

**DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE'S  
BREAKFAST**

**JUNE 20, 2001**

**PETER F. VALLONE**

You can add one more to your list of preservationists. I adopt your platform completely. A couple of people asked me some questions, do I have a yes and no. Will I preserve the Arts Commission, yes! Will I preserve the EDC Committee, no. So, let's get that straight right away. I'm a preservationist at heart and that's why I wanted to preserve this city as a city.

Eleven years ago when I was first elected as the first Speaker of the City under the new Charter Revision -- you obviously know that's why I'm the best Speaker in the history of the City and also the worst speaker of the only speaker -- but I hired the best people I could find, people like Peg Breen, who is my closest personal advisor, and other great brilliant people who cared about this and wanted to preserve it and wanted to enhance it and didn't want to lose it. We inherited the city at the worst possible time -- a young fellow not too far from here was slaughtered on the subway trying to defend his parents from a roving gang -- there were no police in sight; we had an unbalanced budget; the Office of Management Budget announced that it no longer would fund any cultural institutions in the City of New York; you had to make it on your own; we couldn't afford it; the Bronx Zoo was going to close -- and it was really a bad time. So we had to do something about it. And it was the first time that we had the power to do anything -- first time the Counsel could actually do something with the budget -- it had some power under this new constitution of ours.

So, the first thing I did was to do something very unpopular and earmark twelve and a half percent of our personal income tax to rebuild the Criminal Justice System in the City of New York. Not just the ten thousand cops that you hear about, but Legal Aid lawyers, assistant district attorneys, a youth program in every single neighborhood of the City of New York. The whole idea wasn't to arrest every one in the City of New York but to prevent crimes from happening in the first place. I worked with the Youth Board for five years. My last two years of college and three years of law school in which my job was bringing kids off the street, bringing gangs off the street and try and keep them out of trouble. So that was a very successful program and I kept my word, the word that I gave back 1989-90 was I would give back that twelve and a half percent income tax surcharge, and you might recall the big ruckus in 1998 when Mayor Giuliani wanted to use that money to transfer and hold Yankee Stadium from Bronx County to the west side in Manhattan, and you know I defeated that. And I gave that money back to the people who paid it.

I also kept my word on how to balance the budget every single year and every single year the budget has been on time, not one day late. We also created a stabilization account in

our City of over a billion dollars and I reversed the pattern of de-funding cultural institutions, and every single year led the fight to restore cultural institutions to try and get the Administration to understand, which they still don't -- at least the Office of Management Budget -- this is economically viable for the city. When you invest in a cultural institution or in arts, you are creating and enhancing the environment of the city and making it much more attractive for tourists to come and it actually it pays off in monetary terms. I feel the same way about landmarking and preserving what's the best of our past. So we can set a precedent for the future. I think it's economically viable. I think we can see examples all over the country of where that's happening now with far sighted mayors who understand if you landmark an area or district you can create and generate economic activity around that district; you can build hotels as long as it's within the character of the neighborhood. I think that's the kind of looking into the future how you want to see this city ten years from now. Ten years ago no one wanted to stay, you only wanted out. I went to see various people, one of them had 6,000 people working in his building. He says, "I don't need this City! All I need is this phone. He said, "I can go to Switzerland tomorrow and you'll have 6,000 more people out of work unless you make this city what it's supposed to be, and it can't be anything unless you make it safe. My employees don't want to ride the subway, they don't want to come, so you've got to start with safety."

