

**DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE'S  
BREAKFAST**

**JUNE 13, 2001**

**FERNANDO FERRER**

Good Morning! I appreciate your acknowledgement of this report that the elves have so thoughtfully laid upon your table this morning. I want you to know that it's not merely because of the heightened consciousness of landmarks planning and historic preservation issues in the course of this campaign. If you read beyond the very pretty cover of the Hall of Fame which was part of the University Heights Campus of NYU when NYU used to live in a good neighborhood, and I attended it as an undergraduate for four terrific years -- you read beyond that, the information inside is evidence that this is not a recently acquired interest of mine. This has been going on since I have been Borough President, and, in fact, well before. We're the only Borough to have established a Landmarks Task Force which is a subcommittee of our Borough Board. I did that in 1987. I'll talk about its activities and a lot of its successes in the course of this little talk.

Let me talk about some of the recent pro-active preservation activities of my Administration. I think you all know that I work in the Bronx County Building. Right! 161<sup>st</sup> Street and the Grand Concourse. Some call it the Supreme Court House, but in fact, if you look at the original plans for the building it's the Bronx County Building. That was an argument I had with Burton Roberts over the course of many years -- and in fact with the Landmarks Preservancy which mistakenly gave us a medallion that said "Court House," I refer them also to the plans of the building. But inside that building was really the very beginning of my activity in historic preservation as Borough President.

When I first walked in, took my oath of office August 15, 1987, to fill in the unexpired term of my predecessor, there were two things that were immediately evident. On the outside of the building two stairways -- the south and the north entrances of the building closed off because the stairways were in such a decrepit state, they were condemned they had to be roped off. There was graffiti all over the colonnades of the building -- you might recall that -- along the stairways and statuary. Inside the building in the Veterans Memorial -- that space that was colloquially called the Rotunda, my predecessor had turned it into office space. I think to lay claim to the space but drilled holes in the marble to get up an HVAC system and built office space within the Veterans Memorial Hall. First thing I did was ask the Mayor for funds to clean the building. This is after all the center of Bronx Government with the Borough President, District Attorney, all the Supreme Court judges, the County Clerk, the Surrogate Judge work. And it was really awful. He denied us that money, said "No, we don't have it." So what I did was I got two guys who I knew who did graffiti removable -- we had a press conference on Saturday and a competition to clean up the building. Got a call from the Mayor I think that night at home, that I can't do that myself and in the course of the conversation Mayor Koch had agreed to fund the cleaning of the building and the repair of the steps.

On the inside, first thing I did that first Monday was order the demolition of the temporary office space. If you walk in there today you will see not only a restored Veterans Memorial Hall restored to its ceremonial use -- anybody can meet there especially veterans -- they have their first call to the space -- but also you will see some doors on the building -- anybody seen what I'm talking about? They used to be, when they were temporary offices, rolled down see through meshed gates. This wasn't a grocery store. This was a public space. Took those down too and had a designer in my office design doors that paid homage to the front doors of the building. If you walked in today and looked at those bronze doors you might think they were original to the building -- they are not and that was exactly the point. And that space is preserved forever as a ceremonial public assembly space, for hearings, for governmental use and for community use. But it goes well beyond that. The proposing of the Grand Concourse Historic District and the vision project for the Grand Concourse leading to right now an international design competition to rebuild the Grand Concourse. Get all those ad hoc changes over decades out of the way and create a Grand Boulevard once again that the Grand Concourse once was. In fact, make it even better. And there are a lot of other things we've done -- in the report you'll see that from 1993 to 2000 alone we've allocated about six or seven million dollars to the preservation of historic landmarks in the Bronx. And we're pretty proud of that.

And, lest I forget I see in this breakfast an old friend of mine, Thom Bess, whom I met through another old friend of mine a former Bronx Landmarks Commissioner to whom I happen to be wed. When we worked together, I in a different professional life, and Thom, I guess -- no, he's retired now, he's just having fun -- preserving a neighborhood that was part of my old neighborhood growing up as a kid, The Landmark Longwood Historic District, which wasn't always a landmark and designing the new homes that were to be built along Longwood Avenue that would pay homage to those grand old two and half story rural houses on Dawson street, Beck street, and Kelly Street.

I've had a chance to examine your preservation platform and I think it is essentially a terrific idea. Let me get right through it. I believe in tax incentives for preserving historic properties. I especially believe that the City of New York has a special obligation to assist landmark buildings whether they are large buildings intended for more than one family's use or a small home especially in distressed neighborhoods. It has bothered me for a long time that we have landmark buildings, wonderful buildings, residential spaces in communities and offered little or no support to homeowners to continue those buildings, to upgrade those buildings and to really preserve them as they should. The City has a special obligation along with available and proposed State and federal tax incentive help. With respect to the preservation of public buildings, I don't think -- no, I know -- there is no guy running for Mayor this year and in all the years I can remember who has a better record of protecting public buildings that are historic, architectural value or landmarks than I have -- Period, paragraph, end of story. Whether it is P.S. 31 on the Grand Concourse, the fight to save the old Bronx County Courthouse on 161<sup>st</sup> Street from not one but two auctions.

