I doubt that the members of the
23 legislature have the will or desire to put
24 county money into this. Let's say they did.
25 Is it coming out of operating? No. We have

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2 been laying people off from social services,
3 we're closing precincts. There's no way
4 it's coming out of operating expense. That
5 leaves the capital budget. Now, even if we
6 had the will to put the capital project into
7 the capital budget, to redevelop the
8 coliseum or to participate in this, there's
9 this institution called NIFA, and what is
10 happening now is NIFA is slowing up our
11 capital budget, and is approving parts of
12 what we want to do.

13 So in effect they are saying no
14 to street lights and basic functions of
15 county government. I think it's extremely
16 remote that this would pass through NIFA.

17 So, realistically, I don't think
18 county funding is going to happen. I think
19 the parties to this need to explore other
20 avenues and do whatever they can to achieve
21 this without looking to the county funds,
22 either capital or operating.

23 MR. BIVONE: But the numbers
24 don't work without any type of public -- I'm
25 not saying \$400 million, at all. To build

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2 and to do this project, just the coliseum,
3 not the Hub itself, with the density, with
4 current zoning as it's approved, to be able
5 to renovate a coliseum, to be able to put
6 mixed use in, housing, different types of
7 theaters, markets, whatever it may be, the
8 end result is to do that for a private
9 developer, those numbers do not work, they
10 do not equal out the investment and that's
11 why you can't get the capital funds. If
12 they were to give the approval today and
13 say, you know what, go ahead and start
14 building, they're not going to get the
15 money. And it's not being creative, it's
16 being realistic where the federal government
17 is going to put in \$200 million into the
18 Meadowbrook Parkway and down to the Southern
19 State Parkway and Hempstead Turnpike, then
20 the state would have to look at that and
21 partner in with that and put some money up,
22 and now the people will see that it's just
23 not a corporation from some other state that
24 says that they are going to enter into a
25 contract with the county and say, well, we

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2 want to get \$400 million.

3 What they're doing now is,
4 they're having a true public private
5 partnership where you can probably work some
6 contract out, again, explaining to the
7 people, because I think that if the endeavor
8 was maybe done differently in the past on a
9 number of levels, that possibly some
10 approval, I'm not saying that one, could
11 have occurred so that we can move forward.

12 And, yes, economic times are the
13 worst ever and I understand that, and you're
14 really in a tough position, but I think we
15 need to look out of the box as to how we get
16 funding.

17 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: Again, if
18 we get down to the question of NIFA, are we
19 going to be able to get something like this?
20 Assuming there was the will to even do it,
21 would we be able to get something like this
22 from NIFA when they're holding up bread and
23 butter governmental operations? I think
24 it's unlikely.

25 MR. BIVONE: But then we keep on

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2 going around in a circle and we go no where.

3 LEGISLATOR NICOLELLO: If that's
4 the case, then we should explore every
5 possible avenue excluding the county funding
6 portion. Let's be creative. Let's find a
7 solution. Thank you.

8 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you,
9 Richard. I think you mentioned something
10 before in the initial part of your
11 statement, that it's important for us to see
12 the infrastructure be developed to the point
13 where the federal government should come
14 across with funding for those projects, the
15 Hempstead Turnpike area, the Meadowbrook
16 Parkway, because if people see that the
17 transportation aspect of developing that
18 property is on its way to solution, there
19 may be a different opinion of what should go
20 into the coliseum property.

21 But I am not sure. I believe
22 that Kevin Law had indicated that there will
23 be a good possibility that we will be able
24 to get federal funding and possibly state
25 funding, but I believe that John Cameron, in

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2 his study of the Nassau Hub, maybe the road
3 to getting that money to show the people
4 that something can be done and will be done
5 with state or federal monies first.

6 So we can't put the cart before
7 the horse. We need to certainly make sure
8 that you and I know because we live in that
9 area that the bottlenecks on Hempstead
10 Turnpike, Merrick Avenue, the Meadowbrook,
11 are certainly a thorn in the side of the
12 residents who live adjacent to that
13 property. So I think they too have to see
14 something being done, and the federal
15 government putting its fair share into
16 helping us out and resolving the
17 transportation or the infrastructure within
18 that area.

