

FULL TRANSCRIPT

Municipal Art Society panel on Ed Logue and Roosevelt Island
March 7, 2001

INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD KAHAN:

[Welcome to the Municipal Art] Society, and it's a very special honor for me to introduce this evening in the midst of a wonderful exhibit co-sponsored by the Municipal Art Society and the Architectural League on the work of Ed Logue. The reason it's an honor is because -- and there are other people in the room, I know, who can say the same thing -- no person has ever or will ever affect my career or my values or what I've done in this world more than Ed Logue did. And the reason for that is that he taught all of those of us who were privileged to work with him that urban development was about lots more than bricks and mortar. It's about values. There is nothing neutral about urban development, about zoning, about designing projects. Everything is weighted with values, and Ed had a very strong, distinct set of values which he conveyed with tremendous power and enthusiasm. One of them, for example, is affirmative action. If he saw me introducing an all-white male panel, there would be hell to pay. But that's nobody's fault.

Roosevelt Island played a very important role in that set of values. Ed thought it mattered tremendously what the project was designed like, what the open spaces were like, what the public environment was like. He brought a new standard and a new way of thinking about large-scale development. If you think back to those days, the paradigm then was Coop City, Lefrak City, Trump Village... Nobody had thought to infuse public development with the kind of quality, and architectural distinction, and public domain that Ed did.

There were other values. The affirmative action -- I made light of it, but there was no question that Ed brought the issue of affirmative action to the forefront in a way nobody ever else had in government, that I knew of, and set a standard for a long period of time. Economic equity, economic integration, racial integration -- these were things that no UDC project moved to the drawing board without that being the program. The architectural program came second.

Now, Roosevelt Island is particularly important in this context because it was one of the, if not the, centerpiece of his work, and it was a huge social and economic experiment. It's fair to say that as an economic experiment it failed. It failed because, for a variety of reasons, it was unable to pay its own way to carry the debt service on its infrastructure, and in that sense it wasn't replicable. Was it worth trying? Absolutely. Was it successful socially? In my opinion, absolutely. This was a time when the middle class was leaving New York in droves. Ed believed that, if you provide a safe environment with high-quality design, wonderful open spaces and good, small schools, people of all income groups would, in fact, stay in New York City. Now, if today, we were to say, "Let's provide safe neighborhoods, good small schools, and wonderfully designed neighborhoods," I think we all agree that people will stay in those kind of neighborhoods. And in that sense I went to Roosevelt Island a few springs ago -- I haven't been there very much in the last 15 years -- and people were just beginning to plant their gardens. And... everybody has little plots and they lean over the fences and talk to each other, and I saw black people, and white people, and Caribbean people, leaning over and arguing about whose tulip bulbs were going to be better this year. Then I walked across the street and I saw a soccer game with probably ten different ethnic origins on the field, and I thought to myself, "How many places in New York, which is a phenomenally racially-segregated city, can one see those kinds of everyday experiences working?" And that's the wonder of Roosevelt Island.

And it's very important, and I guess that's what this discussion will be about, that that spirit and that philosophy carry on in whatever is done in the future on Roosevelt Island, and there are certainly those that

are arguing that that's not about to be the case, and those that argue that it is, but I will tell you that Ed's power reaches beyond the grave, what he was, at least what his attitude was not so long ago when he wrote a letter to Brendan Sexton, who was then President of the Municipal Art Society:

Dear Brendan,
Once the Municipal Art Society was in love with Roosevelt Island. I hope you or some committee can reactivate your interest. Roosevelt Island is under some real threat.
My very best wishes.
Ed Logue

Now, that's the context within which we're having this discussion, and I will turn it over now to Tom Mellins, the mediator, uh, moderator [LAUGHTER], a prominent architectural historian, co-author of three books on New York City, and Tom, please take it away.

TOM MELLINS:

Thank you very much. Why don't we start this evening with each of the panelists giving us a brief presentation, and then I'll have just literally a moment of placing things in historical context, and then we'll have a few questions among the panelists, and then open up the evening to the audience. Just before we start with the panelists, I do want to acknowledge that there are several people in the audience tonight who were intimately involved with Roosevelt Island, and I'd like to thank them for coming:

Huson Jackson is with us tonight and he was one of the architects of the original housing on the Island.

Jordan Gruzen, the architect of the proposed Southtown development; I believe he's with us tonight.

Ted Liebman and Alan Melting, who worked at the UDC as part of the original team.

Ellen and Frank Logue, the brother and sister of Ed Logue, are also here.

And so I'd like to thank all of those people for coming and joining us tonight. And now, if I can turn to Alex Garvin, the first member of the panel.

ALEXANDER GARVIN:

I met Ed Logue several times, but the time that he had the most impact on me was a weekend I spent on Roosevelt Island. In 1995, Bethami Probst, who sadly died a month ago, and I, ran a workshop on the future of Roosevelt Island. Some eighty people from all over the country and, in fact, from all over the world, came to work on what might be the future of Roosevelt Island. And Ed Logue arrived early, stayed on the Island, enjoyed it, argued about everything, had strong feelings, and left with strong feelings.

I always had strong feelings about Ed Logue. He's that kind of person. He's the kind of person who made things happen. There are very few people in government whose whole psyche is about getting things to happen. But if you're trying to get things to happen, you have successes and failures. And my view is that Ed Logue always had successes and failures. I followed him into New Haven as a student and Worcester Square is a great success, in my judgment, and Church Street is a great disaster, in my judgment.

Well, I can say many of the same things about Roosevelt Island. There are clearly things that Ed Logue tried to do at Roosevelt Island that were successful.

Income mix is the thing that Richard Kahan mentioned. The income mix on Roosevelt Island is rather unusual.

Access for the disabled: Roosevelt Island is one of the few places in the United States that is 100% accessible for the disabled. That was something Ed Logue wanted.

Built into Roosevelt Island was a remarkable accessibility. There was to be a new subway station. And, in fact, that's why Roosevelt Island finally got off the ground. Trouble was, the subway opened 13 years late, so there had to be a Tram, and I still remember working at the Planning Commission and saying, "A Tram? We should invest \$2.4 million to build a Tram so that they can market apartments?" Well, of course, he was right, and I was wrong.

That was frequently the case, but not always.

Motorgate. Yes, it is a largely automobile-free Island. But it is not a hundred percent automobile-free. It never could be, nobody thought about the fact that people had deliveries, there are appliances that have to come and go, that you have to carry groceries, that the two hospitals had vehicles coming and going, and the Motorgate, of course, was built for a larger population that came in. Nevertheless, as an experiment in a less automobile-intensive environment, it was a success.

I would say its major success was in demonstrating that you could provide public services outside the City of New York and its bureaucracy very successfully. Of course, it took more than a million dollars annually from the State of

New York in subsidies because the Island was never finished, and that's very significant. Had the Island been finished, I believe you could have covered the cost of a lot of these services. Maybe not the debt service on the infrastructure which Richard mentioned, but I think it would have been possible. The trouble was that housing was not marketable without subsidies later on.

Those were all successes.

I'd like to talk a little bit about the failures, of which I think there are many.

The first is, they didn't implement the original plan. Philip Johnson planned a town center on top of the subway.

That's where the commercial was going to be. Main Street was a feeder street, and as he said to me one day at lunch, "Who ever heard of a 50-foot wide Main Street?" Without 5,000 units of housing there you do not have enough to support anything. But more than that, there's no other reason to be on the Island except to live there. This is a residential enclave. It is not part of New York. And to that degree I think it is a problem, because it cannot be replicated and it had no spillover into the rest of the communities of New York. In order to be successful you needed a critical mass. When it opened in 1975-76 they had 2,100 units; they now have 3,200 units. That's not enough to support active retail. It never was, never could be. And 5,000 would work, if there were not two towns, a Southtown and a Northtown. Once you've got a Southtown and a Northtown you do not have enough customers in any one of the two of them to support the kind of life it would have been over the subway, and it would have made sense, had the original plan been implemented. So the density makes circulation difficult. There is that red bus that goes around the Island. I believe that creating a plan, and Johnson is as responsible for this as the later planners were, with the five parks, misses the point. You wanted to have all of the density in one critical mass that could support a pedestrian environment. You can't do that; it's too spread out, there's too much open space in the way of parks in between. I know that a lot of you are going to disagree with this, but that is my view.

The minischools. They did not work. We now have a single school there. I don't know, if Ed Logue had been around to continue the experiment, whether they would have or would not have worked. Now we have part of the New York City school system, for whatever reason. I can't tell you whether that would have been or would not have been successful.