So let me give you some examples: This is not a landmark but a local landmark, the old Morrisania Hospital. I mean part of this is also finding intelligent and creative re-uses for these buildings. Morrisania Hospital and that whole complex of buildings on that four and a half acre campus is an extraordinary example of taking a grand neighborhood landmark facility that had been closed for nearly twenty years and turning it into something vital and vibrant -- a spark plug for that community. Working with Urban Horizons, not only in the redesign of the building, the interior uses of the buildings but program re-uses of the buildings. We saved the main hospital building, the Nurses' Residence and one smaller off building, demolished two other buildings and created a new public school on that campus that architecturally pays homage to the hospital and fits in the whole campus, by the way, not only visually creating a sense of real place there, but doing something even more important programmatically. It is a dual language school for the sciences that works with Urban Horizons and has crossed programs with them. Urban Horizons as you know is a program that helps women who are on welfare, out of work, single women with children providing them temporary homes, job training, incubator programs, business incubator programs, primary care for them and their children and works collaboratively with the school that's a block that not only has become a model for the city but a national model. P.S. 31 was an example where the school construction authority -- that's one of C.B.J Snyder buildings that was a dud. The exterior walls were peeling off from the support beams -- it had been sort of patched up over the years -- and it had become really a dangerous building -- it had to be evacuated. But it is a landmark building, Tiffany glass in it. Important architectural details in and out. It was important to save the building. We fought the school construction authority to a standstill for several years to keep that building not only viable but to get it rebuilt and to return it to its original intended use as a school and a neighborhood center. Together with the parents of that school we mounted a very successful effort, and I give an enormous amount of credit to Sandy Lerner, the Bronx member of the Board of Education, who really did successfully lobby Chancellor Levy to just break the membrane on that and get the program going and it will be under construction relatively soon.

I believe in and a well funded and independent Landmark Preservation Commission. It is astounding that there is one enforcement officer for the entire city on the LPC. And it shouldn't be used -- look, I have a pro-active view of these things. Landmarking shouldn't be used as the eleventh hour mechanism to get in and save something, but pro-actively and in conjunction with smart zoning and planning, as a complement to preserving senses of place and space and context fabric throughout neighborhoods. Not all of them are landmarks but certainly many of them have a context and a sense of place that's important to preserve for this city. They ought to be used in a complementary way. That's what we've been trying to do with our Bronx Landmarks Task Force -- to get ahead of the curve instead of when something is endangered, really pro-actively identify those areas that need to be preserved, those areas that fit into other areas in a context throughout a neighborhood that need to be recognized. So let me give you a few examples, some of them that are not architecturally significant -- Gaelic Park in the Bronx. Anybody know where Gaelic Park is in the Bronx? Very few people know about it. Hurling an Irish football. That's where generation after generation of Irish immigrant

has come to watch traditional Irish sports. That's where young Irish girls got married. That's where the guys got together after a sporting event in the bar when the O'Donnell Family owned it -- not architecturally significant, a place that is historically significant for this city. When the MTA announced plans to demolish it and expand it's rail yards we really started cranking up the volume to save that place. It was an important thing to do, to pay homage to a part of the story not only of the heritage and culture of this City but to all the communities of this City.

There are other places as well. Listed on the national register of historic places is a place in my old neighborhood on Prospect Avenue. Anybody know what Casa Amadeo? You know it right -- oldest Latin music store in New York City. It used to be called Casa Hernandez after Rafael Hernandez, a very noted -- probably the most famous Puerto Rican composer. This has been the center of gravity of Latin music. The guy who owns it I've known since I was a kid -- Mike Amadeo. He is the maven of Latin tropical music, Afro-Cuban music, Afro-Caribbean music, tropical music, big band music -- four decades -- recognized expert in the oldest place. It is not architecturally significant in that building but that's a place that really means something in terms of the history of this City. That's another place that we are very interested in preserving and promoting.

The Washington Meat Market is another place where we've got to take a very careful look at further downtown -- a place that is architecturally important, it has a sense of neighborhood and use and purpose and function that needs to be preserved.

I'm done. There's a lot to talk about and that's why I needed some notes because I have been involved in this stuff for my 14 years as Borough President. Well before that in the City Council and before that when I was Director of Housing and Community Development in the Bronx and was very active in historic preservation issues. There is little that needs to be explained to me about this. And, look, -- I mean, I've been told for a long time, it's a poor dog who won't wag his own tail. So let me wag it just a bit more and tell you that I think of all the folks who are running for Mayor, there is no one who is running for Mayor that has an historic preservation record like mine. Nobody!

MODERATOR: Thank you very much I know I'll forget this if I don't do it now -- we didn't do it last week. But just to make sure that the Borough President and the candidate keeps -- He's got it -- well you've got it -- the guide to New York Landmarks. One good reason to give it to you is because the author of Landmark West board member, Andrew Dolcart, is here. Andrew's somewhere. And we thought just to keep -- you can give that one away -- autograph. Andrew will sign it for you. Andrew, where are you? Ollie, where is Andrew? There he is -- he's in the back -- he will sign it!

