

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEES ON PUBLIC HOUSING AND VETERANS

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November 15, 2010

Start: 11:36am

Recess: 12:19pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

MATHIEU EUGENE
Chairperson

ROSIE MENDEZ
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Fernando Cabrera
- Daniel Dromm
- Lewis A. Fidler
- Vincent J. Gentile
- David G. Greenfield
- Robert Jackson
- Maria Del Carman Arroyo
- Daniel J. Halloran III
- James G. Van Bramer
- Melissa Mark-Viverito
- Council Member Nelson
- Council Member Brewer

A P P E A R A N C E S

Cissy Stamm
Volunteer Mediator
Safe Horizon

Edward M. Daniels
Chairman
The Incarcerated Veterans Consortium, Inc

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes, good
3 morning again, ladies and gentlemen. We're going
4 to start the second hearing. Would you please
5 keep silence and turn your phone--turn your phone
6 off? Good morning again, and welcome again to the
7 hearing of the committee on Veteran and Public
8 Housing. My name is Mathieu Eugene and I serve as
9 the Chairman of the Committee on Veterans. This
10 morning we--we are also considering the resolution
11 411, and to do this by Council Member Rosie
12 Mendez, which calls upon the New York City Housing
13 Authority to include an administration preference
14 for public housing specifically--especially for
15 veteran who have a military service connected
16 disability. Currently, the New York City Housing
17 Authority includes civil administration
18 preferences for certain group of people such as
19 applicant who have certain disabilities and
20 medical needs, as well as victim of domestic
21 violation and intimidated witnesses. This group
22 of applicant are typically given priority to
23 receive an apartment as they become available.
24 According to Section 960-206 of Title 24 of the
25 Code of Federal Regulations, NYCHA has the

1 authority to adapt a system of local preferences
2 for selection of families admitted to the local
3 authority's public housing program. In addition,
4 Section 156 of the New York State Public Housing
5 Law allows veterans and the families of veterans
6 who serve in the Armed Forces between 1961 and
7 1975, and also were injure or kill as a result of
8 this service, to meet the less stringent and come
9 disability standard for public housing. Today we
10 are going to look at the possibility of creating a
11 separate preference group for veterans and
12 specially for veteran who have disability
13 connected to their time in service. As you know,
14 homelessness is one of the most pressing issue
15 facing veterans across the city, which could be
16 directly addressed by giving veteran priority when
17 applying for public housing. As we all know,
18 veteran has made enormous sacrifices for our
19 country and for the quality of life we enjoy.
20 They deserve our admin--admiration and respect,
21 and we need to continuously find a ways of
22 assisting veterans and provide them with necessary
23 support. Now, I want to call my colleague, Rosie
24 Mendez, Chair of the Housing--Public Housing.
25

CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you so much, Chair Eugene. I am Council Member Rosie Mendez and I chair the Committee on Public Housing. As Council Member Eugene stated, today's joint hearing will focus on Resolution number 411 introduced by Council Member Lew Fidler, which calls upon the New York City Housing Authority to include an admission preference for veterans who have a military service connected disability for its residential units in its next proposed agency plan. Today's hearing arises out of the concern that the Housing Authority is not providing an admissions preference for veterans. In light of the fact that the men and women of our armed forces are still engaged in combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, that men and women of our armed forces are amongst the ranks of the homeless, and that between the years of 1961 and 1975 veterans were given a priority status on the New York City Housing Authority waiting list under state law. We believe that the Housing Authority should move to make this a preference. Other affordable housing provided, such as Mitchell Lamas [phonetic] provide a preference for veterans

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2 and NYCHA should institute one as soon as
3 possible. Since NYCHA currently provides social
4 services to all its residents, veterans and their
5 family members could avail themselves of said
6 services. Some military families experience
7 difficulty upon returning to civilian life and I
8 believe the Authority, through its social service
9 programs, could assist returning veterans with
10 this transition. In today's hearing the
11 committees--the committees expect to hear from
12 veterans, representatives of veterans, advocacy
13 groups, as well as NYCHA residents. I would like
14 to thank everyone for testifying today and look
15 forward to a productive hearing. We have been
16 joined by the following members. Vinnie Gentile
17 from Brooklyn from the Veterans Committee,
18 Margaret Chin from the Public Housing Committee in
19 Manhattan, Danny Drumm from Queens, Veterans
20 Committee, Council Member Fernando Cabrera from
21 the Bronx, Veterans, and let me go all the way far
22 right. Council Member Halloran, Public Housing
23 Committee, Queens; Council Member Jimmy Van
24 Bramer, Public Housing Committee, Queens; Council
25 Member Marie Carmen Arroyo, Manhattan Public

2 Housing Committee; and Council Member--and the
3 Bronx--and Council Member Lew Fidler, who's
4 introduced this bill and he's from Brooklyn; and
5 Council Member Greenberg--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Field.