So what will I do as Mayor? What makes me different than the other three candidates who are very nice guys. They're all very nice guys. The only difference between them and me is, this is my job, this is what I do every single day. I've worked with three different Mayors very closely. With Mr. Koch I instituted what you now know as the Campaign Finance Law which makes it possible for anyone of you or me or anybody else to run for the highest office in the City, Mayor or Council Member. We actually pay you to run for office, unlike the Republican candidate who -- I wish I was a multi-billionaire too -- who could afford to work for a buck -- maybe that's all he's worth I don't know. But, most of us, most of us have to earn more than a buck a year to survive, OK? But for this Campaign Finance -- or think of it a minute, just think of it -- if there was no Campaign Finance Law in effect, would anybody have a chance against billions of dollars -- absolutely not. So it's great -- I love the idea that you have qualified people running for office. I wish they weren't, but I love the idea that they're running for office. But the difference is -- and you have to understand this -- on December 31<sup>st</sup> every single one of us leaves office at the same time. Never happened before -- doesn't happen like that anyplace else in the country -- but will happen here. Everybody! Of the Council, only 14 will remain. That means they can't do anything -- you need 26 in order to hire staff -- can't do anything unless you have 26 people who agree on a Speaker who then can go out and hire staff. So you're coming into a total vacuum in City Hall.

Talking about preservation, where's the institutional memory -- where's anything about what happened before. Where are you, the various organizations that I see in this audience that do such a remarkable job on our City, that depend upon city funding -- all of that is gone. You need someone in office who knows what he or she is doing. I'm only going to have to move 65 feet from one side of City Hall to the other side of City Hall. Take my staff with me and keep this city going. I also know how important it is to

get the other side of the hall organized as quickly as possible. But don't let them get to where the State is -- where God only knows where they are. They're adjourning and recessing now -- forget about the Budget. Let the City take care of itself -- let the various boards of education throughout the State go borrow money -- we're too busy up here. I don't know what they're doing but they're certainly not doing anything constructive in terms of this City of ours. You can't let that happen. If we don't adopt a budget on time, we lose a hundred million dollars a day. That's what it comes down to. So people have to take their work very seriously in City Hall. So, I'm just saying as a matter of ... you're not taking any chances with me. I'm there for eleven years. There's no one in this city that can say my office has ever been closed to them. And there's no one in this city that could ever say I broke my word. And there is no one in this city that can say that when you come to my office or my staff, the bottom line and I don't care whether you like it or not, the bottom line is that we're going to do the right thing. People kept asking, "What are you going to do about this or what are you going to do about that," I said that's what I have committee hearings for. That's why I hired the best staff like Chris Collins who's sitting here right now. Every one of my staff can go outside and earn two or three times more in private industry. They're here because it's exciting and it's great to be in the greatest city in the world and to see it come to life. To see it begin to blossom and to know that there are dangers ahead. You've got to keep moving -- you could never stop growing -- you could never stop preserving -- you could never stop caring -- you could never allow one person, especially a Mayor whose so strong -- such a powerful office -- to set himself up as a censor when it comes to the arts. No matter how indecent, in quotes, that art may seem to be or insulting that it might be to one person or any group. There's a bigger principle involved here -- there's a greater principle involved in my taste or your taste and that principle is what this country and what this city is founded upon, freedom. Freedom to be and freedom to grow. And freedom to think and freedom to create. And that's what arts and preservation are all about. I just came back from Greece and Italy and Rome and Sicily and to go and see how the Europeans treasure, treasure their past. They have a new subway in Athens -- every subway stop is a museum. It took them thirteen years to build it because everything that they uncovered they preserved. And you're looking at thousand of years of history, it's unremarkable. I have to get off at every stop just to look at what was uncovered. Go to Italy, they can't dig three feet down without finding something and preserving it. And it's all at public expense. They understand that their future depends upon their knowledge and experience of the past. The future of this city depends upon the combined experience and knowledge of the private sector and the public sector.

That's why I am running. It's going to be very close primary on September 11<sup>th</sup> -- if you think the Presidential Election was close, wait until you see this one. It's going to be even closer. And I'm looking forward to being the Democratic candidate and to winning against Mr. Bloomberg, I assume, in November. Can't do it though, can't do it without people understanding how important this election is and how important it is that they come out to vote. Thank you very, very much and I'll be glad to answer any questions you may have.