But my main problem with Roosevelt Island is that it's not part of New York. It is an Island that the people who live there know very well but the rest of New York goes to very rarely. Had there been a source of employment there, a... some other reason to be there besides living there, I think you might have had a very different kind of environment, [and,] had the plan actually been executed with a high- density core at the subway, I think things would have been very different.

And I will leave my colleagues to say other things.

PAUL BYARD:

Alex, very interesting beginning. I came to this exhibition, this was Richard's idea and Kent Barwick's and ours to have an exhibition on the occasion of Ed's death, and we did have to begin to think about the issue that a great deal of time had passed, and what struck me, as a question to ask, is whether this is all history in which, therefore, there are some lessons we could draw from it, or whether it was still a set of live possibilities; and whether we could talk about it as a sense of what we ought to be doing, or whether we ought to think of it as an interesting time when people actually tried to do something. But of course we all learned after that you couldn't do anything so forget it, and go on living the way we do now. I think the failures of Roosevelt Island are definitely national failures, not failures of the scheme. And I note in Alex's comment on things like density if you look at the map that was part of the lease, of course, the density was right where Alex said it was. So the point is not what was going to be built but what actually got built.

And the issues of the school... the school was made a nuisance for really good reason. It was supposed to be a horrible thing to administer, and the point was that, if you had a thing that was difficult enough and you built it difficult, you would make people have to run the school differently.

The failures of the thing... there were no inherent failures of it, had to do with things like then energy policies. We were paid, I think it was, \$2000 a unit, and... if we would put in electric heat. That was because Ravenswood had nothing to do in the winter, therefore it would provide lots of nice electric heat and we could save a bundle of money off the actual mortgage costs, which were the problem. The reason the 5,000 units... the full five...

I'm very glad Alex says that if you had the full 5,000 units it would have worked. It certainly looked as if it was going to work, and that would have included the debt service on the infrastructure. There were a lot of things you had to do, yes, you had to keep on having the subsidies, but at that time we expected to have subsidies. It never occurred to us that the United States would entirely give up trying to do anything for the poor. That was something that when I dearly, dearly remember Ed saying from his service in Calcutta, of course we all laughed together in 1969 and 1970 at the idea of people sleeping in the street. That happened in Calcutta. It would never happen in New York. Well, of course, it did happen with a bang in New York when we decided -- when the nation decided -- that we really wouldn't take care of the poor and the indigent and the people who couldn't take care of themselves, whether you did it outside institutions or in them. So the 5,000 units would have come with the proper subsidy that we all expected, and when Nixon ended the subsidy program, of course, we all went out of business, and that was the beginning of the end for Roosevelt Island and for everybody else. I think in "car-free" Alex did lapse a little bit in some of the diction that one... that "nobody-ever- thought-of" [UNINT]... Of course we thought of it, we got all the deliveries. There's plenty of road to get the deliveries on, and we all knew perfectly well that the hospitals were still going to be there. One of the nifty things we did, we excluded the hospitals from the Lease, so we didn't have to do anything about the hospitals. But we didn't give the hospitals any way to get to themselves, so that meant that you had a negotiation, and I was nicely involved, happily involved years later... the fact that the negotiation was still alive in an arbitration between the hospitals and the [Roosevelt Island Operating] Corporation about the control of the access and that was just what I think, in a rather crude way, we intended.

I could go on myself, but I think it's important to remember that Roosevelt Island was the product not just of a single interest in doing good, doing the public good on a very complicated and high level of the notion of the public good, but it was also one of two ideas that were at work at the time. One that we thought was

a complete bust, i.e., Battery Park City, and ours, which was going to be much better because it was actually going to do something for somebody. It wasn't just going to be some vision of trickle-down that would someday generate some money for somebody else. We were actually going to build, and of course, Battery Park City was stumbling along for years and the time we got the Lease and we got the lease done in five months, they took two and a half years, if I remember properly what it took. Now, happily they went on so long that all the conditions could change three times over and they could be right when one of them came along. But that was a different way to run the business. We thought we were going to deliver something and we certainly did try.

MELLINS:

In the interest of saving time, I'm not identifying all the very accomplished members of this panel and I just draw your attention to the fact that on your chairs there were sheets identifying who everyone is and many of their accomplishments. So now we'll turn to Matthew Katz.

MATTHEW KATZ:

I'm here this evening because I'm president of the Residents Association and while I may represent the residents I don't presume to speak for them.

There's a wide range of diverse opinion on Roosevelt Island on almost any issue you can name. But I am a resident of 12 years and I can speak for myself. I was fortunate enough to come down this afternoon and see this wonderful exhibition and pick up some of the literature, and it gave me the idea for my few minutes this evening to respond to some of the information about Ed Logue, some of which I knew, much of which I didn't.

In the brochure which some of you may have seen, there's a quote that says, as Mr. Liebman pointed out, that "Logue's solutions were often the best in terms of architecture and planning and people's real lives," and that struck a note with me. I think that's true. I think Mr. Logue and his group at UDC built a construct, a Roosevelt Island, but I would also point out that he did not build a community and, were he here today, I think he would agree with that. I think there was a group, 25 years ago, of pioneers, really, who found this proposed community offered on what was then known to everyone as Welfare Island. Welfare Island was a place where the chronically ill, the criminal, and the insane were housed. The idea that this would be a community was a risk, and 25 years ago people took that risk and they built the community -- the people who moved out there built the community. They built playing fields, and they built an Historical Society to take note of the 250 years of history out on that Island. They built -- as has been alluded to, they built Garden Clubs with moving tons and tons of topsoil themselves so people could grow plants and vegetables out there. They built a library from scratch, which is now part of the New York City Public Library system. They built a Theatre and Dance Alliance in theater facilities that are top notch. This was done by people who moved out there, who took chances, and made this what it is today.

And it is a planned community. It's an experimental community and, from the sociological point of view, you must say that it's a success.

Elsewhere in this brochure it says that at the same time UDC made a far greater effort to have its projects fit into and respect the surrounding physical conditions than most often had been the case in the preceding era's urban renewal efforts. I think if there's anything that brought people out there, that made it worthwhile to take these chances, it was the physical conditions that they found there. It was the parkland and open space that makes Roosevelt Island a unique community in the middle of New York. If you were dropped down there blindfolded you would say you were in some small town in upstate New York or in some village in the middle of the country, not in the middle of the Big Apple. It is a unique environment. I'm a City boy. I grew up in Brooklyn, I've lived in Queens, I lived for 14 years on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. If I knew my neighbors, it was to inquire about the weather in the elevator. It's impossible to walk down Main Street, our one street on Roosevelt Island, without getting into a half-a-dozen arguments and discussions with people about the issues of the day. This is not the kind of interaction in a community

you expect to find in the middle of New York City. This is another thing that makes the Island unique. But what brought so many of us out there are the parks and the tennis courts and the swimming pools and the playing fields, fields that were built by the sweat equity of the people who live there, and this, I think, is very important.

This also says that procedures such as Requests for Proposals were never imposed. The only way anything is built on Roosevelt Island now is by Request for Proposals, RFPs. The idea of a cohesive plan has, unfortunately, been abandoned.

Ideas come to the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation, they are considered, perhaps for years at a time; they are either implemented or they are dropped. Case in point: mention was made of the minischools. When our elementary and intermediate school was built, these schools were abandoned. People have been looking for a use for them ever since. For the past two years, RIOC has been considering the plan of one developer. For two years now, this plan has been in front of RIOC. For two years the Island has said that they oppose the idea virtually unanimously. A blue-ribbon commission [the Capital Planning and Development Committee] was put together, of Island residents, to advise RIOC on this particular plan.

They voted unanimously against it. These were developers who had no track record, who had no apparent opportunity to get financing for this opportunity, and yet the RIOC Board voted for it unanimously. Now, just recently, within the last month, the idea has finally been dropped. After two years of looking into this, this idea has been dropped, and now with a new RFP, the process must start again from scratch. There's no opportunity to look at the Island as a whole, and I think this is a terrible detriment to the inspiration of Ed Logue.