I have -- let me arrogate the prerogatives of the chair for a moment -- but for substance of purpose. One to add to my thank you for the Saloon and its owner, Ernie Bogan, who's sitting down here, and also to use, perhaps, this building as a bit of a test case to set forth some of the issues and some of the questions that we have. While I'm blabbering you can walk down and look at some of the watercolor right here on this post and you'll see this -- building is slated for demolition next year. The Saloon which has been

exceedingly generous to Landmark West in issues past and for the first time is making -- I think it's the first time -- or rare occasion making its space available for public use like this -- staff is here at 6:30 in the morning -- in effect contributed the breakfast, the \$10 go to offsetting other costs and it's a cheap breakfast as it is. The Landmark West and others worked hard to get the Landmark Commission to hear this building, and to give a public hearing and to determine whether or not it was a landmark; prepared a report; established a campaign; and were totally ignored. As a consequence, the owner determined to rip it down -- has stripped down already some of the ornamentation although the Saloon has said it will restore its part of the stage to what it looks like up there. We all resist the 11th hour appeals and sometimes we have a new alternative. You'll be in office for a month before it's ripped down. Obviously, can't commit you to do something on this but will you consider doing something like this and how will you approach issues of that character going forward? That's the last question I'll ask.

FERRER: Knowing a little something about the history past and recent of 1926 Broadway. That's why I alluded to these kinds of actions in the body of my remarks. Where landmarking should not only be used as an 11th hour issue but really proactively with other governmental actions to preserve a sense of place in history throughout the City. Yeah, I expect to be Mayor a month by then and I'll want to take a look at the things I can do to preserve an important part of this City. And you want to do that with a view toward being able to win a case in court and you want to do that with a sense of the time clock still being there. I've won a lot of battles, I've lost a few doing that, but they're all worth fighting.

MODERATOR: Thank you! We did pass out blank cards for some written questions. If you have them someone will come around to pick them up. We're going to intersperse live questions with the cards, probably when the crowd sort of poops out, I'll turn to cards. I see one right here, Carol Clark.

CAROL CLARK: I'm a member of the Board of Advisors of the Historic Districts Council. And one of the preservation platform key points that you weren't able to get to when you prepared remarks has to do with the disconnect between the zoning within historic districts and immediately surrounding historic districts, and in terms of neighborhood character, contextual zoning, what would be your position on those issue?

FERRER: Again, I alluded to it. I touched on it very briefly. It's not only -- when I said these things need to be done together -- it is not only for example -- let me use a concrete example of a historic district. Mott Haven Historic District in the South Bronx. We have two blocks north of that the Bertine block -- equally important, lovely and a lot of stuff in between that is just sort of -- you know -- there. Another area that is similar to that is Third Avenue just across the street from the old Borough Courthouse. These are areas that we've got to look at in their context, and in fact as they are upgraded as important landmarks are preserved we have to look beyond that to a neighborhood and to an environment that supports it. So, yeah, it's not only about landmarking, it's about contextual zoning, it's about text changes from time to time, it's

about an intelligent way to look at the already built environment of this City. See where we can make changes, governmental actions, as appropriate to upgrade, things we can do to encourage re-use. Those are things I'm interested in. They're not easy questions and they're not easy -- that's why I used a couple of examples because they're not easy in the abstract. And every example is different from the other -- they're not all the same. When you have a historic building -- for example, there's a building at the Bronx Zoo. What is it the old lion house that we did? We turned that into a new administrative center. How do you turn a lion house into a new administrative center?

QUESTION: What happened to the lions?

FERRER: We didn't eat them for lunch. But, in fact, that place should win and in fact has won awards for wonderful and inventive re-use of something that was thought not to be very useful. You know, we've got to try.

MODERATOR: Michael.

MICHAEL ADAMS: Good morning, Borough President Ferrer. I'm delighted like many people here to see this wonderful list, but two things do dismay me. One is that when I briefly served as a volunteer in the Bronx Landmark Task Force, a majority of the buildings that are proposed as landmarks in this document were proposed at that time eight years ago and have yet to be protected by landmarking. And that's of particular interest to me because, like in Harlem, there are relatively few landmarks in the Bronx compared to other boroughs -- fewer than in any other borough than Queens. And, this is particularly troubling since I have a letter from HUD that says that it would appear to them that the Empowerment Zone board made up of the Mayor and you and other people, that they're in violation of the National Historic Preservation Act and that there has been no consideration of whether the buildings that have been impacted by federal funding from the Empowerment Zone have been considered as potential landmarks to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and they further suggest that some sort of survey ought to have been done in order to determine which buildings would in fact be eligible and which wouldn't, and so this is very troubling to me that federal money would be used actually to negatively impact landmark buildings in communities like Harlem and in the Bronx. Could you please comment on this?

FERRER: First, I think you are aware that I can't account or go bail for eight years of Giuliani running the Landmarks Preservation Commission or anything else. I've done my job -- I've done my job, which is in fact better than anybody else -- to organize, to lead, and to advocate. To support. What you see on the cover is something I funded too. In fact, what you don't see on the cover is the Gould Memorial Library Auditorium which I funded to restore. I believe in this stuff.

When you talk about the Empowerment Zone, make sure you're in possession of the facts. I run the Bronx part of the Empowerment Zone. There are no issues like that in the Bronx. I don't run the Harlem and Upper Manhattan part of it. If there are issues there, I am unaware of them, but I do know this, there are no issues like that in the

Bronx. None! And if you know of any specifically, share them with me now. Share them with me now.

MICHAEL ADAMS: I would most definitely let you know in the future after doing an investigation.

FERRER: I suggest that once you do the investigation you will find what I have just told you. There are no issues like that in the Bronx.

