

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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March 25, 2010  
Start: 10:54 am  
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HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
JOEL RIVERA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Joel Rivera  
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.  
Inez E. Dickens  
Erik Martin Dilan  
Lewis A. Fidler  
Robert Jackson  
James Vacca  
Albert Vann  
Karen Koslowitz  
James S. Oddo  
Christine C. Quinn  
Deborah Rose  
Vincent Ignizio

## A P P E A R A N C E S

David Yassky  
Chair-elect  
Taxi and Limousine Commission

Michael J. Ryan  
Board of Elections

Bill Lindauer  
New York Taxi Workers Alliance

Ethan Gerber  
Greater New York Taxi Association

2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Good morning  
3 ladies and gentlemen and welcome to the Committee  
4 on Rules, Privileges and Elections. My name is  
5 Joel Rivera and I am the chair of the committee.

6 Before we begin, let me just  
7 introduce my colleagues who are here with us  
8 today. We have Council Member Robert Jackson to  
9 my left. We have Council Member Erik Dilan. We  
10 have Council Member Karen Koslowitz. We have the  
11 Minority Leader Council Member Jimmy Oddo. We  
12 have Council Member Debbie Rose joining us here as  
13 well. Council Member Vacca is in the next room.  
14 We have members on their way up.

15 Today the Rule Committee will be  
16 considering the following matters: the appointment  
17 of our former colleague, former Council Member  
18 David Yassky as chair of the Taxi and Limousine  
19 Commission, and the appointment of Michael J. Ryan  
20 to the Board of Elections.

21 Mr. Yassky is being considered for  
22 appointment by the Mayor with the advice and  
23 consent of the Council. As chair of the TLC  
24 Commission if Mr. Yassky, a resident of Brooklyn,  
25 receives the advice and consent of the Council, he

2 will replace Matthew Daus, who has been sitting as  
3 a holdover since January 31, 2010 and serve the  
4 remainder of a seven-year term that expires on  
5 January 31, 2017.

6 Mr. Ryan, a resident of Richmond  
7 County, is being considered for appointment as the  
8 Democratic Commissioner from Richmond County. He  
9 will fill the vacant position previously held by  
10 James Sampel. His appointment is for the  
11 remainder of a four-year term that began on  
12 January 1, 2009 and ends December 31, 2012. For  
13 the record, his certificate for a party  
14 recommendation was properly formatted and  
15 submitted.

16 I will briefly explain the  
17 functions of the TLC. The TLC consists of nine  
18 members appointed by the Mayor, all with the  
19 advice and consent of the Council.

20 Five of said members, one resident  
21 from each of the five boroughs of the City, are  
22 recommended for appointment by a majority vote of  
23 the Council Members of the respective borough.  
24 Commission members are appointed for terms of  
25 seven years, and can serve until the appointment

2 and qualification of a successor. Vacancies,  
3 other than those that occur at the expiration of a  
4 term, shall be filled for the unexpired term. The  
5 Mayor may remove any such member for cause, upon  
6 stated charges.

7 The Mayor designates one member of  
8 the commission to act as the Chairperson and Chief  
9 Executive Officer. The Chairperson shall have  
10 charge of the organization of his/her office and  
11 have authority to employ, assign and superintend  
12 the duties of such officers and employees as may  
13 be necessary to carry out the provisions of  
14 Chapter 65 of the Charter.

15 The Charter provides that the  
16 Chairperson shall devote his/her full time to this  
17 position and, as such, receive compensation as set  
18 by the Mayor. The Chair currently receives  
19 \$192,198 annually. Other members of the TLC are  
20 not entitled to compensation.

21 The committee is responsible for  
22 the continuance, further development and  
23 improvement of the TLC service in the city. It  
24 shall be the further purpose of the commission  
25 consistent with the promotion and protection of

2 the public comfort and convenience to adopt and  
3 establish an overall public transportation policy  
4 governing taxi, coach, limousine and wheelchair  
5 accessible van services as it related to the  
6 overall public transportation network of the city.