MODERATOR: Picking up on the political piece of it for a bit, as you'll recall from the last couple of sessions, we have invited both Mr. Bloomberg and Mr. Badillo to participate in breakfast forums. There is discussion going back and forth between Landmark West and the candidates' offices and as soon as something is locked up we will obviously be back and schedule it. I guess I did forget my one sort of poetic exercise in which I take from the back of the sheet of the platform, the one that list all of the organizations and gives sort of a scope of what it is and perhaps some of you from these organizations will have questions or comments for the speaker because we're here from the Friends of Van Cortlandt Park to the Mudd Lane Society for the Renaissance of Stapleton in Staten Island, from Vinegar Hill in Brooklyn to the Bay Side Historical Society to the East Seventh Street Block Association downtown. I guess I would like the following, I realize that since I don't have a photographic memory, I think there is some value to be had from continuity of questions and I know some of you, great advocates that you are, you wouldn't be in the room, like to hit each of the candidates.

I would like at least for this first question for those who've asked questions before, not to raise your hands so I that will be sure to select someone who hasn't had an opportunity to ask one so far. Remember the questions are limited to landmark and land use issues. Although the candidate, I'm sure, would dearly love to talk about crime in the streets and education, he will find other forums to do that I am sure. Yes Sir!

QUESTION: (Inaudible)

VALLONE: I think you have to complete the work that has been attempted to do, to revisit our zoning law, which is a half a century old, and to try to bring it up into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century -- to incorporate contextual zoning into what we are talking about preserving, protecting and enhancing the growth of our City. The new City Planning Commissioner, Joe Rose, has been trying to do that for four years but he can't get by the Mayor . I have been trying to get the Mayor to sit down with me and Chris and Gail Benjamin and our people and say let's take a look at this thing, forget the politics of it, forget everything else, while we have this opportunity when you're leaving office, we're leaving office and we have this staff put together why don't we sit down see what we can agree upon, get the private sector and do what we can agree upon. You can't get by him. So my highest priority would be to get the most capable city Planning Commission I can find -- people with experience and that's going to be my norm in every appointment that I make. I want people who are familiar with the area that I'm appointing in. I want people who have a history and experience in that area. I'm not just going to put political appointments in. I am going to put people in who I believe are qualified using the same example, that if you want to know who I am going to appoint look at my staff now. My staff is second to none in the country. They're the best in any every area I could find. And that's the same thing I'm going to do with Zoning, and with the City Planning Commission and with trying to get a comprehensive new zoning law.

MODERATOR: OK, restrictions are off. We can have some of the old chestnut bearers. Yes! over there.

RICKY ARIAY: In regards to the meat packing district and the Chelsea Market area. As far as tax incentives for any sort of restoration or historic properties -- what sort of tax incentives will be available for that area?

VALLONE: I'm very much in favor of the Municipal tax incentives tacking on to what's going on both in the federal and state level, where you give tax credits. They don't have the real estate tax, we have the real estate tax, but they can give tax credits for landmarking and rehabing and trying to keep the character of the particular landmark building or neighborhood or district itself in place. I think it's a great idea. It goes back to what I said a little earlier about the argument that you always get from the other side of the Hall, the one I want to go on to, is that we can't afford it. The argument that I would be bringing to that side of the Hall for the first time is that we cannot afford not to do it, and it would enhance our future income, which is the only reason, folks, why we have a reserve. Every time I have a let's take a targeted tax cut in which we no longer tax businesses for the privilege of paying rent that was called a commercial occupancy tax, and we don't double tax you for the unincorporated business tax -- we let you take a credit about that -- that helps businesses stay in the City of New York, becomes more economically viable so while you have to reduce your budget when you give a tax credit or when you reduce a tax, it does enhance your income in the future. And that's why we have a billion dollar reserve now.

MODERATOR: Yes! Wait for the mike, please.

FLORENT: We stay in the same neighborhood. I'm from the Save Gansevoort Market advocating preserving a small piece of New York industrial and commercial past. At the moment there's extreme pressure from development on the west side, especially the Village, the meat market. I'd like to hear your ideas about how to balance the desires of New Yorkers to protect the quality of their lives in their neighborhood with the power of the real estate interest which are able to push through the City large scale development that threatens the fabric of these neighborhoods.