QUESTION: Two quick ones. One, I'm embarrassed at how few of us have seen the Bronx Landmarks -- invite us up -- in any case, we should make amends. My question is, how will you marry preservation and good green practice?

It hasn't been married in the City. The Department of Design and Construction in this City has put out the best greening manual for architects, engineers, and others on how to consider greening new and existing buildings. But I don't think the marriage has really been made. How would you go about that?

FERRER: I think an indication as to where my head and heart are on those issues -- has anybody seen my Yankee Village plan? That's shocking! This is a preservation group? Let me tell you something. Look, when you get out of here, you hit your desk top and -- [bpferrer.org](http://bpferrer.org) -- click on to the Yankee icon and you can download the whole plan. That tells you where my head is at, on these issues. I believe in preservation, I believe in adaptive re-use. There are some difficulties with existing Yankee Stadium, to be sure. And it is not that it's a terrible field or a terrible place, it is not -- it's not that it's unsafe -- it is not. The interior circulation areas are inadequate. They just are. Not enough restrooms -- just not enough of the space. I mean it was designed seventy eight or nine years ago. And it's tough to do something with that. Some people would say blow it down and build like another Comiskey Park. Any body been in Comiskey Park in Chicago? It is a dud! It really is. It's awful. The only great sightlines are from the luxury suites. Everything else is terrible. But I guess that was the intention. What we proposed ... (inaudible) and they gave us a wonderful plan for the stadium itself -- was O.K. move the pedestrian circulation areas, the fan circulation areas outside the building, enclose it in glass, take advantage of the wonderful sights of Harlem River and the vistas of Manhattan right from those escalators and stairways. That makes good sense. It preserves the inside for an arcade, and the outside for fan circulation. I mean those are the kinds of things I'm interested in. They require some thought. They require some creativity. But, it doesn't cost you an extra five bucks to take a minute, think about what we've got here and find ways to re-use it in a creative and aesthetically pleasing way that preserves one of the most important sports landmarks in America. We ought to look at everything like that.

MODERATOR: One of our Landmark Lions, Anthony Wood.

ANTHONY WOOD: Over the last eight years, the Landmarks Commission has moved away from some of the fundamental values and principles that so successfully guided the Commission in its first 25 years. Could you tell us a little about the type of people you'd

be appointing to run the Landmarks Commission and serve on the Commission, and, in a sense, would they be people who would return some of those values and principles that served the City so well?

Ferrer: Yeah! Yeah! Look, I've known most of the Landmarks chairs over the course of -- what -- yeah, twenty something years. Most of them have been good friends -- we worked together collaboratively and well. Most have known something about landmarks and historic preservation. And like in so many other very important areas of operation in this City, areas of policy developed in this City, I think it would be nice for a change to appoint somebody who actually knew something about it. I believe that for housing, for economic development, for Landmarks for most of the things this City finds itself extraordinarily deficient in. Landmarks is one of them. It's not a proud record very frankly. So those are the things I am very interested in. I mean, for example, their limp response on the Paradise Theater in the Bronx. It was extraordinary to me. There aren't many of them left. Anybody know what I talking about? The Leows Paradise in the Bronx. A four thousand seat behemoth. But it's getting rebuilt in the private sector. I am encouraging the guy to do it because I've given up in the last seven and a half years on the City exerting the kind of leadership it needs to exert to make good things like this happen. Now they should be partnerships but the City ought to be leading the way. These are important places in this City. And I would feel awful as a New Yorker and as someone who was born and raised and educated in the Bronx to see a place like the Loew's Paradise turned into a supermarket or a furniture showroom. It's not right. It really isn't. And it's not like we don't have the resources to make this happen. We just haven't had for the last eight years the will to make it happen.

MODERATOR: Can I please understand the tepid response when the candidate said something that we all believe about appointments to the Landmarks Commission and why we ----- it's kind of shocking. While we're talking about the theater and the Arts, I know there is a question down here, and in the same vein, we might as well package the questions.

FERRER: Before you pose the question, let me just respond to your observation. Look, I'm a very unusual guy. You don't expect a guy from the Bronx coming at you talking about historic preservation issues better than anybody else, who should know better. Maybe I'm a shock to your system this morning, and maybe you don't know enough about what we've done in the Bronx. Shame on you.

QUESTION: My name Paul Ames. I've chaired the Housing Committee at Actors Equity, and my question for you is this -- regarding the rehabilitation of the landmarked Biltmore Theater. The Biltmore forty seven project that is currently moving through ULURP. How can such projects be properly evaluated to assure that development is being harnessed to aid the arts rather than the arts being harnessed to aid the development? And, secondly, if the AV 20 apartment building that is attached to this project effectively excludes working theater professionals, what sort of public, private collaboration might lead to affordable housing for those middle class working theater professionals?

FERRER: You are talking about the zoning text change affected almost two years ago in the theater district that sort of spread air rights and development further west.