Also it said, "Because of Logue's work, New York and other cities could continue to regard themselves as engines of democracy." If there's anything that Roosevelt Island is failing in right now, it is democracy. It may have been that at the beginning of the community and, certainly when RIOC was developed in 1984, the idea of a community that was controlled by some entity seemed to make sense, since this was a brand-new community. RIOC, after all, is a public-benefit corporation, and should be working in the public's benefit. This community, though, has been on Roosevelt Island for 25 years now. We have no local government. It is a level of government that has simply been denied us. We have Federal government, we have State government... end of story. The State determines who sits on the RIOC Board, who is the President of RIOC. The Island community has no impact on the operation of the Island or the development of the Island.

When do we get enfranchised? We have made our case by dropping tea into the East River [LAUGHTER]... Honestly, we have. We have made the case that the fighting cry of 225 years ago, "No taxation without representation," still applies on Roosevelt Island, and it does. These are basic fundamental questions of American democracy that need to be resolved on Roosevelt Island and haven't, and must be. There is a group on Roosevelt Island [the Maple Tree Group] that has been working for three years now to revise the 1984 legislation to provide for an elected Board which would then be empowered to hire a trained, professional, experienced community manager to run Roosevelt Island. We think this is an idea whose time has come. We think the current RIOC is not doing an adequate job for Roosevelt Island for a variety of reasons, and I expect we'll be getting into that a little bit as the conversation goes on.

Just one last thing. The brochure says, "One of the keys to Ed Logue's success is that he had great patrons, Nelson Rockefeller chief amongst them, who stuck with him. With the right Governor, the right Mayor, and a few others, it could happen again." God willing. [APPLAUSE]

In 1996, George Pataki became the Governor of the State of New York. One of the first things he did was eliminate both the operating and capital subsidies to Roosevelt Island. We were told, "You are self-sufficient. Go forth and multiply." For the past five years, Roosevelt Island has been barely making do on its operating costs by cutting back on a great deal of maintenance and repair work on the Island. As for any kind of capital improvements, there is no money. There is no capital fund. You might see, should you look

at the financial statements of the Island, as we have very carefully, an item of \$3.4 million in the capital fund. That entire fund will be going to pay for the infrastructure of Mr. Wine's Southtown project, because in the crackerjack negotiations for this project, RIOC has agreed to pay half the infrastructure costs of the project. So there is no money for anything else. We have a seawall. We don't know where the money is to repair that or extend it will ever come from. I expect some of that will come up, and I'll stop right there.

MELLINS:

Thank you. David Wine.

DAVID WINE:

Thank you very much for having me here. My first introduction to Roosevelt Island was actually in 1976, and, as you can see in my bio, I started my career as a multi-family housing representative for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development [HUD]. I graduated college in 1975 in the midst of a real-estate recession and I was able to garner a position with HUD at the time as an urban intern. What an urban intern did in those days, I think, was not much, but which kind of went to the different parts of the federal housing departments, and kind of spent a few months, learned a bit, and then after a year, took a permanent job within HUD. And 1976 was a time of great commitment by government to various programs. It was just the beginning of the Section 8 program. And we, as a group of urban interns, were brought to Roosevelt Island to really show what was then an example of the new-communities program which had been implemented by HUD, which was used [in] about three or four other communities around the country.

My next introduction to Roosevelt Island -- and I may have, late in the 70's, even applied for an apartment on Roosevelt Island -- was in the late 80's, when there was an RFP issued by the Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation for a developer to build Southtown. And Southtown is really the development portion of Roosevelt Island which is meant to complete the 5,000 units originally envisioned under the General Development Plan. And in 1989 -- it was a problematic time, as you might recall, in real estate -- and there was not much interest expressed by the general development community in what was planned at that time as a one-phase, 2,000-unit project, under which the developers would pay 100% of the infrastructure cost. It was pragmatically a very real problem and, I don't think any developers responded to that RFP.

And the next introduction of mine to Roosevelt Island was the next RFP for Southtown, which took place in the mid-90's and, as a company, we saw, really, Roosevelt Island as part of the greater housing scheme in New York City, as I think it always was. Roosevelt Island was seen as a housing opportunity for various income groups, and as a company we saw the prices of housing escalating dramatically beginning the early 1990's. We felt that Roosevelt Island could regain a place for serving a need in the general New York City housing population.

And we responded to that RFP and, actually, that RFP, interestingly enough, was not a request for a planning proposal, per se, but it was a request for qualifications, which would enable RIOC to select experienced developers who could work in a quasi-public-private partnership developing a financially feasible plan for the construction of Southtown. We were designated developer with a partnership of the Hudson Companies. Between the two companies we have a lot of experience in building all sorts of housing in New York City at multiple price points, high-rise, low-rise, for-sale housing, rental housing, and that partnership has actually been quite successful.

We embarked, upon designation, upon a series of meetings to really educate ourselves about many of the issues which have been discussed, and I'm sure during the course of the dialogue this evening the future approach will be discussed, but just briefly let me say that certainly many of the issues that were raised had to do with the viability of commercial spaces, the viability and usability of whatever open space that was going to be displaced by the construction of Southtown, what would come, of what quality would it be, how useful would it be, what kind of economic integration would continue, how -- I think we were struck... when you read about Ed Logue's commitment to the economic integration, the spirit of that economic

integration runs very deep in Roosevelt Island today, and we must address that in our development of Southtown.

So I'm really here to listen and to learn as I've done so many times about Roosevelt Island, and to offer a little bit of what our plans call for some of the future buildings. It's been reported that we are actually, we have started demolition of the Nurses Residence, which is the remaining structure on Southtown, and we anticipate starting construction on the first two buildings, which will be operated and owned by Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital and the Cornell Medical Center as staff housing for both their employees and their families, who I think share a great commitment to what Roosevelt Island is and what Roosevelt Island remains to be for the future.

MELLINS:

Gifford Miller.

GIFFORD MILLER:

Thank you, Tom. I read once in one of those airline magazines that have various articles...

Comment from Audience:

Excuse me, we can't see you back here. If you'd stand at the lectern it would be most helpful.

MILLER:

Sure, I'd be happy to stand at the... no politician ever turns down an opportunity to stand at a lectern. How's that? All right. I was saying that I read once in an airline magazine that the average audience's attention span is seven minutes, and you all have been subjected to a lot of talk without having the opportunity to do some give and take, and I think my point was made there.

So I'll try to be brief, but it's tough to talk about Roosevelt Island briefly.

You know, the purpose of... I think there's sort of two purposes to this evening. One is to look back, and one is to look forward. In looking back I feel very confident that we can say that Roosevelt Island is a success, an extraordinary place, a place that is like no other. And I think, you know, it's been said by some of the other... I don't really have too much to add to it, except that it really is... I would really just like to address this "not-part-of-the-City." I don't think that is true. It think it's a unique part of the City. It's a small town right in the heart of the biggest city in the world, though not in population, but New York to me is the biggest city in the world, and this is a small town right in the heart of it, but it is very much a part of New York to me. It's a unique place, it's a place where people not only know me, their elected representative, but know my mother. I mean, you know, it's a place where my mother walks down Roosevelt Island's Main Street and people go, "Oh, there's Gif's mother." That's a unique experience, I think, in the City of New York, but it is most definitely part of the City and there are many people that come to Roosevelt Island. The Roosevelt Island Tram gets a lot of money from tourists who take the Tram over and then take it back.

There are two major employment centers on the Island, the two hospitals, and, as somebody who stands at the subway and campaigns for re-election, I can tell you that when I have, I stand on the side where people are leaving the Island, but there are, in the morning, lots of people getting off the subway and coming to the Island for employment. And I think that it's that... so I think there is a give and take between the Island and the rest of the City. And I think that clearly we need to consider how to go forward in order to continue that give and take. But in terms of the income mix, people of different races, ethnicities, and the thing that's overlooked, perhaps it's been overlooked tonight, is that Roosevelt Island's unique status as an extraordinary place where many, many people from the United Nations live. It's not just a different people who live in the different communities around New York, but there's a very large ... school on Roosevelt Island. I was there just the other day for the band was playing, and the different parents brought food, and there was Afghani food, and [UNINT] food and Thai food, Indonesian food... It

was amazing, and these were all from people who live on the Island and are a part of the Island's community. So, to me, and it was mentioned the disabled community is an extraordinary success, and also there's a very large elderly community, particularly a very large community of people who are over 80. You get a very large percentage, you know there are census figures on this... a much higher percentage, drastically higher than there is in other parts of the City and the United States.

So it's a unique place, I think, and it has been extraordinarily successful in bringing people together. And it's a small town. Everybody loves each other, and everybody hates each other, and they all know each other so well. It's a unique place in that experience, but ultimately, I think, it's a place where people pull together, and I think, so that's....