VALLONE: You'd have to go by my history. The aim of life is a question of balance. And I think that the balance -- you might take the attempt to move Yankee Stadium from the Bronx County to the west side of Manhattan. The argument was used -- the economic income that it would produce -- to the City of New York. There is no question about the fact that it would've produced a lot more money then it was producing now because corporations would just buy up all the seats and it would buy them up permanently and it would make the Yankees a lot of money, and it probably would create more economic viability around the west side but it would destroy, absolutely destroy, the whole west side. You can't move now. How could you possibly think of doing something like that unless it's in accordance with the character of the neighborhood. Or, do you check the infrastructure. Can you get people in and out? Are the subways adequate? And then none of those answers are viable. So I'm the one that stopped that from my side of the Hall. Obviously, I wouldn't even propose it from the other side of the Hall unless you did it in conformity with the neighborhood itself. And how do you do that? You bring the people in and say look you have four hundred and some odd acres here -- it's going to

have to be developed, it's not going to stay that way. We have to figure out what we are going to do about it and how do we do it and how do we make this livable for the people that are here. So that would be the way I would approach any problem whether it's the Meat Market or anything else. If it's a -- just because it's economically viable doesn't mean we are going to do it if it destroys the character of the neighborhood.

MODERATOR: I am going to abuse the privilege of the chair and move from the -- maybe some of the generalized qualitative questions and address one of the principles on the preservation platform.

Addressing the Landmarks Commission specifically-- there are a total of 45 employees of the Landmarks Commission, a budget not quite three million dollars in what is now a 40 billion dollar budget and some concern at least among many if not all of the 110 organizations represented in the room that in the past the selection at least of the chair of the Landmarks Commission has not necessarily reflected the professionalism that many of us would look for in that position and possibly giving a meaningful voice to some of the landmark organizations in that connection. Could we expect more from you in that regard and to the extent you feel comfortable doing it, specifically, how much more could we expect?

VALLONE: \$114,873.21. First, you have to understand -- yes you certainly can expect more --I would --- the Landmarks Commission -- the people I would appoint would be people that would be in consultation with the industry, the best person I could find -- who believes in the same things that I've just been talking about. Preservation enhancement, and co-operation between the public and private sector. So that would be any appointment -- Police Commissioner, Landmarks or Sanitation or anything else. I think it's very important that you get experienced and qualified people in there. Secondly, in terms of the under-funding --we spend most of our time restoring money that the Mayor cuts. Now, you have to know this because nobody does. I still have some council members that are having difficulty figuring this out. The City Council is far different from the State Legislature or the Congress. When the President proposes a budget or when the Governor proposes a budget, the State Legislature or Congress can increase it. They can say Mr. President or Governor you're holding back 8 billion dollars, we're putting it in and we are going to do all of these things that we think is important for our country or our state. President or Governor doesn't like it he can veto it. Congress can override it. That's the way democracy works. In the City, it doesn't work like that. Only the Mayor, only the Mayor sets the revenues. So if we would like to put another employee on the Landmarks Commission we would have to take an employee from somewhere else. And they're not going to like it, unless the Mayor agrees. So our battle always is to get the Mayor to agree to add on. And if the Mayor doesn't you can't add on unless you adopt your own budget. Which means you have to do it within a much less of a revenue than we do when we have a consent budget. The only time that happened was on the west side where absolutely refused to use the billion four hundred million that he put in the budget. He put one billion four hundred million dollars into the budget to move that stadium -- that was a serious mistake he made. because what we did do was adopt our own budget and take that one billion four hundred million and put it into our

schools. That's why you see all of this construction going on in the City of New York -- all the rehab of the school buildings. I declared in front of the public schools that I went to, Public School 122, two weeks ago they have a beautiful school -- pillars in front of it, gorgeous; came in number one in the whole State of New York in reading and English. Thirty percent of the kids don't speak English and go to this school. A public school that's working in a mixed neighborhood all right! And I did that for a purpose-- two purposes: One, to show that the public school system can work in spite of a nutty system that I'm about to blast in a few minutes in front of the Board of Education; and two, look at this beautiful school. Maybe this is one that should be landmarked. Maybe we should be looking at these beautiful schools of ours and see what we can do to preserve them and say wouldn't it be nice if we did it for historical reasons because the next Mayor went to that school. Now I'm only kidding on that one.