(Inaudible statement)

FERRER: Part of that, yeah. Look, I know a lot about 8020 housing. There ain't much you can do about it. But here -- and I had some misgivings about that zoning text change. When you have low density, low rise part of the City -- I mean this is the only city, for God's sake, that sells air. I mean think about it. I mean, if we continue along this path, the FDR Drive would be a tunnel. And, you know, consider the kind of development that's going in the western part of Manhattan, a little further south of here. You'll have a lovely theater district -- the rights are sold. You're going to have a dense packed district up to 9<sup>th</sup> and 10th Avenue. It is going to create incredible pressure on already existing affordable housing to change, and by the way, not only pressure west but pressure south. I mean these are things that have to be anticipated and have to be evaluated over time with a number things in mind, but you identified one of them, affordable housing. It is clear to me the City is going to have to get serious about producing no fewer than 150,000 units of low, moderate and middle income housing in this City over the course of the next ten years. That's again -- it's a poor dog that doesn't wag its own tail. I've done more of that in my Borough than anybody else in this City too. It rebuilds neighborhoods but it does an awful lot more -- it makes a difference in the lives of those families who are living there. So we are going to have to do that and in an intelligent way. That's going to mean some land uses changes, that is going to mean a bigger priority and emphasis on affordable housing, that's going to mean understanding that we no longer have a commuter tax, in the one of the most cynical and dopey moves by the State legislature I've ever seen. As a result of that huge failure of public trust, I choose my words very carefully, then what we are going to have to do is keep moderate and middle income people from fleeing the City. That means giving them housing opportunities as well.

QUESTION: Let me just follow quickly and throw one more thing in here. What I wanted to make everyone aware of is that the developers on this particular project, the partner corporation, have been listening very carefully to what the community and our interests, we'd like to encourage them to keep doing that. We hope we will wind up with a terrific Biltmore project at the end of this process. And thank you for your comments, I appreciate it.

JOAN HAMILTON: Hi! My name is Jo Hamilton and I'm a chair of Save Gansevoort Market you referred to the Washington meat market.

I want to thank you for this report. It's clear from your record that you're very committed to preservation. My question is, how have you and how would your administration balance the public interest in the unique architecture, history and culture of our neighborhoods versus the private interest of real estate developers who rarely have the vision that preservation can actually be good for the bottom line, and specifically as

we move forward with Save Gansevoort Market, we realize -- which is a mixed use area - - we realize that it's a problem for us that many of the land owners in our neighborhood that we are interested in are actually wanting to tear down our neighborhood and build high rise residential.

FERRER: That was going to be an inevitable pressure of what's going on in real estate development in this City today. And that's why there has to be pro-actively, areas identified in this City that need to be preserved. Now that doesn't say that we're against development. All that says is this needs to be preserved, so find the way like they did at the Palace with the old Villiard House. You find a way to make this happen. This isn't incompatible with the idea that you've got to ramp up this City and continue to build. But there's a context and contour of this City that needs to be preserved. There are intelligent ways to do that, rather than to say everything needs to be as-of-right for anybody who wants to do anything. This is a completely Laissez Faire market, except for our friends, of course, in the last eight years, and, for our friends, we intervene, you know what I mean. I mean, come on, there has to be a clear set of rules here that everyone understands; they've got to be transparent; they've got to be fair. When we've done -- look, I've made some very controversial land use decisions in the Bronx. You don't make everybody happy, and in this City of eight million people there are eighty million toes in which to step on at any given moment. But what you try to do is give everybody all the facts. Try to establish a clear, fair and transparent framework -- give everybody a sense of ownership in that framework. For the most part people who are working with you will arrive at a similar conclusion. But that's bringing people into the process it doesn't cost you an extra five bucks maybe it takes you two or three months more but its worth it.

QUESTION: I have one Bronx based question. It might be a fat pitch or it might not. What is your position on the suburbanization of the Bronx by the replacement of brownstones and apartment buildings by ranch style and low scale construction?

FERRER: The suburbanization of the Bronx. That's clever. That really is. It's also a bit ignorant, if you will excuse me, because that's not what's happening. Small homes are replacing rubble strewn vacant lots. They are not good. What used to exist on rubble strewn vacant lots were very big apartment buildings that were demolished in another time or half demolished or blown apart or set on fire so repeatedly that their structures became completely unstable and in danger of collapse. I happen, as a matter of land use, not to like one family eight unit per acre ranch style houses in this environment -- it does make sense to me. And we were the first borough in the Partnership Program to ramp it up to get to three family row houses. And then to work with the Partnership to develop for not only for the Bronx but for the rest of the city design and construction protocols for them. I didn't want them to do stucco or space age materials on the outside as they were doing. They were building virtual garbage in some neighborhoods. The brick, I want a masonry house. I want something in context with the traditional New York City row house. In fact I'm not fond of drive-id (sic) for certain architectural elements. We have tinsmiths in the Bronx and throughout the city that can reproduce cornices. It's not that much more money -- it'll last for nearly forever and that's the right way to do it.

So I want to just help you with that. It is not just the suburbanization of the Bronx -- that seems to indicate a lack of familiarity with all the facts. All the facts are, we've developed and redeveloped more multi-family housing rehabilitation in the Bronx than just about anywhere. When you had vacant lots you fill them in with higher density, as we've promoted and funded two- and now three-family row houses that really do re-create a sense of neighborhood scale -- these neighborhoods really do work.

MODERATOR: Now, perhaps those who badgered me to accept the notion of written questions will understand why I resisted. I really think that the best questions are those posed by someone where both the speaker and the responder can see one another and there can be some human interaction. Unless I'm overruled at the end of this meeting, I am going to relegate written questions to the trash bin. Yes!