What's disappointing to me about...as we look forward, is that I don't feel that there... [I feel] that there has been an abandonment by the leadership of Roosevelt Island Operating Corporation of not just the General Development Plan, because the General Development Plan was written 20-some years ago, close to 30 years ago, and of course any... no one would think that a General Development Plan needs to be written in stone. It's not as if this comes down on a tablet. To us it's a working document, but there has been an abandonment of any attempt to do the planning that this Island is such a wonderful example of as a product.

And it depends, I suppose, on how you gauge success is. You know, Richard says as an economic matter it's been a failure in the sense that it doesn't entirely support itself. But what community does entirely support itself. I mean, the Upper East Side does not support itself necessarily and no one thinks about it in those terms. You have... you have taxes which go to pay for the local services and you have other taxes which go in a broad sense to pay for the capital of the structure, and I think we expect a unique place like Roosevelt Island to be entirely responsible for its seawall. And why should we look at it in that fashion? It's a part of the City, it should be receiving the services which it needs and it should be supported to the extent that it has infrastructure needs. So.. And I think that's a gauge of success which is a false one, and I think what we need to consider is, where do we go from here, and how do we get there.

And I think that RIOC's abandonment of the whole concept of planning and, you know, essentially there's been different RIOC leadership and different RIOC Boards, because the... you know, recently, they've said, well, they're just going to... There's one member of the Board, who is close to the Governor, who wants essentially to just put the Island up for sale to the highest bidder, and let them do whatever they want to do with whatever portions of the land it is. I think that's a ridiculous... [APPLAUSE] I think, and this has happened ever since, you know, there are failures not just as a part of the Pataki... It's not just the Pataki administration and this Governor. There were previous Governors who never did anything about Southpoint. There were there, for many years, Democrats, in a row [who] did nothing to develop the fabulous proposal for the FDR Memorial at the south end of the Island, which should be a jewel. You know, people spend a lot of time thinking about how to save Governor's Island. You know, this is a part of the Island which is right there, it's right for an extraordinary space [APPLAUSE], and it's not been acted on. But under this Governor, there has been a total walking away from the notion of the planned community, and under different leadership, and I want to say clearly that I don't think this is... This is not the responsibility of Mr. Wine's company. But I'm critical of the whole process by which they selected a developer and then have been negotiating with a developer for six years about what should go on the Island. To me, the effort that was undertaken for the Roosevelt Island "Future in Focus" in late 1995 was exactly the right type of effort that needs to be undertaken again. We should take the community, because -- 1974, you could consider, a group of outside people could consider what was the right thing to do on Roosevelt Island because there were no inside people. Now you can't plan for Roosevelt Island without involving the residents. But you bring the residents, you bring planners, you bring officials, you get them together, and you consider, what is the right thing to do? And in real terms, I mean, it's true, government has walked away from the commitment to housing that there was before, and so you have to be aware. You can't pretend that there are still the same kind of dollars for that that there were before, but we should consider what kind of housing do we want, do we want families or do we want medical school housing, or do we want a mix of that, of housing that's...

Comment from Audience:

[UNINT]

MILLER:

Absolutely. You know, families are... what's the rate of... I'm not meaning to be specific about a proposal because I think there are all kinds of mixes and different types of housing -- studios, one-bedrooms, two-bedrooms, three-bedrooms -- income mixes that should be considered, but we should decide what it is that we want, and then you put it out to request for proposal on who's going to build. And you should consider the rest of the open space and all the rest of it. It's not what's happening now, and so now there is a raging debate on Roosevelt Island on what the right type of governance there is because the governance, in my opinion, has been so poor, and so to me, the question is not that the governance there now is so unacceptable, and that it can't work, 'cause it can work, but it's not going to work unless there's leadership from the top and all the way down that is committed to making the Island into a place that is consistent with the vision of the first... Mr. Logue and the others who first framed this as a concept, and which has, to this point, really survived extraordinarily, and I think -- I think that it still can. I think that there's a lot of work left to be done, but that if we are committed to it, and if we can get that commitment from others, to continue the income mix, and it's a matter of money, in a lot of cases, but to continue the income mix, continue the mix of different ethnicities and races and to continue to develop the Island, and the Island has to be developed, I mean, everybody agrees that there needs to be more development, because the commercial... you can't support great restaurants and great grocery stores and the other things that people want and need without enough base to support it. So there needs to be more development, in my opinion, and it should be done in a planned way that involves the community in order to reach the best solution for everyone involved. And I hope we can still do that with the space and the time that we have left. Thank you. [APPLAUSE]

MELLINS:

Thank you to all of the panelists. I think we can all see immediately that there's no shortage of opinions, no shortage of disagreement on various aspects of the Island, both aesthetic, political, economic. I'd like to just take a moment of your time to try to place some of this in historical context. As an architectural historian I feel a compulsive need to do that.

In 1966 during an age of great government activism, Mayor John Lindsay announced that government would directly plan for the future of what was mentioned, had previously been known as Welfare Island. In 1968 he appointed a 22-member Welfare Island Planning and Development Committee chaired by Benno Schmidt. The following year the committee released a 141-page report which soon served as the basis for a master plan by Philip Johnson and John Burgee, also referred to earlier this evening. That master plan was first shown to the public as a Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition entitled "The Island Nobody Knows." The project was subsequently fleshed out by a team of architects hired by the UDC. A first phase of development was begun in 1971. Work on that phase was substantially complete by 1974 and the first tenants moved in the next year. Since that time there has been further development on the Island, and amendments have been made to the Master Plan. As we have seen and heard tonight, there are apparently several proposals on the board that may radically change the Island.

The Island, which in the 1970's was known as "the new town in town" was without question the UDC's most publicized project and it [UNINT] encapsulated a broad swath of the organization's lofty ambitions. First and foremost, the UDC plans for the Island sought to marry together first-rate architecture and urban planning with high social ideals, particularly the realization of a paradigmatic, mixed-income community.

In light of dramatic shifts in the nation's political and economic climate, I am asking the panelists tonight to address how relevant and how sustainable is Ed Logue's vision today, and picking up on a comment that Gifford Miller just made in which he asked the audience, asked all of you, "Where do we go from here?" as

a follow-up question to, "Is Ed Logue's vision sustainable-- how relevant is it?" I would ask you, "What's your wish list for the Island -- what would you say are the priorities there?" So anyone who wants to jump into the fray.

GARVIN:

I have no trouble jumping into the fray. First, we've heard some of the answers to that from the panelists. First, you need a governance there in which the people who live there have something to say about its future. [APPLAUSE]

The second thing, and here I'm not sure I'm in agreement with everybody on the panel, I think it can pay for itself. I honestly believe that, if you have in excess of 5,000 households who are paying the fees that are currently paid by the Roosevelt Island residents, that you can cover the costs of the services.

Third thing... therefore I wish to get on with the job of finishing it. But I would say it's very important to understand this is 2001 and not 1968. The United States is a different place. The needs of the people who are there are different from an abstraction that was put on the table at the Metropolitan Museum, however good or bad it was. I also would like to have not just citizen involvement, but I really believe that you've got to bring [in] people who know about planned communities... We have been building them. There are hundreds of them in construction all over the country, some of them good, some of them bad, some of them very famous, some of them not, there's a body of experience out there and I think that bringing together some of these people, and some interesting architects, with the residents, in a process like the one that Gifford Miller talked about, would help us to proceed in the spirit of Ed Logue, which is to make an experimentation for the first half of the 21st Century. I don't think that we should slavishly follow the plan that's there now.

KATZ:

I'll take a shot at that. I think the General Development Plan is a 30-year-old document, but I think its fundamental provisos for affordable housing for families in a small-town context in the middle of New York City is as valid today as it was 30 years ago. My own wish list would be for sufficient population on Roosevelt Island to sustain our merchants, to make our Tram a viable operation. Our Tram, some of you may know, is the only commuter aerial Tramway in the United States. It is not subsidized by any government, as most public transportation is in the United States, and it is the only public transportation in the New York region that's not on the MetroCard -- another one of the ways that Roosevelt Island has fallen through the cracks.