7 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: What? Field.

8 I'm sorry.

9 MALE VOICE: Greenburg.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD:

11 Greenfield.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Greenfield.

13 It's because I had a teacher--my favorite English
14 teacher was named Greenburg. From Brooklyn,
15 Veterans Committee. I'd like to now turn it over
16 to Council Member Lew Fidler for a few words on
17 his resolution.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you,
19 Chairwoman Mendez. I have to tell you, we do a
20 lot of lip service to veterans and supporting
21 veterans and appreciating veterans. We just had
22 Veterans Day, which is, in many respects, become
23 an excuse to hold another sale someplace. When we
24 had a hearing on the problem of homelessness
25 amongst veterans, I was shocked to find out that

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2 in one place that we really should have some
3 control in public housing, that all the words mean
4 nothing, that there is no preference given to
5 veterans of any kind, no less those who were in
6 somehow returned from service disabled. I thought
7 that was shocking and appalling, and I understand
8 that the city council does not have the
9 legislative power over an authority like NYCHA To
10 require that they put some deeds behind our words.
11 So I introduced this resolution and I'm very
12 pleased that so many of my colleagues have
13 cosponsored it now because I think, you know,
14 frankly I don't know how many people will come
15 here to testify today because this seems like such
16 a no-brainer, and it's so offensive that it's not
17 being done. And, in fact, while we were waiting
18 for this hearing to begin Council Member
19 Greenfield, Greenberg, whatever, made a suggestion
20 to me that before we allocate funds to NYCHA in
21 next year's budget, that we make it a term and
22 condition--if they don't do it before then that we
23 make it a term and condition of our budgetary
24 allocation that NYCHA implement this policy for
25 our veterans so that next Veterans Day and all

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2 those times when we're asked to stand up and show
3 our appreciation to veterans, those words will
4 have some real meaning and we will have done
5 something to show that appreciation in the kind of
6 way that a veteran can really appreciate. Thank
7 you.

8 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you,
9 Council Member Fidler. We were also joined by
10 Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito from
11 Manhattan in the Public Housing Committee, and
12 just for the public, if you want to give testimony
13 you need to fill out a little white sheet with the
14 Sergeant of Arms in the back. And now we'll turn
15 it over to my co-chair, Dr. Eugene.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
17 Council Member Mendez. Thank you very much. Let
18 me take the opportunity to thank all of you here
19 again this morning and also those who are going to
20 do presentation, and I want especially to thank
21 Council Member Fidler and Council Member Mendez
22 for those two wonderful resolution. And as you
23 say it, you know, eloquently and averiment
24 [phonetic], you know, they put the life--in life
25 they made the sacrifices to defend our way of

2 life, our peace, our democracy, everything we are
3 enjoying today, and I think they deserve, you
4 know, the best that we can provide them with. And
5 it is very important that we take our necessary
6 measure in, you know, pass resolution to ensure
7 that they receive the best that we can provide
8 them with. Again, my colleagues Council Member
9 Fidler and Mendez, thank you very much. And to
10 all my colleagues over here today, thank you all
11 so for our effort in addressing the need of
12 veterans. So now we want to call the first
13 witness. Again, Ms. Stamm, will you please--

14 MS. CISSY STAMM: Sure

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
16 much.

17 MS. STAMM: One of my first
18 concerns--hello everybody.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Hello again.

20 MS. STAMM: Hello, and a special
21 hello to Councilwoman Mendez, who is my--

22 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you.

23 MS. STAMM: --councilperson.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Can I just ask
25 you to identify yourself for the record?

2 MS. STAMM: My name is Cissy Stamm.

3 I am affiliated with no one but myself and have an
4 interest in this, one, because I'm a mediator and
5 deal with a lot of NYCHA cases. Two, I have a
6 disability. I use a service dog. This is a
7 service dog for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and
8 hearing loss, a very common disability for
9 returning veterans. NYCHA can do whatever it
10 wants with regard to animals in public housing,
11 and they tend to be pretty cavalier about the way
12 that they treat both emotional support animals,
13 which are covered by the Fair Housing Act, and
14 service animals which are covered by state laws
15 and the Americans With Disabilities Act, and city
16 laws as well. Thank you, Wargus. He's nervous.
17 One of the big concerns that I have, aside from
18 the access for people with disabilities who use
19 emotional support animals--veterans--and service
20 animals for physical and psychiatric disabilities,
21 is--the policy of NYCHA is--NYCHA is to exclude
22 anyone who has an arrest record or a conviction
23 record from public housing. We're having
24 returning vets who have been arrested without a
25 conviction but they're still excluded, veterans

2 who are going--who are being--who are enlisting
3 who have arrest records, and I was wondering
4 whether or not those veterans are going to
5 automatically get a certificate of relief from
6 disability so that they will be able to apply for
7 public housing, be able to vote, and be able to
8 have other benefits that would--they would be
9 otherwise excluded from. Huge concern, especially
10 if you want to reunite veterans with their
11 families in the effort to rebuild the family unit
12 and help prevent some of the ramifications of
13 being in combat. Thank you. I appreciate it.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
15 much. Thank you so much.