7 The commission is also responsible  
8 for establishing certain rates and standards and  
9 criteria for the licensing of vehicles, drivers  
10 and chauffeurs, owners and operators engaged in  
11 such services and for providing authorization to  
12 persons to operate commuter van services within  
13 the city. Welcome, Mr. Yassky, will you please  
14 raise your right had and be sworn in?

15 FEMALE VOICE: Do you swear or  
16 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
17 nothing but the truth?

18 DAVID YASSKY: Yes, I do.

19 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Now, Mr. Ryan,  
20 I will briefly describe the functions of the Board  
21 of Elections. The Board of Elections consists of  
22 ten commissioners, two from each of the City's  
23 five counties, who are directly appointed by the  
24 New York City Council. Not more than two  
25 commissioners shall be registered voters of the

2 same county. Each commissioner serves a term of  
3 four years or until a successor is appointed.

4 Commissioners shall be registered voters from each  
5 of the major parties in the county for which they  
6 are appointed.

7 The board and its commissioners are  
8 responsible for the maintenance and administration  
9 of voting records and elections. The board also  
10 exercises quasi-judicial powers by conducting  
11 hearings to validate nominating petitions of  
12 candidates for nomination to elective office.

13 The board is required to make an  
14 annual report of its affairs and proceedings to  
15 the New York City Council once every twelve months  
16 and no later than the last day of January in any  
17 year.

18 The commissioners receive a \$300  
19 per-diem for each day's attendance at meetings of  
20 the board or any of its committees, with a maximum  
21 of \$30,000 per year. Welcome, Mr. Ryan, will you  
22 also please raise your right hand and be sworn in.

23 FEMALE VOICE: Do you swear or  
24 affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and  
25 nothing but the truth?

2 MICHAEL J. RYAN: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Perfect. Do  
4 we have any opening statements from either Mr.  
5 Yassky or Mr. Ryan?

6 DAVID YASSKY: I have a lengthy  
7 statement. Good morning Chairman Rivera and  
8 members of the Rules Committee and Council Member  
9 Vacca as well, the chairman of the Transportation  
10 Committee.

11 My name, as you know, is David  
12 Yassky and I am here as nominee for the position  
13 of Chair of the Taxi and Limousine Commission. I  
14 am especially honored to appear before this body,  
15 and at the outset I would like to thank you Mr.  
16 Chairman and this Committee and Speaker Quinn for  
17 hearing this nomination so expeditiously.

18 Mr. Chairman, you set forth the  
19 core functions of the TLC. The Taxi and Limousine  
20 Commission regulates the entire for-hire vehicle  
21 industry, not just the Yellow cabs, which often  
22 get the bulk of the public attention, but livery  
23 cars, the corporate account vehicles, the entire  
24 for-hire vehicle industry.

25 This is a critical part of the

2 City's transportation network. This industry  
3 transports 1.2 million New Yorkers and visitors  
4 every day, and employs more than 100,000 workers.

5 The mission of the TLC is to ensure  
6 that the industry is safe and efficient, that it  
7 delivers good value and is accessible to all  
8 passengers, that it provides fair compensation and  
9 reasonable working conditions for drivers, that it  
10 offers genuine opportunity for entrepreneurs and  
11 small businesses, and that it is financially  
12 healthy so as to be able to support these  
13 outcomes.

14 Under the leadership of Mayor  
15 Bloomberg and Chairman Matt Daus, the TLC has  
16 effected numerous service improvements over the  
17 past eight years. I will mention only a few.  
18 Yellow cabs now accept credit cards, an advance  
19 that has proved enormously popular with riders.

20 New rules prohibiting driver  
21 distractions such as cell phone use are making cab  
22 rides safer. A comprehensive reform of livery car  
23 regulation will enhance safety and customer  
24 service in that important segment of the industry.  
25 Nearly a quarter of the taxi fleet is composed of

2 fuel-efficient hybrid cars. The innovative pilot  
3 program for group rides in taxicabs has the  
4 potential to both reduce the cost for passengers  
5 and increase driver earnings.