My wish list would include maintaining the open spaces and parklands that were provided for within the General Development Plan, and please keep in mind that the General Development Plan did not preclude commercial development. It includes that. And by the way, the document we're talking about looks like this. It's real skinny. It's six pages. It was written by architects, not lawyers. You can read it. [LAUGHTER] It gives guidelines about how to develop the island, it is part of the Master Lease that exists between the City and the State of New York, it has the force of law. RIOC attempted to amend it 10 years ago. They presented 13 amendments to the Board of Estimate; eleven were passed, two were turned down. This is a legal document. The Board of Estimate no longer exists. What the rationale, the mechanism is for amending this document now, needs to be tested. Perhaps in some of its details it could be spruced up a little bit, but this is the only thing that exists between Roosevelt Islanders and inappropriate development that is not in keeping with the quality of life of Roosevelt Island or with the proportionality of Roosevelt Island. It's the only thing approaching zoning that we have, and when this goes, so goes Roosevelt Island as a planned community.

BYARD:

Tom, can I have just a footnote? This is an unusual moment. There are... First of all, it's very nice to hear the correct term, the General Development Plan, and there are in the room tonight the two authors of the General Development Plan, and one has come in the back, and the two of them have not been in the same room probably for more than once in 30 years. Bob Alpert is in the back, and the [APPLAUSE]... It's very interesting to say it was written by architects, in fact it was written by architects, but one of them wasn't an architect at the time, and which may explain some of the diction. But in any case, it's nice to know that it's alive and well. I think we agree that there is some spirit involved. You've got to have some housing, you've got to have some infrastructure, you've got to have some people to consume. I can't imagine that... Anyway, I'm on Alex's side from that one.

MILLER:

I'll just make a brief comment, picking up on a couple of points. First of all, I think everybody agrees.... I think it's pretty well accepted that, if the Island reached its full development point, that could sustain itself in terms of its operating costs. In fact, there hasn't been a subsidy for four years...

UNKNOWN:

Six years.

MILLER:

No, I think it's actually four years, four or five, but, 'cause I've only been in office five years, and there was a subsidy my first year, so it's four years. The... And there's no question, to me, I mean, the General Development Plan is an excellent document, and I think it's excellent in that it's brief and it allows for innovation within it. I've read it, I re-read it again this morning, and I don't think that there is a great need to amend it all that largely, but certainly within the context of its efforts I would be open to amending it.

The City... There is argument about how you go about amending it, and whether it even has legal force, but to me, there isn't much question -- either the Mayor or the Council has to approve amendments. Of course, in my opinion, between the Council and the Mayor, it's the Council. But I think that the "where we go from here," to answer your question, is we should sit down as a community, as elected officials, and as a leadership of RIOC, consider what we want to go where, and not just turn it over to whoever is the highest bidder for any particular place, and then make it happen. I mean... And to just talk about my frustration, it has been so difficult to get RIOC to move forward with any plans and I, you know, would not want to be in Mr. Wine's shoes, having to negotiate with RIOC, because I've been wanting to negotiate with RIOC on the subject of the one-fare MetroCard system, in which I'm offering them a deal on which they'll make lots of money (related report), and MetroCard will be effective on the Tram, and they haven't been able in nine months to get together a meaningful meeting to accept lots of money in order to have the MetroCard placed on the Tram. And it's that kind of total lack of leadership which has overseen an Island, which is an extraordinary piece of real estate, during the strongest real estate market in the history of the world, and yet, you know, no final agreement on what to build in Southtown, and I think that that comes squarely back on RIOC's shoulders.

MELLINS:

Actually, to directly follow up on that, what does fall on RIOC's shoulders and apparently, and what does illuminate the apparent logjam on the Island, which everyone seems to agree would be to everyone's benefit? It does seem to me that underlying all the UDC's efforts concerning Roosevelt Island was a fervent belief in the ability of government to improve the daily lives of ordinary people. Do we still believe that, and how do the complexities of today's public-private partnerships inform what to build, how it gets built, and how do you seemingly free up this apparent logjam?

WINE:

Let me answer that question and kind of give some thoughts on the previous question, as well. My hope for Southtown or for Roosevelt Island is that Southtown can actually be a springboard from which a lot of the planning that people have been talking about for Roosevelt Island as a whole can take place. It's my personal opinion that because such a long period transpired during which no development on Roosevelt Island has occurred, that in fact there's been a lot of disjointed effort, and I think trying to get to some of the economic stability or economic self-sustaining numbers has spurred a lot of investigation. I hope that as Southtown becomes a reality that, in fact, it can put some of those issues to rest, and that Southtown can guarantee the population density that's needed in order to make the Tram even more self-sustaining if it's not, to enable additional services to be provided, so that the Island as a whole can enjoy some of the planning which we just talked about in 1995, and which I think that... nobody can argue that Roosevelt Island doesn't need. It needs to be looked at as a whole, and it needs to be planned, not piecemeal but with great vision, which is what Ed Logue brought to the table. I think that that kind of planning is something which can take place, and can take place in a difficult process, but which can [nonetheless] take place.

GARVIN:

I would answer this with Ed Logue. That is to say, public partnerships, public agencies, only work when the people running them have whatever it is to make things happen. Ed Logue had that. And Ed Logue was willing to gamble, and, as I have pointed out, I think he made some mistakes, but he also achieved a lot of things. What we are missing at the moment is the leadership in public agencies as a whole that will break through the logjam. I believe that's doable, and here and there in the United States, you have one or another of these sorts of things happening, and I believe that if enough pressure comes to bear that will happen on Roosevelt Island, but you need an individual, whether that's someone from the community, someone who is elected, someone who is appointed by the Governor to run RIOG, it really doesn't matter. But you need that individual or else it will continue to spin.

MELLINS:

To address a question which came up among some of the panelists about whether Roosevelt Island indeed feels like part of the City, does it feel like an alternative to the City, does it feel like part of the City, is it architecturally or urbanistically linked or separate... it did make me think about the sense of place that was established there. Looking over the catalog that accompanied the Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibition in which the Master Plan was first presented to the public in 1969, it did strike me that Johnson and Burgee themselves contended that Roosevelt Island contained "some of the most charming tree-lined and paved and bench-equipped promenades west of the River Seine." They further compared their own proposal, one that was never realized, for a glassed-in pedestrian walkway, to the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II in Milan, and they compared their own proposed and also unrealized broad staircase leading down to the East River to the Ghats of Benares on the Ganges. My question to the panelists is, how would you describe Roosevelt Island's sense of place? Does it succeed in establishing a unique urban identity? Will the proposed development diminish or enhance or reconfigure the Island's signature look and character?

GARVIN:

Once again I'm happy to jump in. I don't think it does any of those things. I think that the Main Street looks like deteriorated East Berlin. I think the concrete columns are totally out of place, don't belong there, the plastic windbreaks, the generic store signs, all of these things represent design failures. And I believe that they were inherent from the very beginning. That's one of the reasons that I said I think we have to engage the community that knows about all of this already, from the very beginning in the replanning of it. On the other hand, you have the Blackwell House, which has been beautifully restored, you have [CRIES OF PROTEST FROM THE AUDIENCE]... Well, from the outside -- [CRIES OF PROTEST FROM THE AUDIENCE]...

KATZ:

It's a derelict.

GARVIN:

OK. You have the walkways along both sides, which are potentially even better but in fact are the beginnings of what was talked about in "The Island that Nobody Knows." I think those walkways, especially if they continue past the hospitals and engage the hospitals -- as you get to the southern part of the Island, they disappear -- I think that's something perhaps if we could subsidize the creation of the FDR Memorial, that would be part of that sort of thing. There is that whole waterfront part, on the... but you also have quadrangles which, unfortunately, don't open to the waterfront, which was not part of the original plan at all, and that's fundamental. So I think there are things there that... that... the open spaces that people talked about, in many places have been done quite lovely, but I think they all need to be looked at as a whole, as an integral part of the entire island, and the completion of the Island, I think, has to be an ongoing thing, and in the year 2050 there should be another meeting like this that questions what was done during the last 50 years to make the place better, because I don't think we should stop just because 5,000 units happened or we got the Galleria Vittorio Emanuele on top of the subway. I think there are a lot of things that could be. Some of them, we haven't thought of yet, and I hope the Island grows and changes many times more, but as for the Main Street...

BYARD:

The left end of the table will press on for a minute more. We've actually had a mention of architecture, which was very exciting, and the, I think it's... again, not always to be the curator of ancient history, but it's awfully important to remember why things were as dense as they were. Mr. Johnson has always been a wonderful talker and that was a fine example of vintage Philip on the gats, the walkways and everything. The notion that was first underneath what

Alpert and the author of the General Development Plan did was to remember that we were supposed to produce a certain amount of quantity, and we were not able to -- we couldn't get the quantity that we wanted into the original envelope that showed up at the Metropolitan Museum, and it was Mr. Jackson and the workers at the [Josep Lluís] Sert [architectural] office, including Bob Campbell, the architecture critic of The [Boston] Globe who worked on the business of getting a suitable density into the design. The arcades, which were thought of as a great idea... there are frequently ideas that came and went, but they were considered a great idea at the time. And what... they have certain functions that are good. The grimness is another issue, and part of that's on the other side with the panelized construction, which we thought was another marvelous idea.