16 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Don't go away
17 yet. Don't go away. We may have questions.

18 MS. STAMM: Oh, oh, oh. I'm sorry.

19 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Okay.

20 MS. STAMM: This is a relatively
21 new thing for me.

22 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Well, thank
23 you for being here today and for your testimony,
24 and it's wonderful to meet another one of my
25 constituents. Can I ask you--did--were you aware

2 that at one point there was a preference in NYCHA
3 between 1961 to 1975 for veterans?

4 MS. STAMM: Yes.

5 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Okay. Do you
6 know anything else about why that preference was
7 available then? I mean, I could certainly make my
8 own conjecture about that.

9 MS. STAMM: My conjecture would be
10 guilt over the way in which the returning Vietnam
11 veterans were treated.

12 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Yeah. That
13 was my feeling. Have you or you with any other
14 advocacy group have had a--or requested a meeting
15 with NYCHA to talk about the inclusion of veterans
16 on their priority list?

17 MS. STAMM: I am not important
18 enough, since I do not represent a constituency.
19 I am chopped liver.

20 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Okay. So when
21 I have those conversation I'd like for you to be
22 part of it.

23 MS. STAMM: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Okay. Do my
25 colleagues have any questions? Okay. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I don't have a
3 question but I just want to thank you again, you
4 know, for being here and for your testimony. But
5 I do want to meet with you after the hearing if
6 you have some time for me.

7 MS. STAMM: I thank you for caring.
8 All of you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I
10 wouldn't--I wouldn't--

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I would
13 add that, in my neck of Brooklyn, the Greenbergs
14 and Greenfields, we actually like chopped liver,
15 so. But that could be--that could be--

16 MS. STAMM: So do I.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --that
18 could be a good thing and we definitely appreciate
19 your testimony--your interest. You have some ten
20 members of the city council who are here listening
21 to you, so I think we take it seriously. I would,
22 though, add that I'm a little disappointed that
23 the folks at NYCHA couldn't find their way over
24 here today to--

25 MS. STAMM: They're not here?

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --to--
3 to testify.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: In NYCHA's
5 defense, which I don't gratuitously give them out,
6 but this hearing was scheduled for Friday. It was
7 moved up. So the required mandatory time of
8 notice was shortened and they couldn't rearrange
9 their schedule to be here, so that's why they're
10 not here today. And like council member Lew
11 Fidler said, in terms of public testimony I think
12 this is--we certainly welcome your testimony but I
13 think it's such a no-brainer for everyone that
14 people were not beating down the doors to come and
15 testify today. But thank you for being here and
16 putting your testimony on the record.

17 MS. STAMM: And thank you, all of
18 you, for your service as public servants.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: For the
20 record, we like your dog.

21 MS. STAMM: I do, too. And just so
22 that you know, I've used a dog for Post Traumatic
23 Stress Disorder--I'm not a veteran--since 1997.
24 It has become a huge money maker now and a lot of
25 people simply don't know how to train for PTSD,

2 but they are extremely, extremely useful and
3 anyone who's interested, I'm here.

4 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
5 much. Now we are going to call the next witness.
6 Mr. Edward Daniels, will you please--

7 MR. EDWARD DANIELS: Short notice.

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Let me just
9 thank you very much for coming and thank you for
10 everything you are doing on behalf of our
11 veterans. And I don't know if my co-chair,
12 Council Member Mendez, you have any words?
13 Otherwise, you may start, please.

