

CITY HALL OFFICE
250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1827
NEW YORK, NY 10007
TEL: (212) 788-7286
FAX: (212) 227-3176

DISTRICT OFFICE
2424 RALPH AVENUE
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK 11234
TEL: (718) 241-9330
FAX: (718) 241-9316

AMAISEL@council.nyc.gov



**THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

ALAN MAISEL

COUNCIL MEMBER, 45TH DISTRICT, BROOKLYN

CHAIRMAN
STANDARDS AND ETHICS

COMMITTEE
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
EDUCATION
PARKS AND RECREATION
STATE AND FEDERAL
LEGISLATION
VETERANS

May 12, 2017

Jacques Jiha
Commissioner
Department of Finance
One Centre Street 22nd Floor
New York, NY 10007

RE: Imminent Tax Lien Sale

Dear Commissioner Jiha,

On May 12, 2017, the City of New York is poised to give private speculative investors leverage over hundreds of properties in all five boroughs via the Department of Finance (DOF) Tax Lien Sale. By selling the right to collect unpaid taxes on community gardens, churches, day care centers, and locations owned by community-based charity organizations, the City is putting these hundreds of key community places at risk of foreclosure by private debt collectors and risking their transformation into private, for-profit development sites.

By selling that right for vacant lots in the same transaction, the City gives up its power over the future of our neighborhoods and transforms unpaid property taxes into a “private” debt to be enforced by private debt collectors.


For the first time ever, in response to the requests of advocates, this year the DOF created lists of recently-exempt properties and vacant land heading to the May 12 sale. We urge you to remove all recently-exempt properties DOF identified from this sale. Charity properties are entitled to be free from paying property tax under the New York State Constitution; including them in the lien sale puts them at risk of closing their doors and being sold to speculators.

We also urge you to remove all vacant land DOF identified from this upcoming sale. Allowing private debt to compound the pains of neighborhoods that have been abandoned by absentee

property owners will not lead to responsible development of gardens, community centers, and housing. The City retaining leverage over these properties is vital for our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Maisel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alan Maisel
Council Member
District 46