The basic brick on the other side was maybe more forgiving, but I do hope that when one gets to the... I'm not that current on what's going on right now, but when we get there we will not forget the question of architecture. The envelope I've seen at least of what's been proposed seems -- what's the word -- quotidian for daily architecture today. I hope we can do a little better, because we certainly wanted to, and I think we did produce some interesting stuff in the Sert- Jackson buildings and others, along the way.

KATZ:

I think possibly the comparison between the East River and the Ganges is an appropo... [LAUGHTER] It's a strange mindset on Roosevelt Island. Yes, of course we're part of New York City. Most of the population goes to work there, goes to school there, shops there, entertains itself there. But Roosevelt Island is something unique, something other than New York City. On a summer's day, when you've worked a day in New York and you get off the Tram on Roosevelt Island, immediately you realize that it's ten degrees cooler than anything you've experienced during the day, and the air doesn't smell of car exhaust, it smells of honeysuckle. You immediately know you're someplace other than New York City. So we're both. We're part of New York, we pay our taxes to everybody, and yet, we're also Roosevelt Island, and we're paying additional taxes through our rents for the ground rents of our buildings and for the upkeep of our unarmed

State Peace Officers called Public Safety, which may be a misnomer. We pay for the privilege of living on Roosevelt Island.

Regarding the question of architecture, which is an interesting question, given where we are right now. In terms of the future we've seen some architect's drawings of some of the plans for the Island. We've seen what some of the proposals for our Octagon Park might be. We've seen some of the proposals for what Southpoint might be, and what we've seen are two 32-story towers comprising a Marriott Hotel, condo and conference center which is so out of proportion with life on Roosevelt Island as to boggle the mind. What we unfortunately have not seen is so much as an artist's rendering of what Southtown will look like. [APPLAUSE] Over the past two years, we've seen a three-dimensional artist's model of the placement of the buildings but, where the buildings go, what we've seen are white styrofoam blocks. Mr. Wine is correct in that the Blackwell Field is now completely blocked off prior to the excavation of foundations in the springtime, and yet at this point we have never seen so much as a drawing of what these buildings will look like, what the facades will look like, what the apartments will look like... Will there be balconies, will there be spacious rooms? We just don't know. We have met with the developers on many occasions at town meetings, through meetings of our Residents Association, but there are some fundamental questions which haven't been answered, and again I think it comes back to the question of, "Is RIOC doing their job as a public benefit corporation?" And I would bring to your attention that RIOC is not represented here although they were given that opportunity.

ETHEL ROMM [from audience]:

Is there anybody from RIOC here, Matt?

KATZ:

No, ma'am.

ROMM:

Not one.

MELLINS:

At this point I'd like to open up for questions from the audience. In a very brief blurb in New York Magazine announcing this event it said it promises to be "part history lesson and part very heated town meeting." [LAUGHTER] We'll see if they're right. I just ask that people speak loudly, try to enunciate their questions, and it may be best to address your questions to a specific member or members of the panel. In the back?

Woman:

How long did it take to build the Tram and who built it and what did it cost and [UNINT]?

BYARD:

I can't remember exactly the statistics. It was bought on a letter from the von Roll company. We wrote a letter to von Roll. It's the world's most inefficient Tramway because it lifts you up at both ends. If you think of the ideal mountain tramway the thousands of pounds of people going down help pay for the thousands of pounds of people going up. And the Welfare Island Tramway, of course, everybody's going up and going down at the same time. It was not very expensive, and it was not necessarily supposed to last, because after all the subway was supposed to come. Now I think, if you look at the Lease, I think it still says that the fare's supposed to go up when the subway comes in so that we wouldn't be giving an unnecessary benefit to... you know, the subway would get what it was expecting out of this hopeless thing. But it came in a box, essentially, from Switzerland. [LAUGHTER]

GARVIN:

The price, I do know, was \$2.4 million in a capital budget allocation of the City of New York.

Woman:

Who was the engineer or architect [UNINT]?

BYARD:

Well, the architect of the stations was Prentice and Chan. The engineer was Led Zeppelin, I'm pretty sure, working... and the towers and the rest were done as part of that system, and that's how I remember... that much. Ted will remember more accurately than that.

TED LIEBMAN [from audience]:

I know it had to get there very quickly to allow the slogan... It was very interesting when they started advertising Roosevelt Island and the Tram was going to come and the subway was not, the slogan was not, the slogan was, "Only three minutes by air from Bloomingdale's..." [LAUGHTER]

MILLER:

May I say about the Tram, the interesting thing about any discussion of the Tram, for those of you here who are residents, you can't help but think of Al Weinstein who was the... may he rest in peace, was a wonderful man and was sort of known as the Mayor of Roosevelt Island, but he was Tram advocate, he would love to regale you with stories about the Tram for hours, but it originally was meant to be a temporary facility, and it's become such an integral part of the Island. It's such an extraordinary part of the Island's identity, I don't think anyone can contemplate the Island without the Tram, and it's certainly will make money, without question it will make money once the Island reaches... It's pretty close to making money now, and with more ridership it could make money and hopefully will remain forever and ever and ever.

JUDY BERDY [from audience]:

I could ask you a thousand questions but I won't. Who ever would think that the subway would be the town square. I mean our town square was Good Shepherd Chapel, the plaza. Every summer Friday and Saturday night we're all out on the Plaza eating gourmet food from our gourmet restaurant and who would ever think that people would want to hang out by the subway station? Mr. Garvin, you're the one that said that.

GARVIN:

I was talking about the original plan that Johnson prepared, which had the town center not on Main Street. Main Street was a residential street, and the town center was really where all the people were going to come out, because people were going to come and go by subway. Nobody imagined the Tram at that point, and what he had was in fact an air-conditioned shopping mall there. You came out in the middle of an air-conditioned shopping mall. I don't really care whether you took the architectural form that he proposed or not, but I do believe that if you're going to have viable retail it's either going to be based at the Motorgate or it's going to be based at the

Tram or it's going to be based at the subway. The trouble is they're too far from one another, and therefore you need to repair this. I don't know off the top of my head how to do that. That's one of the reasons that I think one should be thinking in terms of the next stage, using the fact that there's a Tram and it was never thought it was going to be there forever. The Island developed and you can't start from scratch anymore. You've got to build with what's there. As you say, there's now a square around the church. All these things come into play, and that's why I don't believe we should slavishly follow whatever was done by Johnson, or after Johnson, or certainly not the crazy one that created a new public square, the 1989 version.

WINE:

Well, you'll be happy to know, Alex, that in fact the original vision of having a common around the subway is the focal point of what Southtown is, and there are a lot of reasons why. And certainly the amount of commercial space that's there, that we tried to plan to not cannibalize what's there already, but to cater to people coming and going by the subway, will actually be realized and part of that is just pragmatic. In fact, you can't build there because of the subway tunnel, but part of it is the hope to realize the dream of the open space and the parkland by having a beautiful commons as you exit or enter the subway.

RHODA JACKLIN [from audience]:

Yeah, Gifford, as an aside, going forward, where do you see Pataki in this plan right now?

MILLER:

Well, I don't think the Governor is committed to what everybody on this panel has pretty much expressed their commitment to, which is to consider a plan for the Island as a whole and to work to realize that plan. And I think that's just reflected in his, in those people who work for him, who work for RIOC, who have not... and the Governor's recent appointments to the Board have been floating ideas of selling off the Island or turning it back to the City or... and it's reflected in his decision to...

JACKLIN:

So he's the controlling factor.

MILLER:

Well, nothing can happen on the Island, you can't change the structure of the governance of the Island, you can't build anything on the Island, you can't do anything on the Island without the Governor's say-so in some form, whether it's him personally or his appointees.