14 MR. DANIELS: Oh, well, thank you.
15 It's a pleasure to be here this morning, and I
16 was--I think this hearing, it comes at a very
17 appropriate time concerning NYCHA and their
18 position regarding veterans in public housing. As
19 my predecessor stated, they are--NYCHA--

20 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Excuse me for
21 interrupting you. Could you please, you know,
22 state your name--

23 MR. DANIELS: Oh, I'm so sorry.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --for the
25 record?

2 MR. DANIELS: Okay. Okay.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER: Thank you.

4 MR. DANIELS: I--let me intro--I
5 apologize. My name is Edward M. Daniels. I chair
6 an organization called The Incarcerated Veterans
7 Consortium, Inc., which is a nonprofit
8 organization that works with veterans and
9 veterans' families, specifically with the focus
10 geared more to those that have been incarcerated
11 and those that are incarcerated. For those of you
12 who are not familiar with veterans that are
13 incarcerated, over 90% of them are honorably
14 discharged. The majority of them suffer from Post
15 Traumatic Stress Disorder or some other mental
16 capacity--incapacity to cause them to stray from
17 societal bounds and wind up being incarcerated.
18 Our organization was founded on the premise that
19 these individuals who served the country so
20 honorably and didn't get the services that they
21 were entitled to upon their discharge should not
22 be cast aside and thrown in a ditch. Just
23 recently, in September--this was affirmed by the
24 VA, itself, down in Washington DC where the
25 General Counsel stated, with the backing of the

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2 Secretary of Veterans Affairs, that they would no
3 longer throw veterans who made bad decisions and
4 got a dishonorable discharges into the caverns and
5 not help them, and they will try to link with
6 other social services organizations and CBOs to
7 get them help. But, as I said, our organization,
8 which we work with veterans of all ethnicities,
9 discharge types, and et cetera, in making sure
10 that they can get acclimated back into the
11 mainstream on a successful basis. And one of the
12 paramount problems that we have come--excuse me--
13 have come into knowledge about is that a lot of
14 veterans, because of their low incomes, cannot
15 afford to live on housing at market rate. And so
16 what a lot of them are trying to do is to get into
17 public housing or some other kind of other
18 subsidized housing, and it's very hard now with
19 the abolition of--when they got rid of the Section
20 Eight vouchers. It's sort of like what happened
21 with East 118th Street, which maybe some of you
22 don't even know about is, a veterans SRO on East
23 118th Street between Fifth and Madison, which
24 recently was supposed to be transitional and was
25 SRO. Now we're being told by DHS and whatnot that

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2 it is now permanent housing so they're no longer
3 eligible for Section Eight vouchers. So that put
4 another burden upon veterans in how do I get
5 myself back into the mainstream--mainstream on a
6 successful level? Getting back to NYCHA, NYCHA
7 has, for quite a while, and as our organization
8 not only service veterans with the getting back
9 out of--into the mainstream, but also represent
10 them in legal issues or we assist them with legal
11 problems they may incurring. A lot of the
12 veterans that we represent have public housing
13 problems. Not necessarily because they have
14 gotten arrested, and no other reason than they
15 have been in--they've had family members that live
16 in public housing, and which you have this thing
17 called remaining family member, which seems to be
18 NYCHA's catchall for denying people who would be
19 eligible for that housing not to get in. What
20 they've done is start making it problematic.
21 They'll say, well, you have to have an add-on, and
22 they're reluctant to give you the add-on to have
23 someone added to your household. Once that is
24 done common sense say, well, we'll get back to you
25 by a certain time. Prior to 2004 NYCHA had 90

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2 days in which to respond to a request to add
3 someone on to your family household composition.
4 They done away with that. Now when you put it in,
5 they never respond. I have a particular case out
6 of--and I'm going to call names of some of the
7 developments that we're dealing with this year
8 because I'm--I've been exasperated with their
9 behavior and how they've flaunted the laws and
10 ill-served the constituents. Out in London
11 Boulevard Housing this gentleman, born into that
12 housing, left the housing, came back, which he was
13 entitled to, and for the last six years NYCHA has
14 not ruled on his family member adding him on to
15 the household. I had to say we had the same
16 problem dealing with Chelsea Housing, where there
17 was a--both of the family members were both
18 veterans. One was a Vietnam veteran who had a
19 multitude of problems associated with his service
20 alongside PTSD, and his sister, who followed
21 behind him in the military. When he passed away
22 suddenly they made it impossible for her to get
23 into--back into the household, even though she was
24 back and forth into the housing. What they did
25 was not recognize it--the add-on request again,

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2 and the case wound up going into the Appellate
3 Court. This is Chelsea Housing. We have housing
4 with St. Nicholas housing, which is one of the
5 most poignant ones, a Vietnam veteran who died the
6 day before this Veterans Day. He died on November
7 the 10th of this year. His wife called me up and
8 told me that he died, and he died in the house.