MODERATOR: You will see that one of the legs of the platform addresses specifically the landmarking of some of the City's historic, magnificently designed, brilliantly architected schools. O.K. Michael!

MICHAEL ADAMS: Good Morning Mr. Vallone! I have a letter from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

VALLONE: Thank God it's not a subpoena. You scared me there for a second there.

MICHAEL ADAMS: And, it suggests that both in the Bronx and in Harlem that the Empowerment Zone is in violation of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. What role do you see the City Council currently has in addressing that and how would you address that as the Mayor?

VALLONE: Well, why don't we talk to our attorney, Chris, are you familiar with this?

(Inaudible)

VALLONE: So why don't you give the letter to my attorney and my attorney will be glad to get back to you.

He who knows he doesn't know has knowledge -- that's what I go by. I haven't got the foggiest idea what you're talking about, but he does.

MODERATOR: In the corner. Wait for the mike please.

QUESTION: My name is Jim Van Westring. My question relates to -- would you invite the historic preservation community into City Hall for a meeting on the preservation agenda which we've established and I'll give you a little background, if I may.

MODERATOR: Not too much!

JIM WESTRING: Any! Or do I just get to the question?

MODERATOR: YES!

JIM WESTRING: Thank you.

JIM WESTRING: For last several years I've had the pleasure of working with Jay O'Donovan, chairman of the Economic Development Committee of the City Council. I know with your support we have invited business men, investors from all over the world into City Hall seeking their investment in our City. I submit to you, you have your investors here. We have invested -- we are homeowners, business owners, citizens. And I think it would be wonderful if you would invite us to City Hall, an historic building, to discuss the issues which are before us today and if you would invite us, we will come.

VALLONE: Bruce, get the name and address and telephone number of everybody in this room, you're all invited. But, I'll go one step better -- I'll go one step better than that. At this time next year -- OK -- we will invite you all for a little picnic on the lawn of Gracie Mansion -- providing you elect me Mayor. But get your own answer. That's also a Historic building.

MODERATOR: And I trust that will be without the necessity for a court order. Carol.

CAROL CLARK: Good Morning, again, Mr. Speaker. Carol Clark with the Historic Districts Council's Board of Advisors. We were all very pleased in your remarks to hear you say that you embraced the preservation platform, and my question is really a follow up on the one Mr. Gruen asked about zoning reform, as I'm sure you know there is really a jarring disconnect in many of our historic districts between what the zoning calls for in terms of built form and what the Landmarks Commission does when they consider an action a certificate of appropriateness and even around the historic districts the zoning is out of whack with what might make the most sense in terms of good urban form. You mention contextual zoning when you responded to Mr. Gruen. Could you tell us a little more about your position on contextual zoning and preserving neighborhood character.

VALLONE: I think that there has to be a connect. As you say now, there's a disconnect. These are all supposedly people working for the Mayor. It will be nice to get them working together. And when your planning zoning why would you not bring in landmarks and figure out how you can get zoning that's compatible with the area, that's in harmony with the area. You can't have historical districts surrounded by skyscrapers. I mean there has to be a way of meshing this in, and I think that would be -- that's a given -- that's the way I would absolutely operate. Part of my re-zoning, re-looking at -- aren't we different than we were back in 1960, the last time this thing was revisited? And, should we not be talking about the future? And why should we be surprised when the Guggenheim Museum comes up with an erratically different design -- should there not be some kind of planning involved in this and some kind of notification involved before it happen? There's got to be a way of putting all of these people together so that we have a comprehensive way of preserving and enhancing the quality and beauty of this City.