Woman:

I'm a fairly new resident of the Island and I'm an urban planner, so I'd like to go back to... and this question would be for Mr. Wine. It seems that the Related Companies, as the developer of Southtown, is inheriting the ideals that were articulated earlier about first-rate architecture with high social ideals. It seems to me that it's still possible to achieve those two goals. I'm not immediately familiar with the programs that are now available for subsidized housing in New York State, but I'm curious as to why the selection of the particular population, which would seem to be a one-income population, whether there's... in terms of the hospital housing... whether there's going to be a range of incomes, whether there's any subsidy planned, an 80-20 kind of breakout, and then how you are taking and carrying that responsibility for first-rate architecture.

WINE:

Well, let me answer that last question by just... Speak to the gentleman, Jordan Gruzen, whose firm has been part of the master planning and is doing the architecture for the first couple of buildings. Alfreda Razitsky, who is also behind him, has been lead architect on that, as well.

Woman:

Maybe they'd like to say something.

WINE:

I think that it is interesting to note that at a time when there is a great lack of programs devoted to affordable housing... Think about what's really happened in terms of the way in which the economics have shifted over time. Think about how the amount of money that was invested in building affordable housing on Roosevelt Island when it was originally conceived and constructed, and what's really happened now is that for something really to be built in order to achieve economic viability, somebody's gotta pay the bill. Somebody's gotta foot the bill because the economics -- and I hate to be the pragmatist, but I suppose as a real estate developer I have to be -- but if the economics don't work, someone's gotta pay the bill. So what's happened right now is that the hospitals as an integral part of the New York City economy, and the integral part of the New York City community... New York is a medical center... have selected Roosevelt Island as a community in which to house many of their employees and their employees' families. I mean, they're planning day-care centers and playgrounds and they are really seeing this as a means of joining the existing community, so we see that as a kind of good way of bridging a pragmatic need to have fiscal responsibility in building the first buildings.

We are required to comply with the GDP. So there will be economic integration in Southtown as a whole. That is a requirement, and I believe one of the reasons why the partnership of the Hudson Companies and the Related Companies is a good one is because we have experience at every single price point and every single product type. So if there is a program out there that will work, we know it, we've worked in it, and we're going to try it.

Woman:

Well, I'm familiar with Related Companies so that's why I was interested to hear your comments.

WINE:

You know, the question was raised about the future and where it is going. When we applied under the RFP we knew it was a multi-year commitment, and we're investing millions of dollars in order to... kind of as a vote of what we believe Roosevelt Island can be.

MILLER:

Let me just add, I think Mr. Wine is exactly right. You have to be pragmatic about it. You have to be reasonable about it, and the question is who's going to pay for it, and if we were to... I'm sure... this is what happens as a result of... and unfortunately, from my point of view, it's RIOC's responsibility to negotiate either with you, Mr. Wine, since the determination has been made to negotiate with Mr. Wine or in an abstract sense to negotiate with whomever it is they negotiate with, in order to realize what is going to be there, and if we want to have a strong income mix, that's going to cost more in the sense of, in some sense, either in terms of the State or the City having to put up money or in terms of the State or City realizing less money than to do other things. And those are the decisions that have to be made, but at some point somebody certainly has to pay for it and my concern is that I don't see the City, State, and Federal government making the type of commitment to affordable housing that you had before, and so it's how do you work within that context to still realize something that is appropriate for the vision that was originally there.

MARK PONTON [from audience]:

We are all talking as if there's some hope here. Our host tonight said that the Island was a place of wonder, and it is. I've lived there for 23 years, and one of the great wonders I perceive is the inability to ask the only question that needs to be asked. Every person on this panel has said we need a plan. That, to me, says we don't have one. And since we don't have one, shouldn't we stop what we're doing until we get one?

Woman's Voice:

Absolutely. [APPLAUSE]

MILLER:

I'll field that. I think we should, but the problem is, is that everybody on this panel doesn't get to make that decision, and [it is] the people who are not on this panel who are making the decision, and [those who are on this panel] who are not doing the plan.

PONTON:

It's not our making, it's half-made. Let me just... a couple of comments.

MILLER:

Yes.

PONTON:

Number one, [UNINT]... renovation of Blackwell House. The last time Blackwell House was renovated was by Blackwell himself. And the second thing is, your comment about negotiating -- the difficulty Mr. Wine must have negotiating with RIOC... [UNINT] revenue split. It's 98 to 2 in favor of Mr. Wine and his associates. You couldn't get that deal at Staples at Christmas time. [APPLAUSE]

MILLER:

This is not -- the Municipal Art Society forum -- for me to get into a detailed economic analysis of the agreement that RIOC has concluded with the Related Companies, but all I would say to that is... My point I was trying to make is I haven't been able to get RIOC to agree to anything, and I think it's a... anything, even reasonable things that you can't believe that they can't agree to, and I think that the only reason I think there's hope is that I'm hoping that we're going to have a new Governor in a year and half, and at the rate at which they're going, there's still going to be plenty of things left on the table to be decided, because they... you know, it's been six years and you know we're moving forward with demolition on two properties.

Man:

I'm a resident, and thinking about the Marriott idea that's been floated for the southern end of the Island... One of the things that strikes the residents, I think, is the absolute lack of imagination for that spectacular place, and the... in comparison, an architect friend of mine showed me a monograph by Rem Koolhaas done in the early 80's sometime, I think, that was probably tongue in cheek, proposal for the Island including something that was a wraparound conference structure that wrapped around the Queensboro Bridge. I'm wondering... First, I'd love to hear something more from the architects about some of the wilder ideas that were actually proposed for the Island, because it was this blank slate, and that must be an interesting bit of history. Another thing is the role of imagination in building a market for this Island. Boring buildings are not going to bring people out to a strip of rock in the middle of the river. You need to have something exciting. You need to have something interesting. If we're not going to do it for social reasons, and if ordinary economics are not going to do it, then what's the role of architecture in making something happen?

BYARD:

You know, that's very nice remarks. There were lots of visionary... there was a carrier or deck, with stuff all over it... [UNINT]

GARVIN:

[UNINT] ...there was a Tivoli Gardens for it, many many things.

BYARD:

Right... But the point was that this one, which is the accurate one which is actually on the wall, Tom, it's in the wonderful 1960 book, not this one, unfortunately, we didn't talk about it soon enough, this is the right one, you were trying to get an envelope that had the right character for this piece of land. And to recognize that you probably shouldn't make it into an aircraft carrier of some sort the way the Gruen, which I've now been reminded of, was basically doing. One point Alex did make before and I think we all did. Whatever happens surely has to reflect the needs of the larger politic of the time. I mean, if institutional housing is a valuable asset for the City as a whole, that was part of the object of the game. We turned it down because we were trying to do something else. But that's something... daily life is different now and it's important to remember what it is. Architecture's got to be important, and Jordan, I didn't realize was right there. You've got an awfully good architect working on this project, if I understand it correctly, right? Very important.

LIEBMAN:

I just wanted to answer this gentleman's question concerning the tip of the Island, and I just wanted to tell a little... people might not know about Louis I. Kahn's Roosevelt Memorial. When he was hired to do it, first of all it was 1973 and he was, at that moment, the greatest living American architect, but the dialogue between Ed Logue, who loved Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Louis I. Kahn, who loved Franklin Delano Roosevelt, that dialog produced that memorial, so it's a very important structure, because philosophy of two people of similar age in that dialog produced that wonderful design and it hasn't been built yet. Lou Kahn died during the design of that work, and another great friend of his, Aldo Giurgola, finished the working drawings for the same fee, just finished them up, with the young fellow from Lou Kahn's office that worked with him. So there's a history of love attached to the tip of the Island and I think it would be a great legacy for great architects like Lou Kahn, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and Ed Logue, to see that built. And I think that that soft edge at the tip would also be best for Roosevelt Island.
[APPLAUSE]

MILLER:

I think the point here is that you have such a contrast between proposals for what do with this extraordinary space and between planning processes. In the one, you had a master plan from someone who considered that part of the Island should be open space, and relate the name of the Island to the mission of the Island, and the other, you had an RFP process which said, "How can you make money with this particular plot of land?" And so what you have is an extraordinary contrast between one vision and another, which comes directly out of the type of planning process which was undertaken for that space.

BYARD:

Not to let Ted's point go unemphasized: Why did they like Roosevelt? Well, they liked Roosevelt because of the programs and besides the personality and what he stood for and what we all thought we were trying to do, which was something for the public good. And to have some kind of memorial to remember those days would be very nice, would be terrific.

ETHEL ROMM:

To add, I have a question that I wouldn't want anybody who had something to do with this to leave without knowing how much I've learned tonight about the beginnings of things. You did something remarkable. A small thing like the ramps, which I hope [to Wine] you'll have in your buildings, it's not only for the disabled, but everybody with a baby carriage, and you see the kids on rollerblades. Every kid is an expert on that. You just created something marvelous... the steps to the river, really marvelous. How's your Mom?