9 And we're having a problem with that because they
10 want to evict them out of the household because of
11 some misbehavior of the children, who did not live
12 there. Okay. And anyone with common sense should
13 know that if your children go astray, you don't
14 desert your children. No matter what their case
15 need, they are your children. So rather than to
16 put this person on the probation, what they did,
17 they decided, we're going to evict them. Then
18 there's other housing with Wagner. I have a case
19 now in the Harlem Uptown Housing--Uptown Court
20 where this gentleman--he's a Vietnam veteran,
21 Marine Corps--who father died. He was there being
22 the caretaker because his father--excuse me--was
23 too ill to add him back on to the household. They
24 want to evict him, which is ridiculous and
25 everybody in the complex knows that he was living

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2 there and taking care of his father. Moving on,
3 we have a Navy veteran--they live at Harvard View
4 Housing--who actually grew up with his grandfather
5 in Harvard View housing, went into the--graduated
6 from high school while living with his
7 grandfather, went into the Navy, came out of the
8 Navy, went back living with his grandfather, and
9 they want to evict him saying he's not a family
10 member, and yet all the evidence we presented to
11 them says, listen, this is where his information
12 came from high school, when he graduated, this is
13 where he was when he went into the military, this
14 is where he was when he came out of the military,
15 and now you're saying that he's not a remaining
16 family member. So NYCHA has taken its own
17 perspective on how to deal with requests for
18 remaining family member status, and they take no--
19 they take no--into consideration as to a person's
20 service. Because the rules say that if you went
21 into the military you entitled to come back into
22 that household, yet they're disregarding this rule
23 and saying, no, you have to be--get our
24 permission. Well, I can't get your permission if
25 you refuse to give your permission by procas--for

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2 by--sorry--by pontificating, never responding to
3 the add-ons, so therefore I can't get your
4 permission. How can I get your permission if you
5 don't respond? You know? So NYCHA is something
6 that this meeting--this hearing--I would hope that
7 in some way that you can get something strong
8 enough within the law to force NYCHA to obey and
9 abide by the rules as they may be so that veterans
10 who are not well off can get into affordable
11 housing and not have--run the risk of living out
12 here on the streets. And there's a lot of--a lot
13 of housing and I--and all of these developments, I
14 can tell you, have spaces and vacancies that they
15 could put these veterans in and I personally have
16 looked into this, you know? And so when it comes
17 to NYCHA there needs to be some kind of situation,
18 some kind of mechanism to get them to do what they
19 are supposed to do. And I want to thank everyone
20 for your time and I don't want to eat up the whole
21 session here by going through this, but I think
22 it's--I think it's something that should be done
23 with NYCHA, and I don't know if there's something
24 you can do punitively with them to make them--or
25 say if you--if you break the rules and you don't

2 abide by the rules this is what they--this is what
3 we're going to do. So I would hope that this--
4 something could be done in this vernacular. Thank
5 you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Thank you. If
7 you actually have cases of individuals that were a
8 member of the household who left to the military
9 and came back--

10 MR. DANIELS: Every one of them
11 that I just named is milit--

12 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Was part of
13 the current household.

14 MR. DANIELS: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Not that they
16 were--they left--

17 MR. DANIELS: No.

18 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: --the
19 household prior to joining the military.

20 MR. DANIELS: No. Well--no.

21 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Then I--okay.

22 MR. DANIELS: No.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Provide me a
24 list of those individuals.

25 MR. DANIELS: Okay. Fine.

2 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Okay?

3 MR. DANIELS: Mm-hmm.

4 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: To my
5 committee. Thank you very much.

6 MR. DANIELS: Will do.

7 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
8 much Mr. Daniels. I want to thank you for what
9 you are doing on behalf of the veterans. Thank
10 you for what your organization is doing. But let
11 me ask you one thing, you know, I'm not going to
12 ask you too many questions, but you say that your
13 organization is working with other CBO and
14 organization. Can you just mention some of them
15 and what exactly you have been doing together?

16 MR. DANIELS: Well--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER: And how successful
18 you have been working with the other organization,
19 addressing exactly this issue?

20 MR. DANIELS: Well, they--to be
21 very honest it's not a lot of CBOs that we've been
22 working with on this. We have an attorney
23 sometimes that, depending on his case load, and
24 which we can refer people that have cases that are
25 beyond our ability to handle, to represent these

2 individuals that are having these problems. When
 3 he talk to--about CBOs, I mean, we work with Black
 4 Veteran Social Justice and we work with the New
 5 Era Veterans out of the Bronx. We've also done
 6 some work with the Vietnam Vets of America out of
 7 Queens, out of Chapter 32, in trying to provide
 8 services for some of the individuals that are
 9 having these type of issues. And we're open to
 10 just about anyone that has a problem with--in the
 11 legal field that we require our ability to assist
 12 them.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Have you been
 14 working also with MOVA [phonetic]? Did you reach
 15 out to them? What type of assistant you get, you
 16 know, for them?