QUESTION: Hi, Mr. Ferrer. My name is Karen Lo. I'm with the group in Chelsea called "Friends of the High Line. You've talked about a sense of place in history and context in preserving and re-using and we are trying very hard to do that in Chelsea with the unused elevated railroad line called the High Line as you may know used to go to the Bronx and now goes from Gansevoort Street up to 34<sup>th</sup> Street. We are encountering resistance from various places including the Giuliani Administration which would love to tear it down. In addition to preserving some last vestige of the industrial heritage in Chelsea, it also would provide much needed public space because we have very little of that in Chelsea and I'm wondering if you will help us in our efforts.

FERRER: I'm certainly interested in doing that. As Mayor I won't shut you down because you're not criminal justice related. You know! I have some other interests, besides DAs and judges and police. Their important but I've got some other interests.

QUESTION: Good morning Borough President. My name Ron Melicher. I am the president of the Hamilton Heights West Harlem Community Preservation Organization and you've spoken today about being more aggressive to find solutions for preservation programs and projects. I am wondering if you would consider and if you would, how you would consider and what funding you would consider for bolstering the Landmarks Commission so that they can either address these issues beyond just the regulatory responsibilities, or in fact if you would be interested in setting up something like the Economic Development Corporation or the Preservation Development Corporation that would tackle some of these major problems that we have such a hard time finding solutions?

FERRER: I don't know if creating another almost competing instrumentality with a similar mission does the job. I know the Landmark Preservation Commission used to do this in varying degrees of adequacy. It is inevitably about money but it is even more about the political and governmental support it gets from City Hall. It's considered a small backwater commission, not very high profile and that's too bad because it really is preserving a lot of the spine of this city. The original built environment of this city -- and

it's got to be given a whole lot of importance. I have been given the opportunity to turn up its volume. So I can't give you a dollar figure because it would not be truthful. But I can tell you this, I mean, I don't really think there are a whole lot of other folks running for public office in this city who have a more of a hands on familiarity with the work that Landmarks did and does and the work that I've done to try to help that along than I do. That will not be ignored in my Administration. Now, I'm glad to tell you this because I'm, frankly, a little surprised that we don't know a lot about each other since we've been traveling in similar circles all through the course of years. There are some wonderful things in the Bronx that we've preserved that would have deteriorated beyond the ability to rehabilitate them -- they would've been demolished if we had not acted and had we not been pro-active and even aggressive about their preservation. So that's a record I'll continue.

MODERATOR: Violating my own rule again and one of the prerogatives of chair and building on a couple of the written questions and my own concerns, one of the things we've written is not only during the current administration but previous administrations is the lack of coordination between Landmarks Commission and other vitally interested city agencies, most particularly Building and City Planning but not exclusively, and while from time to time fitful efforts are made for their computers to be able to talk to one another, by and large they fail, and every once in a while when we urge greater coordination we are met with the response, " Well the quick way to do that is to fold the Landmarks Commission into some other agency which is, I assure you, is a total anathema to the people in this room and those who care about Landmarks Preservation. How would you manage that tension between the real necessity to coordinate something for landmarking or to coordinate the City Planning Commission with its zoning proposals to be sensitive to historic district designations, for example, -- and how could you fold in the enormous energy and intelligence although usually scattered to the five boroughs and the five winds of the tens, probably hundreds of thousands of people ultimately represented by these 105 organizations?

FERRER: I don't think the answer is to create, as I mentioned before, competing instrumentalities and things like that. Let me give you an example, does everybody know Bernd Zimmerman, my head of Planning and Development in the office? I point him out because he's probably the best planner of any borough president's office, pound for pound in this City ever! And he's terrific. And what we do in the Bronx, and we've done this for a long, is to put an entire planning and development operation whether it is residential development, facilities development, economic development and planning in one place. I really want one framework for it -- articulation is important. A policy direction is important and that's why our economic development group, and our planning and development group, economic development is an agency of my administration something like EDC, planning and development on my own organization chart -- they're in one place with one executive in charge on one floor in one building. You want to get a building address, you want to talk about city planning certification, you want to get a small business loan or a revolving loan or anything else having to do with development and planning issues, you go to one place. One place. It's important because they articulate with each other they know what each other's doing. There's a framework for

development -- I mean it's a plan -- it really is -- that has to be done on the City level where you take these development functions and preservation functions and begin to have them talk with one another -- begin to have them meet with one another and share a framework -- and that's the way you begin to organize a coherent vision for the rest of the City -- by getting the right people together in one room, putting someone in charge with a policy overlay, and trying to get them to cooperate with one another. Now, why shouldn't they cooperate with one another? I would appoint them all.

MODERATOR: Sara, you had a question.

QUESTION: Freddie, thank you for recognizing me which my neighbor didn't. I'm Sarah Kovner and I ask this question as a member of the Green Guerillas, which is not something that people necessarily identify me with but it's an issue I care very strongly about.

When you talk about Sunset Place and context of neighborhoods, I think of the community gardens and the assault that this administration has made on those places, and recognizing the various needs in neighborhoods and the city at large, how would you factor in open space, park space, and community gardens into the other needs that neighborhoods have?