19 I don't know where we're going to
20 go from here, but my colleague, Mr.
21 Nicoletto, is right when he says NIFA is a
22 thorn in our side at this point. We can
23 hardly get capital projects within our own
24 communities done because we need NIFA's
25 approval and many of those projects have

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2 been sitting on the drawing board for a long
3 time.

4 So I'm putting my hope and my
5 faith in the -- and I don't know, maybe I'm
6 being too altruistic or maybe unrealistic,
7 in that the federal government will grant
8 the funding that we need and the state will
9 grant us the funding that we need to at
10 least get a head start on the
11 transportation.

12 MR. BIVONE: Thank you.

13 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: You're welcome,
14 Mr. Bivone. Thank you very much.

15 MR. BIVONE: Have a good evening.

16 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: You too. The
17 next speaker we have is Nick Terzulli from
18 the Nassau County IDA.

19 MR. TERZULLI: Thank you,
20 Legislator Ford, and I want to thank the
21 entire body for letting the Industrial
22 Development Agency participate in this
23 important hearing.

24 As you said, my name is Nick
25 Terzulli, I'm the director of business

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2 development at the Nassau County IDA. I'm
3 speaking here on behalf of Joseph Carney,
4 our executive director, who was unable to
5 attend the hearing.

6 This year, with County Executive
7 Mangano's leadership, the IDA has closed 13
8 projects which will create 1,600 new jobs in
9 the county while retaining 1,000 current
10 jobs and generating close to \$1.5 billion in
11 economic activity.

12 Due to the leadership of your
13 body, the county legislature, the IDA
14 created a sister organization, the Nassau
15 County Local Economic Assistance Corp.,
16 which will allow hospitals, universities and
17 non-profits to avail themselves of the same
18 benefits the IDA has.

19 In 2011, we closed a deal with a
20 network of Catholic hospitals and with a
21 leading provider of services for the
22 disabled, adults and children with learning
23 and developmental disabilities.

24 Thus far, in 2012, we have close
25 to 20 deals in the project pipeline and we

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2 closed our first last week which will
3 generate over \$11 million in economic
4 impacts while creating over 60 jobs in the
5 county.

6 The IDA has as an aggressive
7 business development and marketing program.
8 It's focused on two distinct but unified
9 goals; insure Nassau County businesses stay
10 and grow in Nassau County, and attract new
11 enterprises to the county.

12 The IDA pursues our goals through
13 various tools. Mining our existing networks
14 and relationships, engaging with consulting
15 firms specializing in site selection, and
16 actively meeting with companies in all
17 stages of their development all throughout
18 the county.

19 In 2011, the IDA met with over 50
20 companies who were interested in our
21 benefits. How does the IDA work? The IDA
22 provides four areas of relief primarily;
23 sales and use tax exemption, on furniture
24 fixtures and equipment, a mortgage recording
25 tax exemption, a payment in lieu of taxes,

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2 also known as a pilot payment, and taxable
3 and tax exempt bond financing.

4 It usually takes between four and
5 six weeks to go from application to closing.
6 And the IDA adopted a uniformed tax exempt
7 policy called a UTEP which provides normally
8 for a 10 year pilot period.

9 The Hub is an important area of
10 strategic development and growth in the
11 county and the IDA is a part of that. In
12 2011, with the guidance and leadership of
13 Nassau County Executive Ed Mangano, the IDA
14 passed a resolution designating the Hub a
15 strategic development area. This
16 designation allows the IDA to move more
17 expeditiously through the process and it
18 also allows us to deviate from our uniform
19 tax exempt policy, or UTEP, allowing for a
20 longer term pilot which is usually very
21 advantageous for the applicant.

22 The IDA looks forward to and
23 encourages applications all across Nassau
24 County but especially within the Hub area.
25 I look forward to your questions.

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2 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
3 much. With the IDA, I mean, we are looking
4 at, and we understand that even with the
5 county, both Legislator Nicoletto and
6 Gonsalves did speak about the fact that it
7 would probably be very hard to try to get
8 any funding from the county because of NIFA.