17 MR. DANIELS: Well, with MOVA--

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Is there--

19 MR. DANIELS: --MOVA--MOVA in the
 20 past has referred clientele to us to assist. This
 21 was prior to this--when Mr. Handy was the director
 22 of the Mayor's Office of Veterans Affairs. We
 23 used to get a lot of referrals for assistance from
 24 him. As per demise, this has, for whatever
 25 reasons, has not been effectuated since then.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I don't know
3 about, you know, the exact--the--you know, the--
4 you capacity of handling all the cases you are
5 dealing with, but could you tell us what is your
6 biggest challenge, you know, dealing with this
7 issue?

8 MR. DANIELS: With the housing?

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes.

10 MR. DANIELS: Well, the biggest
11 issue is actually getting MOVA--I mean, not
12 getting MOVA, I'm sorry--getting NYCHA to conform
13 to the rules as per what is a remaining family
14 member. They have a--they have a manual which is
15 specifically details the requirements as to what a
16 refraining--remaining family member status is--
17 person is, and this has to be in conformity with
18 the United States Code. But however, they have a
19 predilection for doing what they want to do, and
20 they just don't prov--they just don't, you know,
21 conform to the rules. For instance, I have one
22 with a guy in grant housings, and we were supposed
23 to have a hearing. I think the last time we came
24 here was--I came here was on the 24th of October,
25 I believe, something like that, and the attorney

1
2 for a case that we were supposed to had on the
3 14th of October--no, I'm sorry, it was the 18th.
4 On the 14th we were supposed to have a hearing
5 regarding this member--this career war vet whose
6 ambulatory person was supposed to be on the 14th.
7 He called up on the 13th and left a message for me
8 saying that the case had been rescheduled.

9 Suffice to say, when I returned his call I left a
10 message with my--with the client saying that the
11 case would not be heard on the 14th because it had
12 been rescheduled. Then the attorney from NYCHA
13 called me up 20 minutes before the hearing, which
14 is uptown, to tell me that the hearing was going
15 on. I said I thought you left me a message that
16 was re--that the hearing was rescheduled. So they
17 dismissed the veteran's application for RFM
18 because him and his wife was in the apartment and
19 he wasn't on the--he had been taken off the lease.
20 She had cancer and he had moved back in. So what
21 happened was, they dismissed the case and we
22 responded because they didn't even inform us that
23 they had dismissed the case until I found out
24 through the veteran himself, who came over to the
25 offices saying, hey, listen. I got this letter

2 from NYCHA and it says--this is what it says. my
3 case been dismissed for failure to appear for
4 litigation. So I called up and I said, listen,
5 there's a problem here. The veteran--it wasn't
6 that he didn't want to show up to litigate. Your
7 attorney called up and left a message and said the
8 case was rescheduled, now you've dismissed the
9 case. Suffice to say to this date we have not
10 heard a response back from NYCHA, when we authored
11 a letter--which I have a copy in my--in my
12 attaché--saying that, hey, it wasn't our fault.
13 Your attorney did some unethical and so you're
14 dismissing our case. That's--that's unethical.
15 And we haven't heard back from them as of yet.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
17 much. We have been joined by Council Member
18 Robert Jackson. Thank you, Council Member
19 Jackson. And also I want to recognize Council
20 Member Greenfield. I think it's Greenfield, not
21 Greenburg, right?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: - - -

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: - - .

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --

25 Greenfield. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
3 much.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah,
5 thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Madame Chair,
6 and thank you, Chairman Fidler, for introducing
7 this resolution. You know, quick question. In
8 general, you know, someone who represents veterans
9 in New York City and deals with NYCHA, how do you
10 find NYCHA? Are they responsive to you?

11 MR. DANIELS: Not really, I don't.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Not
13 really.

14 MR. DANIELS: To be very honest, I
15 don't find them--I find them sort of like
16 obstructionist--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah.

18 MR. DANIELS: --particularly when
19 you're trying to do what we do, and that's to
20 affirm someone's legal right--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Sure.

22 MR. DANIELS: --to an apartment--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Sure.

24 MR. DANIELS: --they become very
25 obstructionist and they try to make it difficult

2 for you to ascertain the paperwork or review the
3 case file for evidence as to what will support
4 your claim. It--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Yeah,
6 well--well, I mean, I--once again, understanding
7 their excuses, I personally am disappointed as
8 well, especially because 15 members of the city
9 council were able to reschedule their time to come
10 to a committee hearing, you'd think that the
11 multi-billion dollar corporation of NYCHA could
12 find one person, I don't know, an intern, maybe--
13 they could've sent someone over to answer our
14 questions. But I have another question for you.
15 I don't know if you know the answer to this, and
16 that is, you know, do you have any sense of how
17 many veterans are on the wait list for NYCHA
18 housing, or do you have a sense of that or not
19 really?

