

Commissioner Diana Chapin, Queens representative

“It’s truly unfortunate that we don’t anymore have any of the gravestones, but at least there is some historic record. It is an important historical and archaeological record ... We don’t know what possibly may exist for this in the future so I think it’s important for it not to be built over at this time.”

Commissioner Margery Perlmutter, Manhattan representative

Asks LPC General Counsel Mark Silberman for an explanation on the implications of landmarking a cemetery site with no visible markers.

LPC General Counsel Mark Silberman:

Based on the research the commission has done, and based on the testimony and materials submitted to the commission, the research staff has concluded there is no reason to believe that the burials are not still there.

While there are no visible headstones, there is a hope that buried underneath are headstones and that in the future this site in the right hands could be restored or re-created to a certain extent to the cemetery that it is. If the owner comes forward and seeks to build something on the site, the commission will have to consider what kind of development, if any, is appropriate for the site. So it does raise some regulatory questions.

Commissioner Margery Perlmutter responds:

It seems to me that it’s important to be protecting an

important burial site like this, but at the same time unless there are some visible remains of tombstones and so on, it's kind of hard for the public to understand what this about. So my support of this is really of the idea of it being an archaeologically important site and that in the future if the owner chooses to develop something there, that the development speaks to the archaeological importance and the protection of the subsurface and however the structure is designed to not disturb or protect the subsurface conditions

Commissioner Christopher P. Moore, Brooklyn representative

I agree with the archaeological importance of burials. Burials have been important on this part of the continent for about 10,000 years and that's a pretty good length of time, and this represents part of that sense of importance of burials.

Commissioner Pablo E. Vengoechea, Staten Island representative

I also think it's important to preserve the memory and it's a place of remembrance. I just think these kinds of places are sacred in many ways, and the designation will help keep the options open as to what to do with the site in the future, how to best commemorate this.

Commissioner Michael Devonshire, Brooklyn representative

One of the aspects of the archaeology is typically the information isn't known until you start digging the place up, and I would hope that doesn't actually occur. For me one of the telling images was the 1920s aerial map

showing that pretty much everything around this was cultivated farmland and I think it's important for us to maintain this kind of milestone for the remembrance not just for the archaeological value, and in my mind moving forward, what I see, is because by saving this is we give ourselves the option of in the future possibly even working with a school for traditional trades, stone carving trades, to re-create some of the headstones that we know the original design of and re-establishing this very important spot of memory in NYC

Commission Chairman Robert B. Tierney

As we've heard in the discussion, this is unusual \_ rare\_ not unique, but a designation that is nontraditional. It raises a lot of questions, in terms of regulation and preservation broadly writ, and in terms of the commission recognizing what is there.

There is enormous interest and community support for this designation, for the preservation of this site. There are multiple organizations, multiple community groups, elected officials. It has attracted a lot of attention and a lot of support, and it's my hope that this designation will continue and supplement whatever it is that will happen with this body with respect to this soon-to-be-designated New York City landmark.