

OPENING REMARKS given by

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**BATTERY PARK CITY: Coming of Age
Lessons Learned From One of
The World's Most Successful Planned Communities
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You have to look closely to live and work in a city like New York, or risk forever overlooking the necessary evolutions of nature. Like how a farmer knows a burning field is the sign of a future yield Battery Park City is that phoenix rising. It was borne from a deteriorated wasteland: haunted by ghosts of commercial progress, buzzing with derelicts, now bearing the scars of Manhattan's deepest wound. Yet it isn't simply a neighborhood built on a landfill – Battery Park City represents a pioneering sustainable community reborn from land filled with history.

Good morning. My name is Jack Nyman. I'm the director of the Steven L. Newman Real Estate Institute at Baruch College, City University of New York, the proud sponsor of today's conference, BATTERY PARK CITY – Coming of Age, Lessons Learned from one of the World's Most Successful Planned Communities.

The story of Battery Park City is relentless in its depth. Rewind to the early 1900s....downtown Manhattan. Economic forces swept real estate into a tide of industry. The lower west side waterways supported a booming commercial shipping trade, and over the course of the next century, big banking and business followed south, creating the lower Manhattan we know today.

Everything changed after World War II. Towering stacks of containers replaced bulk boxes, and tall cranes outmoded the hordes of longshoremen. Soon, the piers sunk into the cold river and the derelicts moved in. Drug dealers, women of the night, and the homeless greeted newcomers, gazing across the Hudson from Ellis Island.

By 1956 the economic wasteland became a political battleground. David Rockefeller created the Downtown Lower Manhattan Association and put in motion, plans for a change even he termed "audacious." The political linchpin outlined 564-acres on the waterfront for a then-cost of a one billion dollar transformation. David's brother, Governor Nelson Rockefeller was instrumental in making Battery Park City come to life.

Over the next fifty years Battery Park City yielded the most remarkable urban renewal project undertaken in the United States, and in the process set a new international standard for sustainable communities and in many ways helped to pave the way as a model for successful public private partnerships. While we may appear to be more

concerned today with the architecture, planning and development of Battery Park City, we cannot forget its position on the American landscape.

The Statue of Liberty represents the gateway to America. A hundred years earlier immigrants would have looked at lower Manhattan and seen the booming shipping trade, and in that vision the promise of freedom, of work and of hope. Fast forward a half-century and they would have seen the dark underbelly of a city in transition. And just ten years ago, they would have witnessed the smoking ashes of a city burdened by its promise.

And what does Lady Liberty face today? Battery Park City. A phenomenal example of urban renewal, a rebirth, engendered by extraordinary vision, creativity, and determination: the audacity of large-scale planning, the hope of a sustainable community, and the promise of a better tomorrow.

The purpose of this conference is to share the vision of a well-planned community by mining the lessons learned from shores filled with history beneath Battery Park City. Let's look at its tremendous presence today: 92 acres of mixed-use community, 9.3 million square feet of commercial space, 7.2 million square feet of residential space, 3 schools, 2 museums, a marina and 36 acres of parkland.

It is important to point out; Battery Park City has the largest concentration of LEED certified green buildings in the country. And, the sheer quantity and quality of awards received by the Battery Park City Authority is too extensive to list now, but of note would be that top professional organizations have selected this development to receive their highest honors in categories ranging from Architecture and Design to Sustainable Development. These organizations include the American Institute of Architects, the American Planning Association, The Urban Land Institute, the Association of Energy Engineers, The Waterfront Center and The City of New York to name but a few.

Today, Battery Park City's urban design is unrivaled. The transit lines at the site determined the location of the World Financial Center directly across from the former twin towers, which is now the home of the new World Trade Center development and its 9/11 Memorial. A second level, originally the main public walkway, connects the four commercial towers and intersects at the Winter Garden, now a premier public events venue.

Flanking both sides of the World Financial Center are six residential areas, each distinctive in character, density and setting, and each organized around a unique park. The buildings vary from townhouses to 50 story towers all set upon land sloped three degrees towards the water to accentuate the views of the Hudson River. Bookended by Stuyvesant High School to the north, and the world class Museum of Jewish Heritage, a Living Memorial to the Holocaust to the south, the area continues to guard and cultivate its American roots.

Like a work of art, viewed from the other side of the river one can witness the intricate balance between the residential buildings, the open space, and the stepped majesty of the commercial towers all addressing the view corridors to the Hudson, and expressing the gateway to an important part of the history of America.

Battery Park City is a scion for connectivity and large-scale planning and design. It is a community interfaced with the waterway it nestles against. Today we will hear about its trials and its success, and through this discussion remember it serves as an international model for the potential of sustainable living and urban waterfront planning.

But to fully appreciate this we must return to the “audacious” plan of David Rockefeller in 1956 to understand just how far this project has come. The mix of culture, schools, commercial, residential and park space embodies the spiritual and physical rebirth of the lower west side of our island. Battery Park City is a symbol of the natural evolutions we so often overlook in our daily urban life.

Its uniqueness is not just one of world-class design and development, but a tremendous compilation of human spirit, talent, vision, leadership and determination. Out of a land filled with history, the connection between the World Financial Center, lower Manhattan and Battery Park City honors the potential of New York City, and the thoughts of hope and freedom that the gateway to America represents. Today, Battery Park City returns Lady Liberty’s gaze ...with pride.

Before we begin today’s rich agenda, it is important for me to acknowledge our sponsors: Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects, Urstadt Biddle Properties, Zetlin & De Chiara LLP, Jones Lang LaSalle and special thanks to our host, Brookfield Office Properties.

Thanks to Brookfield, we are enjoying this spectacular venue for today’s conference. I first walked into this space two weeks ago on a sunny Friday and looked out over the north cove. I saw children playing ball, a regatta that stretched out from north cove marina to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island and I thought to myself, this is what exceptional urban design and civic commitment is all about:.... the creation of a unique environment that has taken into consideration its unique urban ecology.

I am proud that The Newman Real Estate Institute has this opportunity today to provide a voice and stage for the will, determination and talent that created this amazing neighborhood. From inanimate brick, stone and mortar, that talent created life.

Now, let’s get this conference started.