20 MR. DANIELS: No, I don't have a
21 sense of it, but I do have a sense that they have
22 quite a few that have applied for that type of
23 subsi--subsidiary--subsidized housing.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Sure.

25 MR. DANIELS: And--and the fact of

2 it is you're not able to get the information--
3 well, I'm not, or our organization is not able to
4 get that type of information from NYCHA because
5 they always assert privilege of confidentiality.
6 So we haven't been able to get it.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: And you
8 mentioned--you mentioned your work with MOVA. How
9 do you find MOVA? I mean are they helpful to you
10 at all, or not really, either?

11 MR. DANIELS: I would say no
12 comment, but--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I
14 remind you that you are not under oath.

15 MR. DANIELS: Okay.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: We
17 would appreciate honest answers.

18 MR. DANIELS: Well--well, speaking
19 directly and quite frankly, we haven't had, as I
20 said earlier, any assistance from MOVA, and we
21 certainly haven't had any referral of individuals
22 from MOVA since the stewardship of the late Mike
23 Handy. I don't know most--I knew Mike and I sort
24 of, like, came along around at the same time. He
25 went to York and I went to another school and

2 when--at--all that. We started--all of--all of
3 us, I think, started out at CUNY.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: So, in
5 your opinion, as somebody who spends much of his
6 time advocating on behalf of veterans, is there
7 any city agency that you find actually works well,
8 or, for lack of a better term, cares about
9 veterans?

10 MR. DANIELS: That's a very good
11 question. I'd have to really give it some deep
12 thought. I mean, you know, I know that we have
13 veterans that have a lot of problems with the
14 Department of Consumer Affairs, Dan Rossi and
15 them. They haven't been very helpful working with
16 us.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: They
18 have not.

19 MR. DANIELS: No.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD:
21 Noticing a--

22 MR. DANIELS: No.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --a
24 theme. Different agencies not being helpful to
25 veterans.

2 MR. DANIELS: Oh, well, they--so
3 far as--not really. The only one that pretends to
4 be helpful is DHS, and that--we have a number of
5 problems with the programs in which DHS has
6 alleged to be helping vets. But when you take--
7 when you take an SRO and you put it into a
8 permanent housing situation, and you make people
9 that trying to get ahead make it more difficult.
10 I mean I understand that some people here went to--
11 --went to the facility on East 118th Street and it
12 doesn't live up to the standards of the model that
13 it was in the beginning when it was first built,
14 so there's some problems with that. And to be--
15 and looking at it in totality, there's not too
16 many people that we've--the only one I can think
17 off the top of my head, really was H&HC--Health
18 and Health Corporations. Hospitals, yeah.
19 Health--

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: That
21 are helpful.

22 MR. DANIELS: Yeah. They have been
23 helpful, particularly when we was having the
24 problem with the VA hospitals. They were very
25 helpful.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Well, I
3 would say, honestly, that that's very
4 disappointing to hear.

5 MR. DANIELS: Yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD:
7 Especially coming on the heels of Veterans Day.
8 You know, it's wonderful to have a parade and
9 floats and music but--

10 MR. DANIELS: Right.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --the
12 veterans who come back don't have services and
13 they're not getting the proper respect and
14 attention by the city, that's--that's tragic and
15 it's something that I would welcome, Mr. Chairman,
16 if we could consider perhaps holding broader
17 hearings on citywide agencies and their
18 responsiveness to veterans in this city and
19 whether they're doing everything they can to
20 assist our veterans. Thank you for your testimony
21 and I like the hat.

22 MR. DANIELS: Well, thank you. I
23 just want to add one thing to what you're saying
24 because I don't know--I assume everyone here's
25 already heard it--that the president has

2 cancelled, sort of, his decision to start pulling
3 troops out of Afghanistan next year. And I was
4 watching MSNBC earlier this morning and it seems
5 like we're going to--we target to stay there until
6 2014 before anything actually substantive starts
7 occurring. Which brings to mind that we have to
8 think about how many times people were rotated
9 over and over again into Iraq, and we're not
10 having people flooding the recruitment stations
11 again. So take into consideration, please, that
12 the individuals that now, if this war gets
13 extended in Afghanistan further, what's going to
14 happen? We're going to have triple problems with
15 people out of Afghanistan coming back with three
16 and four tours, as well as those that went into
17 Iraq.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Sure.

19 MR. DANIELS: And there's a
20 horrendous condition when you're fighting in the
21 mountains versus fighting in the city. So I don't
22 want to diminish anybody's service because I know
23 what it was like. So, consequently, we have to
24 think about are we going to be able to provide
25 them the services, the housing, - -, the

2 employment, and the health, the mental care that
3 they're going to all require when they come home.
4 And that they will start to come home.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Sure.