6 This is less flashy, but to me of  
7 particular importance, the TLC's own performance  
8 has improved markedly, with shorter wait times for  
9 drivers at licensing and inspection facilities

10 Of course there is much to be done.  
11 I believe that the industry now provides a high  
12 level of service to its passengers, but we cannot  
13 rest content or take it for granted, we must  
14 continually strive for improvement.

15 This is not the time to set forth a  
16 detailed agenda, but I do want to outline some of  
17 the areas that I intend for the TLC to focus on  
18 during my tenure. I will try and keep my remarks  
19 to under half an hour.

20 First, it is time for the TLC to  
21 plan for the next generation of yellow cabs. With  
22 its bold "Taxi of Tomorrow" initiative, the TLC  
23 has sought to drive change rather than simply  
24 respond to it. The goal is to ensure that yellow  
25 cabs continue to perform their vital function

2 while improving upon their comfort, fuel  
3 efficiency and accessibility to all users.

4 Even while the "Taxi of Tomorrow"  
5 process unfolds, I will be pushing forward on  
6 these goals. As you know, the Council took an  
7 important step toward making the taxi fleet  
8 accessible to wheelchair-using passengers by  
9 mandating the introduction of a small number of  
10 wheelchair-accessible cabs. And the TLC has taken  
11 another important step with its dispatch pilot  
12 program. This pilot program should tell us a lot  
13 about what works and what doesn't, and I will  
14 carefully evaluate its results to determine what  
15 next steps should be taken.

16 Another immediate priority will be  
17 to reassure passengers that they will not be  
18 overcharged in taxicabs. As I am sure you were, I  
19 was very distressed when I learned that some  
20 drivers have used the out-of-City rate to  
21 overcharge passengers on in-City trips. The TLC  
22 is now working to ascertain how widespread this  
23 practice has been. The staff is now in the  
24 process of analyzing the data to determine how  
25 many of the instances in which the out-of-City

2 rate was applied are likely to have been  
3 inadvertent errors and how many are likely to have  
4 been deliberate overcharges.

5 I know the Council's Transportation  
6 Committee under Chairman Vacca has already  
7 scheduled a hearing on this topic, and that will  
8 be an opportunity to go through the facts in  
9 detail. I can say here that I am determined to  
10 see that the practice is completely eliminated,  
11 and in fact, the TLC has already taken action to  
12 alert passengers if a driver activates the out-of-  
13 town rate during their trip.

14 We must also hold drivers who  
15 committed deliberate overcharges accountable. We  
16 will not act precipitously, but I do intend to  
17 move swiftly to begin appropriate enforcement  
18 proceedings where the evidence indicates driver  
19 misconduct.

20 Beyond this particular practice, I  
21 want to assure the Council and your constituents  
22 that I am committed to tough enforcement of TLC  
23 rules guaranteeing passengers fair and consistent  
24 pricing.

25 The rate code episode also points

2 to another priority, which is greater use of data  
3 both in enforcement and in planning. Beginning a  
4 little over two years ago, when the TLC mandated  
5 the use of in-vehicle consoles that employ GPS to  
6 record each trip, the TLC has collected a great  
7 deal of data on taxicab usage.

8 As has been reported, it was this  
9 data that enabled the TLC to find other instances  
10 of rate-code overcharging after a passenger  
11 complaint brought the first instance to light. I  
12 will direct the TLC staff to search for other  
13 opportunities to use data analysis to make its  
14 enforcement operations more efficient and  
15 effective.

16 Again, this is not an exhaustive  
17 agenda for the TLC, but rather the beginnings of  
18 one. In addition to these specific policy points,  
19 I want to make a couple of larger points about the  
20 perspective I hope to bring to the agency.

21 First, I believe the TLC must  
22 attend to all parts of the industry it regulates,  
23 and ensure that the industry serves all parts of  
24 the City effectively. Having represented for  
25 eight years a district in Brooklyn, I know that

2 many residents of the city, particularly outside  
3 the core business district of Manhattan and the  
4 immediately adjacent neighborhoods feel that the  
5 yellow cab service is concentrated there and in  
6 fact it is.