9 With the IDA and with the
10 programs that you have, with the pilot and
11 other initiatives, is there anything that
12 you can do to help us, like look for other
13 types of funding? I don't know if that's
14 under your responsibilities, or --

15 MR. TERZULLI: It's a tricky
16 question but one that I'm happy to answer.
17 We are trying to become a one stop shop for
18 businesses in Nassau County who have any
19 questions about potential funding. So we
20 often refer businesses to different
21 state-based organizations. We'll let them
22 know about regional economic development
23 meetings that are happening and point them
24 towards the CFA application if that's what
25 they're interested in. There is never an

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2 instance where a business calls the IDA and
3 we say, no, we can't help you or, no, we
4 can't direct you.

5 Regarding direct grants, that we
6 don't have, we don't have the resources for
7 that nor do we have the legislation or the
8 legal ability or legal structure to provide
9 that.

10 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Thank you very
11 much. I know it's getting late. We look
12 forward to working with you though, we, as a
13 county, as well as the state and everybody
14 else, so we'll be -- we appreciate you
15 addressing us here today and we you on our
16 speed dial.

17 MR. TERZULLI: Thank you.

18 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: We're going to
19 go out of order once again. Eric Alexander
20 from Vision Long Island. Sorry, Eric.

21 MR. ALEXANDER: It's okay. A lot
22 of good information today. I'm glad you're
23 doing this Legislator Ford, members of the
24 committee.

25 I think we all have a goal of

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2 mixed use development, with housing, office,
3 retail, a revitalized arena, and real sense
4 of place for the area. That's been a vision
5 that folks have had for over 15 years of
6 various plans. I think there's been three
7 county plans tied to infrastructure in
8 overall planning, and two development plans.
9 They all failed. So I guess the point of
10 hopefully 15 years of things not working is
11 that we've learned some lessons from them.

12 So the first and foremost issue
13 that was raised, and Rich Bivone, and the
14 members of this committee had a good
15 dialogue on this and I think John Cameron
16 spoke as well, is that the funding is key.

17 Really what's frustrated a group
18 like ours and we said it at prior meetings
19 at the county legislature and we've said it
20 to the prior county executive for eight
21 years, that when you don't submit for
22 funding, you don't get it. The reality is
23 that for eight years there was no submission
24 of funds for infrastructure. We may be
25 wrong but that's our understanding. I hope

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2 I'm wrong. But the reality is thankfully in
3 the last year and a half, we know the county
4 executive has at least submitted for funds,
5 whether it be through Long Island Regional
6 Economic Development Council process, and we
7 hope through other areas.

8 So here are some suggestions.
9 There is, thankfully, you're finishing up
10 the transit study and that should open up
11 the door for new starts money on the federal
12 level. Complete that process and move
13 forward, one.

14 Two, if Cedar Creek needs any
15 improvements, start to seek funding for
16 sewer upgrades through the word of process
17 on the federal level. Hope you're doing
18 that.

19 So, again, the other issue is
20 that Long Island doesn't get its fair share
21 of sewer funds but get this project in the
22 pipeline. We only get three percent of the
23 state's funds for sewer infrastructure, 15,
24 17 percent of the population, so we
25 obviously need to do some advocacy in that

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2 regard. But hopefully we're doing that.

3 Regarding improvements on the
4 Meadowbrook. Has DOT done what they need to
5 do to analyze the design improvements for
6 that? That has to be in their design
7 process before we even get to funding and
8 construction. So that's a DOT question.
9 The federal dollars and state dollars that
10 need to be applied for and has to get into
11 the tip. So hopefully -- these are again
12 the things the county could do to plan to
13 get the infrastructure ready to go,
14 unfortunately, this should have been done
15 ten years ago. It was not. So lessons
16 learned. Let's not repeat the same mistake.

17 The types of things that we need
18 to do, we need to do some lobbying, quite
19 frankly. The federal T bill, as it's
20 structured right now, would be devastating
21 to transit and other forms of
22 infrastructure, so folks need to rally and
23 stop that. That's an item that we can weigh
24 in on now.

25 Tomorrow a number of us, and

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2 folks where were here today, John Durso from
3 the Long Island Federation of Labor, Rich
4 Bivone from the Business Council, and some
5 of the local chambers of commerce, are going
6 to meet with nine state senators tomorrow in
7 Albany, and this is one of our asks, for
8 infrastructure improvements on the
9 Meadowbrook. We'll let you know how we do.
10 But we want support from you guys to follow
11 through and follow-up so we're a coordinated
12 effort as opposed to working on different
13 fronts. So that's the funding piece.