MODERATOR: I'm going to take the privilege of a follow up because it leads into one of the questions that we dealt with -- and one of the tensions frankly that we're confronted with. We've always been puzzled by -- with what you've just addressed, the apparent inability of various agencies under the direct control of the Mayor to communicate with one another and to coordinate their efforts, and it's not just City Planning and the Landmarks Commission, it's the Buildings Department as well. And, at the same time that we pressed endlessly for coordination and cooperation, one of the push backs periodically comes by saying, "Well let's just fold the Landmarks Commission into one of these other agencies thereby subordinating, in our view, its mission, and managing the governmental tension between desiring coordination and cooperation, and yet preserving the mission as we see it. The Landmarks Commission, I think, is a great challenge of government that has not been managed by I think even those who wanted to do so. Do you have any new or creative notions as to how that could be brought about?"

VALLONE: It takes its tone from the Mayor. Let's talk about the Buildings Department in less than five hours which is what we would really need. Here, the Mayor understands, as we all do, that you need a radical re-visit to the Buildings Department and the kind of corruption that has existed when you pay people less than \$30,000 to go out -- to inspect a job involving millions and billions of dollars, that the attraction, the lure, the temptation not only has been there but has corrupted many of our inspectors. The Mayor's solution is just to transfer the Buildings Department to the Fire Department. What kind of sense does that make? Now, I have stopped that legislatively. The Mayor is trying to get around that now by just simply physically moving the inspectors over without having any executive order or anything else to abide by, and my lawyers are presently trying to figure out if he's serious about this, whether or not we'll be successful in court. The light at the end of the tunnel of this is -- the quick answer to your question obviously is, the Buildings Department has to work. You've got to get a Commissioner in there; you've got to get the supervisory personnel in there; you've got to increase the pay; you have to hire more people; and, you have to have a vigilance involved so we don't just give up and say corruption has to exist and that's it. That's absurd! The Fire Department has a very important job to do and the Billing Department has a very important job to do, and both should not meet except when it comes to dangerous conditions that would lead to fires -- that's where you have a unity of inspection involved -- but certainly you won't abolish the apartment, the whole of the apartment. We don't even have a Buildings Commissioner as we're talking. That's absurd! The light at the end of the tunnel is that this is only going to last another six months, OK? That's the best I can tell you.

MODERATOR: Yes!

QUESTION: My name is Eileen Remore, I'm with Parks 2001 and many historic houses are in parks but unfortunately due to lack of funding many of these parks are falling into disrepair. How would you address this problem?

VALLONE: The same answer I gave you before. The Mayor sets the budget for every single department. The commissioners then come in at oversight hearings before the

Council and we say to them how come you can't do this and that and how much more money do you need and they say everything is fine. And, they're doing that because that's what the Mayor told them to say. So the only way that we can try to enhance it, is we take bulks of money and we say we're putting this much money into re-habing every single park in the city. We're putting this amount of money in for more parks inspectors, for PEP officers, for rangers. And that we have the individual council members who know the condition of the parks in their own district, who have their own way of trying to get money into the budget to try and fix that up. But we're always reacting to a budget that's proposed and commissioners whose lips are sealed, because if they say that we're under-funded, they're no longer going to be a commissioner. So, the answer again lies in the presentation of the budget and the priorities that the Mayor has. Now, the Mayor has spent \$300 million dollars more in overtime -- think of this, folks. \$300 million dollars in overtime for the Police Department alone. Knowing full well that there're twelve hundred jobs in the Police Department that should be occupied by civilians and not by police officers. If you took six hundred of those and created made them work full time, you would not have to spend one penny in overtime. Now that's 300 million dollars that could be taken out of that one budget and put into Arts, could be put into Parks, it could be put into any place that you're thinking about. The Mayor's priority, as it must be, is public safety. There has to be a balance and there has to be some economy of use. And, in this case, the public safety, you can't talk to the Mayor. That's a number one priority. The Police Commissioner is just a figure head, whoever it is. He's running that department and he's going to make sure that department works. Well if he had the same attention to some of the other departments we wouldn't have some of the problems we're having.