FERRER: I'm real glad you asked that question. In 1988, we started with the Bronx, with the New York Botanical Garden which happens to be in the Bronx. The Bronx Green-Up program and Jim Hester was the president of the Garden and we hired in fact a colleague from the Green Guerillas, Terry Keller, to run it. And she did a spectacular job -- she just really had a sense of mission and passion about this. Over the course of the Bronx Green-Up program, because we had a lot of vacant lots and I had the biggest fencing program in the city so I would provide the fence the sidewalk and we get the garden to work with us on the expertise and we both worked together to organize the neighborhood -- we took a lot of vacant lots and turned them into wonderful places. Some -- we didn't enough adequate support from the community -- so they were not so great places. But at the end of the day, Sarah, we probably created -- there's slightly over 450 community gardens in the Bronx. Not all of them were going to be permanent, in fact, some of them were in the Melrose area and they were going to be re-developed and in fact they were going to be re-developed in a plan that was worked on with the community. One of the interesting things about community participation and planning -- there's community, and community, and community. So if someone shows up in two week and says I wasn't part of that conversation, I just moved here, I'm the community -- where do you draw the line? I mean, if you really want to include the community.

Second fact, I believe in these community gardens. I think there are some communities without sufficient open space -- these are oases. And some of them are really quite beautiful. I mean, they've turned into something magnificent. There're a great way to bring neighbors out of there homes -- to get to know each other and work with each other. They're fantastic things. You know Edie King, member of the Botanical Garden Board

and the head of that Green Up effort now? Edie and I became very good friends. Green Up is something I started with the garden – I’m still very interested and still fund it. They do an enormous amount of private sector funding for it and they do tremendous things. Edie and I are standing in the mid- Bronx and she says, “We’ve got to keep all these gardens.” And I said, “Edie, look, we’re at an intersection now where three of the four corners on the intersection are gardens. Can I have one of them for housing because somebody’s got to live somewhere. Now that, I think, is a reasonable request. What was unreasonable was Giuliani’s coming in and saying we’re going to have a municipal bake sell and sell them all -- without a plan. So that’s when he came out with his mass auctions. I said, “Look! I think it’s fair for the government to fully disclose. If you’ve got a housing or economic development plan, let’s see it. Let everybody evaluate it. But if you don’t and your intent is just to sell them off -- demolish them and turn them into parking lots or flat fix stations or just another generation of a run down vacant lot because somebody’s speculating -- that’s not planning -- that’s the antithesis of planning and it’s completely unacceptable as an outcome of what should be a rational governmental process to get to a good conclusion that works for everybody.” So, I oppose that. It was the wrong framework. He had no plan. It was about an ideological groove he stuck in to sell everything. And it’s dumb.

**MODERATOR:** To preserve our diversity, is there anyone from Brooklyn, Queens, or Staten Island with a question?

**ANSWER:** (Inaudible) We’re trying to oppose putting Costco and Home Depot in a million square foot building on the East River and 116<sup>th</sup> Street. Two issues seem to us worthy of consideration by the next mayor: First, the developer who originally budgeted 87 million dollars – the budget is now 170 million dollars and 40 of it is expected to come from public funds in order to build a 6-story garage; the second is the traffic addition. The developer admits that there’ll be 7,000 more cars a day attracted to this site of which 3,000 will be on the East River Drive. Fortunately, the Commissioner of Transportation, the new Commissioner, has directed a re-study of the traffic problems that are likely to result, and, I hope you will support us in the effort to have some sense of rationality applied to this development.

**FERRER:** In the interest of full public disclosure, George, for everybody, we did talk about this briefly before I got up here this morning, and George did call my office asking for my opinion on it – so, let me give it to you now.

One, I have always had misgivings about this project from a traffic perspective. One, you cannot get commercial vehicles on the FDR Drive. So, what will happen is, there will be passenger vehicles loaded up with sheet rock and everything else on the car roof with the trunk half open. That’s a safety issue. But, even more fundamentally, does the FDR need more traffic right now? The bigger issue is coming into this facility on 116<sup>th</sup> Street, from almost anywhere else in the City. Well, there are only a number of ways you come down. You can’t come down on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Would you want to come down on Lexington Avenue? At almost any time of the day it is an incredible bottleneck at 125<sup>th</sup> Street. In fact, at 129<sup>th</sup> Street is where it begins. So, where are you going to come down, 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue? You begin thinking about this. It has huge traffic impacts. So, I have some

misgivings about it. Now, being the Borough President of the Bronx wasn't exactly my (inaudible) running for mayor. I will tell you, I have big misgivings about it. But I am very happy that Iris Weinshall (sic) is saying, "Stop the music. I want to look at the traffic impacts here." She's right.

Second, I have an allergy, a real allergy toward providing public funds for retail ventures. You've got to be in this marketplace. It is not our business to give you subsidies for it. I have always denied public money in my capacity as Borough President to anyone who is doing a retail venture. I have stopped projects, that's not our job. Not our job. We assist manufacturing, we assist certain service industries because they don't need to be here. Retail! Listen, my job is to rebuild the market. Retail's job is to be in the marketplace in a sensible way. My only job as a leader of government and officer of the city is to create an even playing field -- not to give them more money. So, I have an allergy to it. That public subsidy would be zero once I am Mayor.

(Applause)

MODERATOR: We'll take one more question. Someone did ask about the website again. It is [www.bpferrer.org](http://www.bpferrer.org).