14 And I think the Regional Economic
15 Development Council funds are important,
16 that's \$100 million or maybe a total billion
17 for statewide. The state spends \$15 billion
18 a year on infrastructure. So there's other
19 pots of funds and you need to deal with
20 those agencies directly, still, so don't put
21 your eggs in one basket, work with
22 everybody.

23 Really, quite frankly, there
24 should be somebody on your staff as the
25 county that coordinates these types of asks,

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2 these types of lobby trips, these types of
3 coordinated planning and a schedule to
4 secure these dollars. I don't know who that
5 is. Whether it's out of planning, out of
6 DPW, if it's out of -- but there should be a
7 point person who coordinates these
8 activities that's accountable to you and the
9 county exec and pulls together, all the
10 groups that are in this room and everywhere
11 should be putting letters of support in and
12 doing lobby trips and visits and raising the
13 consciousness of this need beyond kind of
14 just out there in the press. So that's the
15 funding.

16 Second piece. Anticipate road
17 blocks. We've had them through the years.
18 So let's, again, learn what hasn't worked.
19 The public is going to ask as Legislator
20 Gonsalves asked, what's the transportation
21 mitigation that's going to be needed. Folks
22 are to ask about ways for it, folks are
23 going to ask about fire and emergency
24 services, folks are going to ask about
25 water. We have answers to those, but let's

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2 have them ready to go and not say, well,
3 that guy answers it, or that person answers
4 it, or someone else someone has a marvelous
5 answer. So we don't end up in a situation
6 like this last summer where maybe a good
7 idea went sideways because there was
8 inadequate information or poorly coordinated
9 marketing.

10 So this leads us to the process.
11 The politics. It is going to have to be a
12 bipartisan effort. I've watched here,
13 Republicans Democrats, Democrats
14 Republicans, it doesn't matter. Have been
15 opposed to various Hub plans and supportive
16 of various Hub plans.

17 I would propose, and I would
18 think that you guys are all great people, I
19 know many of you individually, that you
20 should create a Hub caucus of the
21 surrounding folks, those of you who have
22 districts, your Republicans and Democrats,
23 that you guys meet at least once a month for
24 lunch or a drink or whatever you guys want
25 to do to caucus on this, and, regularly,

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2 like a drum beat, secure dollars,
3 coordination, planning, whatever is needed
4 until you get it done. Keep all your
5 politics where ever else, you guys can
6 scream at each other, yell at each other
7 about all kinds of great stuff, but on this
8 you're united, right? So prove it.
9 Coordinate amongst yourselves and get this
10 done. You've done this today with this
11 committee but we love to see that type of
12 effort that bipartisanship so that if some
13 groups get behind one effort, like our
14 organization did this summer, then we found
15 out the Democrat chair is attacking the
16 initiative, and then you got emails flying
17 all over the place. You won't believe the
18 phone calls we had in our office when we got
19 behind that. It's off the bean. It's not
20 worth the time. Get past the politics.

21 The distraction of special
22 interests. Technically we're a special
23 interest. I live in Northport. I don't
24 live in Nassau County, but, having said
25 that, we work closely, and I think you do

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2 with the residents, the small businesses,
3 the town of Hempstead, the county, the major
4 tenant, and the Islanders, and whatever new
5 developer you get. Those are your major
6 stakeholders. Keep that in mind. The press
7 will get you distracted about what this
8 person said and what that person said, and
9 this person's got an idea, and blah blah
10 blah. It's all entertaining. The reality
11 is, you are accountable to the residents and
12 small businesses, and then there key players
13 who have decision-making authority on this.

14 Keep your eye on the ball of
15 those interests and keeping those folks
16 aligned and, if you focus on that, you'll
17 get it done. It's the distractions that
18 veer you off.

19 Then the last thing is, with
20 that, a unified message, on the process, you
21 have to get a unified message on what this
22 new development will look like and what the
23 impacts will be and how it's going to be
24 funded.

25 Having that being said, there is

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2 only so much the county can do. The town of
3 Hempstead needs to demonstrate flexibility
4 in their zoning to create a true town
5 center, they're going to have to make code
6 revisions, John Cameron's testimony tonight
7 was completely on point, and I'll just say
8 that most of what he said, we were in
9 complete agreement with that there needs to
10 be some structural changes in the code to
11 allow for a true mixed use development. I
12 hope they're open to that. If a number of
13 folks need to appeal to the town to work
14 with them in that regard, we're very willing
15 to do that.