MODERATOR: Another mathematical footnote that I can't forbear 300 million dollars in overtime for the police is 100 times the entire budget of the Landmarks Preservation Commission – it's an interesting statistic.

QUESTION: Good Morning! I'm Jeff Kroessler. I'm with the Historic Districts Council and the Astoria Historical Society. You've heard of it. We want to congratulate you on having made this important step from being the honorary Mayor of Long Island City to the actual Mayoral candidate of the City of New York.

VALLONE: Would-be Mayor.

KROESSLER: Yes, and speaking of Astoria, I want to pick up on a comment you made about the need to balance economic development with the neighborhood context because there are several problems in western Queens. One is the placing of Costco on the East River waterfront which really is an insult to the neighborhood because it blocks off access to one of our amenities, and at the other end you have Shore Towers which looms over the historic neighborhood of old Astoria. Now we have an old Astoria as you've been following the threat to the antebellum neighborhood which was the heart of historic Astoria. This is being threatened by the demolition of historic one-family wood frame houses and the replacement by multi-family dwellings. This is not a historic district yet, but that problem of single family homes in single family neighborhoods being

demolished and replaced by multi-families is a problem not only in Astoria but also in Staten Island and parts of Bay Ridge, Brooklyn, and the like. So I'm wondering how you could address this?

VALLONE: I walked the streets of that – we tried to stop that condominium but it was approved by the Board of Estimate, as a matter of right -- something like 25 years ago, and what we were able to do, we were able to scale it down, we were able to reposition it. Paul O'Dwyer and I walked the streets -- that's one of the most beautiful areas of the City. It's part of the Underground Railroad, back to the Civil War. You have Widow's Peaks on top of these beautiful one-family dwellings that look towards the river.

There used to be a tunnel, that going right from some of these houses right to the waterfront. It's a beautiful area. And Paul O'Dwyer and I tried to make this and historical district in the 1970s, O.K. The people didn't want it. Why didn't they want it? Because if they had a one-family house that was worth \$100,000, they could get \$2 million for it and who are you to tell them you can't do that. So it's always a question of balance, OK? It's always a question of trying to do what's right for the community and at the same time if you have a property owner who invested his or her money into the area, they have to have a return on the money. So, that becomes the issue not only in Astoria which I happen to be familiar with because I represent the area, but it becomes an issue in every single neighborhood. You can't just come in and – boom -- declare something historical and tell the people who live there, sorry, this is for your own good -- we're taking this money out of your pocket whether you like it or not -- there's got to be a balance and there has to be an intelligent dialogue back and forth.

MODERATOR: I'm going to pose the same question to the candidate that I posed to the others because the sense of place that we're all so fond of compels us to do so.

The next Mayor of the City of New York will have one quick issue to deal with in his first month in office, and that's the preservation of this building and when you walk out look at the print that is on this brick stanchion and understand that as of January 31<sup>st</sup> all of the tenants in this building are going to be evicted and the building is going to be torn down and to prevent Landmarking or to attempt to do so, much of the major decorative work was removed from this building within the last, probably, six weeks. That's your first month's problem. The problem you'll face for the next eight years of your term, if you're elected, is across the street. Lincoln Center, as you doubtless know, is in the midst of developing at least a billion and a half dollar restoration, rehabilitation, re-development, or reconstruction, depending upon which word they choose to use before which audience. And, the designation of Lincoln Center on the state and national historic registers and its eligibility for landmark designation is going to be a hot issue.

VALLONE: I never answer a question unless I have all the facts. And, in my position as Speaker, if this should come up before me, I would certainly not tell you what I'm going to do now because then I deprive the committee and everyone else from an opportunity to testify. All I will tell you is based upon what I've said now that everything is a question of balance and a question of merit and a question of right, and the way I decide every

issue is to give it to objective people who have no stake one way or the other based upon their experience and their ability in the area. Bottom line, what is the right thing to do -- what is the right thing to do, and that, I assure you, is what will be done. Whether it's this building, whether it's Lincoln Center, whether it's the Astoria District. That's the only bottom line and I would never prejudice in my capacity as Speaker or Mayor what the outcome is going to be until everybody has an opportunity to be heard in either way.