MILLER:

My Mom is fine.

ROMM:

My question is a technical one. My field happens to be construction and design. That General Development Plan -- if any exceptions are made to it, does that negate the whole thing? There are projects that some of us like very much that have been proposed. The Marriott is not among them. [Nor] those 30-story aged things. But there are some beautiful things being suggested, but they're not congruent with that GDP as we read it. If one of them goes through, one of the reasons there's so much opposition to it is there's this fear, that if it does, we'll never get the Roosevelt Memorial because that, right now, it's in the GDP in some sense.

BYARD:

One could briefly answer that. The whole thing is so interesting to everybody talking about how enduring it is. That's wonderful to think it enduring a bit... it's terrific, but it's basically a leasehold, and if you do something wrong you've violated the lease. Then the question is, what happens? There could be a "call me pisher" problem which is all right, so you did it wrong, what are we going to do now, because the other side's got to enforce it. It's an ordinary private set of relationships between two governmental agencies, with a subsidiary to help out with it. You know, you don't go straight to jail, somebody has to want to have it come out one way or the other. Well, what the General Development Plan was supposed to do, and the choice of the word was very careful, was not.. there was a thing that was regarded as the master plan, but this thing was called the General Development Plan, as a way to give a kind of very general set of directions that would endure, and it's interesting to see that they seem to have somewhat. The object of the exercise was to get an envelope and a shape and commitments to parks and commitments to open space and... there's a very tricky device, I don't know whether it worked, but it was supposed to get rid of Mr. Whatshisname's fountain -- if you remember the wonderful [spray] that put what was then sewage on the U.N. on a good day -- was really quite a good thing, and so the thing is not supposed to say only the most general ways, the kinds of densities and the kinds of allocation of space, and that, I would think, would be worth trying to keep on with. But the remedies are remedies of a private transactions between two governments.

MELLINS:

I think that we are about to wrap things up, so does anyone have the ideal question to end with?
[LAUGHTER]

Woman [from audience]:

I have two questions, actually, but they are both departures. One is the playing fields, which I care deeply about and I think brings New Yorkers to Roosevelt Island [UNINT]. I thought Battery Park City would have [UNINT], but they don't, to speak of. They used that up for high-density building. But they use that [in the Southtown plan] for high-density building. Where does that fit into the plan? Is there [UNINT] to keep our open spaces? Am I right that people come from all over the City to play on the playing fields? And parkland is nice, walkways are nice, but I truly mean playing fields. Grownups need the playing fields. Soccer fields are used by [UNINT]. Where does that fit into the plan and where does it fit in for the future?

WINE:

Well, I can only speak in terms of Southtown, but one of the things in the many many meetings that we attended was a good desire to... you know, what was going to happen to the existing playing field.

Woman:

How are things now? How do you get to use the playing field? Are there not schools that use them.

WINE:

I don't know. What I can say is that the whole plan for Southtown was developed to relocate and completely rebuild the playing field so that it is much more of a legitimate soccer field and ball field with some viewing stands and it will be irrigated and it's actually quite a tremendous...

Woman:

Maybe we don't need that...

WINE:

Well, I can tell you I went to about 30 meetings and they said it was needed absolutely, so maybe I was told incorrectly, and again we could only respond to people who came to these meetings and who spoke. It was said [it] absolutely was critical.

Woman:

I would like to add [UNINT] to that, which is that one of the things we're hoping with the playing fields and the irrigation is that it will make it much more low maintenance, because of [UNINT]... talk about Roosevelt Island not having operating budget, we tried to anticipate this and to design playing fields that [UNINT]... and it's really sort of being cognizant of the [UNINT].

MELLINS:

I'm going to take one more question...

KATZ:

If I could just respond to that question...?

MELLINS:

Sure.

KATZ:

I just want to say that in terms of the fields that are used on Roosevelt Island now, you're quite right. Many of them are offered to schools on a rental basis. As a matter of fact, in the time of Mr. Ryan's predecessor, Dr. Blue, he attempted to quintuple the cost for the Little League fields to our own players as a source of revenue for the Island. That didn't go over too well. In Octagon Park there are two beautiful fields. There's a soccer field and a pony field for baseball. The soccer field is more appropriate for water polo, and the pony field has never been developed because, again, because of drainage problems. So two of the fields that are supposed to take up some of the slack when the development proceeded are simply not available on a regular basis to Island children or to anyone else. So there is certainly a crying need for all kinds of spaces for children to use.

MELLINS:

Last question, the man in the back.

LEE EDELMAN:

Yeah, this question is for Mr. Wine. I'd like to draw your attention to the negotiations conducted and the agreement concluded with RIOC in general, and in particular Phase One, which is about to be constructed. As you well know, in that agreement, it was agreed that RIOC would put \$4.5 million into the infrastructure. Now, it was also negotiated that out of the Phase One, the developers would pay a total of ground rent and PILOT payments of \$195,000 a year. Now, if you do the math, I'm sure you're quite capable of doing so, if you take \$4.5 million that RIOC is going to take, basically, of residents', of our

money, basically to build the infrastructure for your development, and you invested that in Treasuries at six percent, you'd end up with about \$270,000 a year of income without doing a damn thing, that could be used for the Island, whereas RIOC, with the deal they negotiated so well with you, will produce an income stream of \$195,000 a year on an investment of \$4.5 million. In addition, they add more people to the Island, more services, which means RIOC has apparently done a wonderful financial business with Related Company. Now my question is, with that in mind, do you think there is any connection between that type of deal that was negotiated and the fact that the Chairman of Related, Steve Ross, has been a longtime supporter of the Republicans, and in fact contributed \$20,000, the maximum legal limit, to the last gubernatorial campaign of Mr. Pataki? So my question is, do you think there's any connection between those two? [LAUGHTER]

MELLINS:

If I could interrupt for just a moment, and this will take just a minute. Many years ago I went to a wonderful panel at the New York Public Library on preservation in New York, and at that time preservation did not have the strong public... it wasn't as much a part of the way the City worked as it is now. Passions ran high about this.

There was a group of very illustrious architects and preservationists, and there was one developer. And he stood up and he was about to give his presentation and he said, "When Queen Elizabeth II was coronated, it was a very mixed event for her mother, the Queen Mother, because she was proud that her daughter had just become Queen, and she was very depressed that her husband had just died, and so to attend to this situation it was decided that Noel Coward, the wittiest man in the Commonwealth, would be her escort for these occasions. Royalty came from all over the world, including the King and Queen of Tonga. The Queen of Tonga weighed about 400 pounds and she was given to great flower print muumuus, and a matching parasol. She became the darling of media all over the world. When the actual procession of all the royalty is going on, the Queen of Tonga is being carried by ten men on a litter, and as all the people who are viewing this procession looked into the litter they see a tiny skinny wizened old man sitting next to the Queen of Tonga. The Queen Mother turns to Noel Coward and says, 'Is that her husband?' and Noel Coward says, 'I think that's her lunch.'" [LAUGHTER] So I have a feeling that you, Mr. Wine, are lunch. [LAUGHTER, APPLAUSE] I apologize for that, and now, your answer...

WINE:

First of all, let me just say that your characterization of the agreement is inaccurate, inappropriate, and somewhat naive. Please, you finished. Let me finish.

EDELMAN:

I'm letting you finish.

WINE:

Because if you think an investment in infrastructure is only attributable to Phase I of a project, then you don't understand one of the main reasons why it has been so difficult for many projects, particularly Southtown, to be constructed. So it is very... it is inaccurate to characterize our deal the way you have characterized it, and to do the math the way you've projected. It maybe makes for a nice speech to skewer a real- estate developer and, to follow up on your next question about some supposed favoritism, that might be extended to us, but it is in fact inaccurate. Secondly, we were designated the developer and we negotiated a business deal under the prior administration, so whether or not you agree with the numbers, whether or not you agree with the deal, that's fine. But to misconstrue and to mischaracterize things is just not fair.

EDELMAN:

First off, the infrastructure being put in only goes up to Phase I. It does not go past Phase I. It is only going...

WINE:

How do you get there? How do you get to Phase II without doing Phase I?

MELLINS:

At this moment, I'm going to say we're going to call for a recess. You've all been saved by the bell. But I want to thank you for everyone's participation. Thank you.

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