16 So, with that, I just want to end
17 on a hopeful note that over the last five
18 years, while we've been having these debates
19 about the Hub and all the negative drum beat
20 you hear in the press and other special
21 interests, that 1,275 units of housing have
22 been approved, 11 projects in seven
23 communities in the immediate area. Some are
24 being constructed as we speak.

25 What that says is, development

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2 can occur. Local consensus can move
3 forward. Things can get done. You guys
4 have what it takes to make it happen and
5 also there are developers that are
6 interested in doing something here in
7 collaboration with everybody, they just
8 don't want to walk down a blind alley and
9 end up with political machinations back and
10 forth.

11 So prove the bipartisanship, and
12 prove the focus on getting funding done.
13 Write your funding grant before you do a
14 press conference. We told that to the last
15 county executive and didn't always get a
16 friendly answer. That's the type of focus
17 we want to see. You would be surprised. I
18 think if folks see that energy, that focus,
19 and that unification, you would be surprised
20 at how many -- this room will be overflowing
21 with positive people who want to get
22 something done.

23 This area is not about nimbyism
24 to hurt this project. It's about the
25 various special interests that really

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2 distorted the effort. There's no need to go
3 back. Let's just learn from it and not do
4 it again and move on.

5 So that's my long winded
6 statement. I waited for three hours. I did
7 want to say this in the record though. I
8 thought it was important because we've been
9 around a while.

10 Neil Lewis is someone you should
11 lean on also who has been through this
12 process for quite some time. John Durso was
13 also here today and he didn't have time to
14 get up and speak but he's an important
15 person with this too.

16 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I think, Eric,
17 you brought up a lot of good comments, I
18 mean, recommendations. And I do want to say
19 that there are times we can transform
20 ourselves out of our political sides into
21 non-political, because Legislator Denenberg
22 and I have both been working together on the
23 western bays, and I believe we have achieved
24 some great successes, and little by little
25 we find that, you're right, when you remain

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2 focus, when you set your game plan, you know
3 what you have to do. You start doing it. I
4 think we are achieving some successes,
5 right, Dave?

6 I think even with this, the one
7 key, and that's something that I am going to
8 follow up on, who was it in the county that
9 would be that point person to look at after
10 the grants to make sure that we are going
11 because there are different components,
12 whether or not New York State has some
13 money, and the federal money, what other
14 types of grants can we get? Can we get
15 something under green energy? Can we get
16 something under road improvements? Can we
17 get something under whatever else?

18 If we can start looking at this
19 and compiling all of this money, and, I
20 agree, I think we also have to have a
21 comprehensive approach, we have to also then
22 have something that is well presented for
23 the community. Because I firmly believe
24 that we do need the community, all of the
25 Nassau residents to support this, and if we

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2 do a helter skelter type of project and not
3 really pay attention to what we should be
4 presenting, I think it's going to fail.

5 I agree, last year I think
6 probably had we marketed it a little bit
7 better, perhaps we might have seen a
8 different outcome of that referendum vote.
9 So thank you.

10 MR. ALEXANDER: We'll work with
11 you anyway possible.

12 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: And keep in
13 touch with me, please.

14 MR. ALEXANDER: Thank you.

15 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Finally, I
16 apologize to my last two speakers, Muzzio
17 Tallini, he's the Elmont Chamber of
18 Commerce. I apologize, I know it's been a
19 long afternoon.

20 MR. TALLINI: Good afternoon.
21 I'll try to keep it as brief as possible. I
22 know it's Valentine's Day. I know all our
23 spouses and significant others, we want to
24 stay in their good graces.

25 Not to repeat what has been said

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2 over the last so many hours, but Eric made a
3 very good point just before about a caucus.
4 I would suggest that not only it be a county
5 legislative caucus, but perhaps you should
6 include the town of Hempstead, New York
7 State, and all other government stakeholders
8 as part of this Hub, and I hate to use the
9 word "super committee," but perhaps it's
10 something to think about.

11 I'm from a community that is
12 probably the most pro-development community
13 that exists on Long Island which is Elmont.
14 I don't know of another community where a
15 developer suggests that they would like to
16 build a casino and the people say, okay,
17 let's talk about it.