One last question, then I think we'll give the candidate a minute or two to sum up.

Yes ma'am?

QUESTIOIN: My name is RITA SHU. I hear you're a great believer in adaptive re-use. Have you heard of the coming Lincoln Center East? I am referring to the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment Armory on the upper east side of Park Avenue and 67<sup>th</sup> and 68<sup>th</sup> Street. You may have heard there's a private organization that has an admirable plan to restore the building at the cost of having a performance center that would seat 55,000 people, with the entrance on Lexington Avenue. Lexington Avenue is a very narrow avenue and I don't want to go into the details of what it means to the neighborhood in the way of congestion, the loading and unloading of shows, etc. But, it will ultimately change the character of the neighborhood. If you look out the window -- right here you can see what supports Lincoln Center here -- restaurant after restaurant. Lexington Avenue right now still has a great deal of the charm of the old Lexington Avenue neighborhood. I wonder as Mayor, what can the City do to help restore the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment Armory -- the physical aspects of the building -- while balancing the needs of the neighborhood?

FERRER: I'm not familiar with the project that you've just laid out, so I'd want to know more about it before I engage in what too many do, which is "hoof and mouth disease," and try and answer a question like that. Other than to say --look, I have a similar issue in the Bronx -- The Kingsbridge Armory, except it's not similar at all. They've got to replace the roof on it--the drill floor is a hard hat area. The state and the city both let this building deteriorate, to -- beyond anything that's imaginable. It is going to take an enormous amount of money to fix up. There was a plan advanced by the Giuliani Administration to use it for a big indoor mall. OK, look, I am not opposed to retail issues.

I mean, let's see what it would cost – Oh! Let's bring in Home Depot – Oh, hold on! There were small homes around that Armory. You want to pop everybody's water and sewer line with one of these heavily loaded tractor trailers trucks making a delivery to Home Depot? I'm not for that. No Home Depot. You want to do a Multiplex? Well, people don't have enough—they have to go to Yonkers or New Jersey to watch a movie—let's see about that. It turned out to be a dud—I think the private developer is walking away.

My original plan was to return this to public use. And, here was the plan. Look, we have a Fire Academy on Randall's Island, right? But, they have to do outdoor stuff -- outdoor exercises to stage emergency training. Well, wait a minute! You've got a Multi-story, unobstructed space at the Kingsbridge Armory where they used to do this stuff -- fix it up, turn it over to the Fire Department or to Emergency Services and give them the opportunity to do training. Anybody been in the Kingsbridge Armory? It goes down about five levels. In fact, when I went to the theater -- there's a theater in there -- a couple of shooting ranges --it's incredible. The Police should be using it as a shooting range and not at Randall's Island, anyway. But, that's another issue.

QUESTION: I understand it is flooded.

FERRER: Right! Correct! And, the water is not coming down, it's coming up. There's a reason why it's called Aqueduct Avenue.

MODERATOR: That was our last question, but the reference was to Lincoln Center East and I think as we look out the window we see Lincoln Center West, and I dare say one of the issues that is going to be front and center for the next mayor of the City of New York is going to be dealing with Lincoln Center and its redevelopment plans, which they are very carefully secreting from anyone, involving a minimum of a billion and a half dollars, of a tall structure, a tower, apartment tower in what is now Damrosch Park. The possible gutting, if not destruction, of Avery Fisher Hall.

QUESTION: Really?

MODERATOR: Yes, a battle with the Metropolitan Opera over whether or not they should extend twenty or forty feet into the plaza and a whole host of other horrors which you'll be delighted to deal with, I'm sure.

On behalf of all of us as the real estate developers who sometimes call themselves Lincoln Center go forward. With that if you'll like sixty seconds to rap up. We promised everybody 9:30.

We thank you very much for an enlightened and sparkling presentation.

FERRER: I say this without a sense of regret or recrimination, I am probably not the guy you expected this morning, and that's all right. I'm glad to be a shock to your system. Most people know more about Beijing than they do about the Bronx. Most people in this

City know more about Beijing than they do about the Bronx. But you need to pay attention to what is going on over there. You need to pay attention to the development; you need to pay attention to the planning; you need to pay attention to the community planning partnerships that have been forged as part of our development framework from day one, because that's how I'll govern this City, and the results speak for themselves. When you produce sixty-six thousand units of housing without sit-ins, court cases, and everything else; thirty-five thousand new jobs without massive dislocations. Let me put a human face on it -- that's sixty-six thousand families who have a decent place to gather around the dinner table. A quiet place for a child to do homework; they've got reliable heat and hot water in the winter time. That's the foundation for their stable family life. You build enough of those foundations up. You have a stable block, you have a stable neighborhood, you have a dynamic market.

What follows and services a dynamic market? A dynamic market place. That's been our strategy from day one. It has worked. We haven't built monoliths. We've done things with people on the ground. We worked with communities throughout. In fact, it is one of the first times they had a real partner in planning and development in local government, and, they were shocked by it, too. Thirty-five thousand new jobs—let me put a human face on that. That's thirty-five thousand bread winners who are supporting themselves and their families, paying the bills, paying the rent, putting groceries on the table and supporting their kids.

Those are some of the reasons I want to be mayor. To make this happen in so many other places in this city that have been left out and shut out for far too long.

So I'm glad I am not who you expected today. Bye!