MODERATOR: In other words, nice try but no cigar. We have one more question for the Speaker. Jack!

QUESTION: I'm Jack Taylor, Mr. Speaker. What is your view about what should happen to Governor's Island?

VALLONE: Well, that's what I've been clear about because they took that away from us altogether. The City Council has nothing to say about it, unfortunately. What we wanted and what we fought for and what I went to Congress and went to the State Legislature -- we wanted it, you know. And we wanted the Mayor, this Mayor and this Governor to get together on one plan at least in Washington, which they basically got together and it almost happened except that one Congress member in the city was trying to tack on more City -- and rightfully so -- some City say about what goes on on Governor's Island. You have to re-institute with a little more vigor.

The next Mayor, hopefully it will be me, and I will definitely, definitely come together with whoever the Governor is going to be or the existing Governor, to come together with a plan which preserves the area as much as possible. You already have two federal landmarks on the island where we're going to get some money. We get some kind of mix use where we could pay the forty million dollars a year that it's going to take to maintain that island. But to let it go is absurd and so -- but it takes a very concerted effort. Why a Mayor of the City, to get agreement with the Governor, to go to Congress together to the President and present a plan.

MODERATOR: Mr. Speaker you want to take a minute or two to wrap up.

VALLONE: Yes! Thanks very much! I'm about to go to the Board of Education to read about that because I really do think that if this City is going to survive, really, besides preserving what we want to preserve -- what makes this City, New York City -- the same thing the fellow who was going to move 7,000 people out the next day. I'm in New York City not because of it's physical location -- as it used to be hundred years ago -- docks, economic center of gravity and all that kind of stuff -- there is no more economic center of gravity, it's wherever the businesses move to, becomes the economic center of gravity. I am here because of the character of the things that this City offers, that no other city in the world offers.

When I've been to Greece or Rome or any place else in the world and how much I love it and all that but there's nothing like New York City. There's nothing like the excitement,

the feel of it, the areas that you can go to, the parks, to think and to breath. I want to preserve all of that, and in order to do that, you've got to concentrate on the public safety, but not go crazy with it. You've got to make sure our system works, our school system works which is why I pointed out Public School 122, because it can work. It's inexcusable, that it works in spite of this crazy system or somebody out of the street who is going to vote for me anyway, and it works in spite of this crazy system, and you have to have affordable housing if you don't have – the last affordable housing plan we had was with Mayor Koch, who's already endorsed me and we're going to go right back into another affordable housing plan. I just want to leave you one thought, going back to what's going to happen on December 31<sup>st</sup>, this is very effective because it's true. I played a – excuse me, this hay fever is killing me at the moment -- something in here that I'm allergic to probably whatever they tore out of the building left some dust.

MODERATOR: Certainly, not the community

VALLONE: Gives you some idea of what I'm going to do with this building! In any event, I had an operation on my knee, those of us who play ball usually wind up with some kind of problem on the knee. So, ten years ago, I had to go for a knee operation, and doctor said-- highly recommended, graduated number one from Harvard Medical School, wrote a book on knee operations. Wonderful guy. When I got there, he tells me, I was going to be his first knee operation. He had never operated on a knee before. And I said, "You know some day you'll be great, I'm sure. They'll be writing about you for years." I said, "But, I'd rather go to this doctor," and "I don't care what medical school he went to, I don't care how high he graduated in class." He operated on knees over a thousand times, successfully. That's the guy, that's the doctor that I would go to. That's pretty much the choice. I would make it – take a choice with my knee – I don't think you should take a chance with the City. No matter what the qualifications are claimed, by other people that are running for office, what have they done? What have they done with reference to making this City where it was 11 years ago to where it is today. No one that I know wants to go back to where we were 11 years ago. I'm the only sure bet you have. Thank you very much -- look forward to it.