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Testimony from Council Member David Yassky
Re: Domino Sugar Processing Plant

I am writing to express support for Community Preservation Corp's (CPC) plan for the former Domino Sugar Plant. The site is a complex area to develop since there are a number of community wishes for area, including affordable housing and preservation. These do not easily go hand in hand due to several issues, financial and other, but I feel that CPC has stuck a balance.

I submitted testimony several weeks ago in support of landmarking the Domino refinery. I would like to reiterate the historical significance of this building in our City. Williamsburg has been one of the centers of industry in New York for centuries, and was the center for Brooklyn's sugar production during the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Domino Plant is the largest and most imposing reminder of this past that remains on our Waterfront today. In addition to representing North Brooklyn's history, the Domino Sugar Processing Plant is a landmark in the traditional use of the word: every pedestrian, cyclist and automobile driver that crosses the Williamsburg Bridge sees the Domino Sugar Plant as a beacon on the Brooklyn waterfront. It is an imposing visual, and is among the most recognizable buildings in New York.

CPC's commitment to include 30% affordable housing in their design is laudable. I have worked hard throughout the years to create and increase affordable housing along Brooklyn's East River waterfront. During the rezoning we succeeded in creating a program that achieved 20% affordable housing in many of those buildings, and I am happy to see that CPC helping to preserve current Williamsburg communities by including 30% affordable housing.

Lastly, Community Preservation Corp. has pledged to create public access to the waterfront. The Mayor's PlaNYC set goals to ensure that all New Yorkers have easy access to public open space, and I strongly support this goal. I applaud CPC's commitment to enhance this goal.

Community Preservation Corp. has created a plan for the Domino Sugar site that will benefit the neighborhood. No plan can perfect for everyone, but I believe that CPC has done a competent job of creating a good balance between competing wishes for the site. This is a significant and positive step towards the continued development of Brooklyn's waterfront.

City Council Member David Yassky
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