18 So our motto is, less talk and
19 more action. And perhaps in the effort of
20 more action, you start tomorrow putting this
21 super committee together and all the
22 stakeholders down at the table and start
23 moving. Don't wait until the day offer.
24 Start now. Don't do tomorrow what you can
25 do today.

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2 Just one idea, as I was listening
3 to all of this go on today, and perhaps we
4 don't need to reinvent the wheel on
5 everything, but there's been a lot of talk
6 of high tech at the Hub and, in the effort
7 of not reinventing the wheel, we can look
8 perhaps to see what Mayor Bloomberg did at
9 Roosevelt Island and learn from that RFP and
10 who the players were and what they brought
11 to the table.

12 They were some of the best
13 technological universities in the world, and
14 one of them, which was my alma mater that
15 participated in that university if the RFP,
16 and you can all correct me if I'm wrong, but
17 the city is putting up \$100 million at
18 Roosevelt Island and that's it. And they're
19 generating \$4 billion in economic activity.
20 They're fronting \$100 million. Maybe that's
21 something that the county or the state or a
22 combination is able to digest.

23 Perhaps, and this is just a
24 suggestion, just take a look at what
25 transpired at Roosevelt Island and perhaps

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2 this county can look at it and learn from
3 it.

4 With that said, like I said, I
5 was going to keep it brief. Oh, one thing.
6 I was sitting next to Rose Norton, and for
7 those of you who know Rose Norton, she is a
8 civic leader in West Hempstead. I like to
9 sit next to her because she always offers a
10 pearl of wisdom just in talking to her.
11 It's an invaluable experience to me, as a
12 developer as well.

13 Rose Norton has a theory on
14 economic development and it's something that
15 she learned during the battle at the
16 Courtesy Hotel and it was that fears are
17 going to come out in any development.
18 Mother Teresa can propose a church on the
19 Hub property and there would be nimbis and
20 opposition against Mother Teresa. But you
21 have to respond to those fears with good
22 solid information. That's what Rose Norton
23 did at the Courtesy Hotel. She was
24 tireless. She researched every aspect of
25 that development. So when she came before a

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2 community or a government committee, town
3 board, what have you, that the information
4 that she was presenting was legit. No one
5 argued with it because she had done her
6 homework.

7 So what has happened in the past,
8 sometimes information has been presented and
9 it's not quite the truth, it's skewed a
10 certain way, or you're getting it last
11 second, and then the public doubts the
12 process. When the public doubts the
13 process, the fears come in. The fears
14 become truths. So just keep that in mind.
15 Learn from Rose Norton. She couldn't stay
16 here today, but learn from the example that
17 she set.

18 With that, I wish everyone a good
19 night.

20 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I thank you
21 very much.

22 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you,
23 Muzzio, for coming.

24 MR. TALLINI: Thank you. Good
25 night.

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2 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Finally we have
3 David Sabatino from Envision Long Island.
4 I'm sorry you had to wait so long and I
5 thank you for sticking it out.

6 MR. SABATINO: No problem. Thank
7 you for having me. I, too, will keep it
8 short. I came today to advocate that any
9 sort of economic development that goes on at
10 the Hub that it keeps in mind that
11 affordable housing is very important as all
12 of you know to young professionals here on
13 Long Island, most of which are leaving Long
14 Island to seek jobs and affordable housing
15 elsewhere.

16 I think most of this hearing I'm
17 trying to think, you know, what's the
18 linchpin here, what's the target, what's
19 going to break this? And I think Legislator
20 Denenberg was getting to that point as well.
21 I think that's really the task ahead. Find
22 that linchpin, find what the answer is.
23 Find what is it going to take to make this
24 happen. Maybe incentives for zoning --
25 incentives for up zoning is a way you can

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2 look into that, including affordable
3 housing, reaching out to those communities
4 and finding what it will take to allow a
5 denser development to occur, and exactly
6 what it's going to solve this question that
7 seems to have been plaguing Nassau County
8 and its residents for quite a long time.

9 But, yes, keep it short, just
10 please keep in mind that it's very difficult
11 for a young professional to stay here, to
12 pay taxes, and I also own a business and I'm
13 finding that an incredible task at hand here
14 in Nassau County for many reasons. But
15 please keep in mind that young people want
16 to stay, but, unfortunately, we are being
17 pushed out because it's just too expensive
18 and I would like to see that at the Hub.
19 Thank you so much.

