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Two City Hall protests, one common theme

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Charges of forced displacement formed a common thread Monday in two separate City Hall protests -- one by foes of a Brooklyn rezoning measure, the other by newsstand operators opposing a new street franchise.



One debate involved development in Williamsburg and Greenpoint, pitting the Bloomberg administration against local City Council members and community leaders.

At a council hearing, City Planning Commission Chairwoman Amanda Burden defended a land-use plan that officials say would create 10,000 units of housing of which 2,300 are deemed to be affordable units.

Foes claim the plan would force thousands of residents out of the community due to "gentrification and real-estate speculation." They are demanding that 40 percent of the housing authorized by the city's rezoning be "truly affordable." Borough President Marty Markowitz and Public Advocate Betsy Gotbaum oppose the city's plan.

The administration rebutted the displacement charge.

"This will not only increase the housing supply but contains generous amounts of affordable housing, some of which is specifically aimed at making permanent existing affordable-housing units," said Burden spokeswoman Rachaele Raynoff.

A vote by the council's Land Use Committee is expected in the next four weeks.

In a news conference on a crowded sidewalk near City Hall, the Newsstand Operators Association said 37 of 60 newsstands that would be forced to relocate by a pending city franchise would lose their businesses.

The city's so-called street-furniture bill makes the newsstands part of a franchise that authorizes private concessions for new public toilets and bus shelters.

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