6 Well, that's an excellent observation. Thank you
7 very much and thank you for your testimony and for
8 all that you do for veterans here in New York
9 City.

10 MR. DANIELS: Okay. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
12 much, Council Member Greenfield, and thank you,
13 Mr. Daniels. But before you go could you--you
14 mentioned that you have a good collaboration and
15 partnership with HHC.

16 MR. DANIELS: Yeah, we--

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: - - - -

18 MR. DANIELS: --did.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: - - - -.

20 MR. DANIELS: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Could you
22 just, you know, for--to help us understand what
23 works, what doesn't works, you know, just to
24 duplicate or to try to improve the good
25 relationship that you have been having with them,

2 could you tell us exactly in which way recent they
3 have been helpful to--

4 MR. DANIELS: Right.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --what you're
6 doing?

7 MR. DANIELS: Excuse me. Yes.
8 Yes, I can.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Just to--yeah.

10 MR. DANIELS: Well, you know, be--
11 taking into consideration that all veterans don't
12 have honorable discharges and are not eligible,
13 per se, for VA medical services, we--we have
14 contrived the relations--we have contrived a
15 relationship with the Health and Hospital
16 Corporation back in the--whatever--it was 2002/3,
17 and this was fortified through our engagement and
18 cooperation with some other--the Commission On
19 Public Health Systems, Judy Wessler, and getting
20 public hospitals to treat veterans, help them get
21 Medicaid, or when they are ineligible for VA
22 medical care because of the type of discharge,
23 helping them to find appropriate clinics nearby
24 when they needed emer--when they needed to get
25 locked up with some type of health care system.

2 And so they were very cordial and very helpful.
3 The former head of the H&HC met with us on a
4 couple of occasions to do that. And so it's been
5 something that's been beneficial through the--
6 through the years since the--since the problems
7 that have developed with the VA medical centers so
8 far as getting other veterans into healthcare
9 systems. For instance, we've had people that got
10 into--they've been getting treated with--because
11 of their lack of health care with the VA--at St.
12 Luke's Hospital, Harlem Hospital, and believe it
13 or not, Columbia Presbyterian, who--who we have a
14 very good relationship working with them,
15 surprisingly. What they've done in the past, if
16 they have a veteran that came in on an emergency
17 basis they would stabilize the individual, give us
18 a call, and thereafter we would make the
19 preparations to get them transferred over into a
20 VA hospital if they--if they needed further
21 services.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
23 much Mr. Daniel, and thank you again for what you
24 are doing and what your organization, you know, is
25 doing for the veterans. Let me acknowledge that

2 we are being adjourned by Council Member Nelson.

3 I don't know if--also, we are being joined by
4 Council Member Brewer. And Council Member Nelson?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Do you have
7 any question?

8 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Can I just
9 ask, Council Member--

10 COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Sure.

11 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: --Nelson,
12 there is another committee that was supposed to
13 start in here and take a vote a few minutes ago,
14 so if we can just expedite this a little bit just--
15 -

16 COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Sure

17 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: --- - been
18 running late today.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Happens to
20 be my committee, so I'm right there with you with
21 this. No, I just want to congratulate the
22 gentleman speaking and thank him, and all the
23 veterans, as well. We flap our lips a lot about
24 how we owe veterans a great deal, and in fact they
25 do not get all that they should be getting,

2 considering what they gave to the country. So I
3 thank Councilman Fidler and the Chairs for
4 conducting this hearing today and I, of course,
5 have signed on to these two resos. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.
7 Council Member Brewer?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Hmm?

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Do you have
10 any question?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Huh-uh.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Any of my
13 colleagues, do you have any questions? So, Mr.
14 Daniel, again, thank you so much. Thank you very
15 much. I think that it is very important that we
16 continue to work together to better serve our
17 veteran and to make sure that we create the proper
18 services for them. And again, I commend you. I
19 congratulate you for what you're doing and what
20 your organization is doing. So it seem that we
21 don't have any other witness and I want to call my
22 co-chair, Council Member Mendez.

23 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: Okay, we're
24 going to lay this hearing over for a vote on a day
25 to be determined, so I want to thank everyone for

2 being here, and you can gavel out.

3 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
4 much. Thank you. Thank you. Oh, did I give you
5 back the sheet?

6 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: I took it
7 back.

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.
9 Thank you very much. Okay.

10 CHAIRPERSON MENDEZ: - - send them
11 upstairs.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes, I know.
13 I know. I know.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Shanti Navarre, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Shanti Navarre', written over a horizontal line.

Signature_____

Date November 22, 2010_____