20 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: Thank you,
21 David, for coming.

22 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: That's the end
23 of the schedule speakers and we just have
24 two requests to speak from Mr. Kenneth Hare,
25 and Patricia Maher.

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2 MS. MAHER: Hi. I'm Pat Maher.
3 I'm really glad that you had this hearing.
4 I recently formed a civic organization
5 called the Merrick Avenue Civic Action
6 Association. I'm not here on their behalf,
7 but one of our issues is the Hub.

8 If I look out my back window, I
9 see Merrick Avenue. If I walk a little
10 further up, I see the coliseum. So we're
11 right there. That whole community that I
12 live in, we are all impacted by this, and I
13 would love nothing more than to see it
14 developed. I would love to see the
15 Islanders stay, to have this land, this
16 coliseum that's eroding, and it's not in
17 good condition. It's a real shame to the
18 community.

19 If you walk around the community
20 of East Meadow, and I have lived there all
21 my life, you see vacant buildings, you see
22 businesses that are becoming failed. It
23 would only bring more to the community.

24 I heard what Legislator Gonsalves
25 said about the community seeing certain

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2 things and certain ways. I would agree with
3 her. There are certain people in the
4 community that see it one way and certain
5 people see it another way.

6 I heard about the RFP. I think
7 that would be a great idea. It's a great
8 idea to push it forward. But one thing that
9 I think was really important and I didn't
10 see it here and maybe in the future, the
11 people that may have stopped this Hub, and I
12 think it's a lot of people who live in my
13 area, are people that aren't even here.

14 Outreach into the community may
15 be putting together a summit, but to have it
16 behind closed doors, big mistake. Make it
17 open. Let the community be a part of it so
18 they feel they're a part of it, and then I
19 think it would move forward. And I'm there
20 too. So thank you.

21 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: And you're
22 right. Actually, the one thing that I
23 found, even when they were still
24 entertaining the thought of the Lighthouse
25 Development, they actually did go out to the

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2 various communities. I know they came out
3 into Long Beach. The sad thing was that
4 only ten people came to that meeting.

5 So sometimes, even when you have
6 the outreach, a lot of people like, all of a
7 sudden, it doesn't seem to phase them
8 because it's just an idea. Then, all of a
9 sudden, when you start building something,
10 then, all of a sudden, they wake up and they
11 say, hey, wait a minute, what happened?

12 But I think you are right and I
13 think we have to rely on our civic
14 associations also to get that message out.
15 Even for us, we need to move ahead with this
16 and we keep saying, "time is of the
17 essence," and it's just our intent that we
18 are not going to stop.

19 MS. MAHER: Just one more thing.
20 I remember a lot of people saying that they
21 heard one story and they believe this story
22 and another people hearing another story,
23 but I think part of their problem was, they
24 were never part of the process.

25 It's the process now again, and

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2 you have everything -- you have to open
3 those doors and let the community be a part
4 of it. I would disagree to having a closed
5 door hearing and then coming out and telling
6 everyone. I think that's only going to
7 result in the same problem. I'm all for
8 developing it, because, as I said, I walk
9 right out there and see it and I think it
10 would only help the business community and I
11 think it would help the taxpayers and their
12 home values too.

13 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: I think even
14 like the fact that we would have a new
15 building there probably would be so much
16 nicer looking too, like when you said look
17 at the aesthetics of the area too, so I
18 thank you very much for coming down and
19 sticking it out.

20 MS. MAHER: Thank you.

21 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: Do I have a
22 motion to end the public hearing?

23 LEGISLATOR SOLAGES: So moved.

24 LEGISLATOR DENENBERG: Second.

25 CHAIRWOMAN FORD: So moved by

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2 Legislator Solages, seconded by Legislator
3 Denenberg. The hearing is closed. I thank
4 you very much everybody.

5 (Whereupon, the Economic and
6 Community Development and Labor Committee
7 adjourned at 5:23 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, FRANK GRAY, a Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of New York, do hereby stated:

THAT I attended at the time and place above mentioned and took stenographic record of the proceedings in the above-entitled matter;

THAT the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate transcript of the same and the whole thereof, according to the best of my ability and belief.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this 28th day of February, 2012.

FRANK GRAY