7           For residents in boroughs outside  
8 Manhattan and in northern Manhattan, it's the  
9 livery car service that is the most reliable form  
10 of for-hire transportation. So that means that if  
11 the TLC is going to make sure that all New Yorkers  
12 are served, we have to make sure we focus not just  
13 on yellow cabs but on livery service as well.

14           The TLC has started down this road  
15 with a new set of rules that I mentioned earlier  
16 that are focused on livery cars. I will give that  
17 focus to make sure that this is an agency that  
18 really serves all parts of the city.

19           Second, I understand that the  
20 customers of the TLC include not only the  
21 passengers, New Yorkers and visitors alike, and  
22 not only its industry partners, but also and  
23 crucially the drivers who are the industry's core  
24 workforce. As Chairman, I will be looking  
25 actively for opportunities to protect and enhance

2 the welfare of this workforce.

3 Third, if the Council does confirm  
4 my nomination, I will be mindful that the impact  
5 of TLC policies often extends beyond New York  
6 City. Our for-hire vehicle industry is widely  
7 recognized as one of the world's finest and most  
8 sophisticated, and the TLC itself is a world  
9 leader in regulating this type of business.

10 Other cities often wait for New  
11 York's TLC to try new ideas, and then follow suit  
12 if they work. I read recently, for example, that  
13 San Francisco, after New York, at the instigation  
14 of the Council, implemented a program to get more  
15 of the cabs to be fuel efficient hybrids. San  
16 Francisco followed suit and now they've actually  
17 surpassed us. So we've got to kind of leapfrog  
18 them and regain our place as the world leader.

19 Under Mayor Bloomberg and Chairman  
20 Daus, the stature of the TLC has even increased,  
21 and I will strive to continue this record of  
22 accomplishment.

23 I will also be mindful that, in  
24 addition to playing its crucial function in our  
25 overall transportation network, the taxicab

2 industry also have a symbolic importance. The  
3 yellow taxi is a world recognized emblem of the  
4 City's 24-7 energy and entrepreneurial culture.  
5 The TLC is a steward of this icon, and has the  
6 opportunity to help define the values it will  
7 represent over the coming years. I would relish  
8 that opportunity. I would relish that opportunity  
9 and I ask you to give that to me.

10 Finally, I will of course work  
11 closely with the Council and in particular with  
12 the Transportation Committee and Chairman Vacca,  
13 for whom I have great respect.

14 I am happy to answer any questions,  
15 Mr. Chairman. Do we have any questions from the  
16 committee? Council Member Minority Leader Jimmy  
17 Oddo has a question.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Mr. Chairman,  
19 thank you. I'm not sure if you heard, Mr.  
20 Chairman, but Council Members Rose and Ignizio and  
21 I were having some fun with our colleague and we  
22 wish David well. I simply would make one request,  
23 David. That is when you get settled in at the  
24 invitation of Council Member Rose, Ignizio and I,  
25 if you can come and spend some time with us in

2 Staten Island. The livery industry is critically  
3 important to our borough because essentially, as  
4 you know, we have no mass transit system.

5 So for a lot of our seniors in  
6 particular, their access to doctors, their access  
7 to supermarkets, et cetera, is through the livery  
8 industry. We have forged over the years a good  
9 working relationship and helped facilitate a  
10 relationship between the livery companies and the  
11 TLC, but we would love the opportunity to host you  
12 for a lunch perhaps with the borough president and  
13 just go over some of the unique issues that we  
14 have in our borough.

15 DAVID YASSKY: The short answer is  
16 done. I look forward to that. I know that the  
17 TLC has already begun a process to put a livery  
18 stand at the ferry terminal, but I have no doubt  
19 that there is a lot the TLC can and should be  
20 doing. I look forward to getting your advice and  
21 counsel.

22 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you. We  
23 also have a question from Council Member Jackson.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Thank you,  
25 Mr. Chair. Let me just say to our former

2 colleague David Yassky, I am pleased on your  
3 recommendation for appointment to the Taxi and  
4 Limousine Commission as the chair by Mayor  
5 Bloomberg. Obviously when you've worked with  
6 someone for eight years, you get to know them.

7 I would say that we have a very  
8 good working relationship, agreeing on most things  
9 and disagreeing on very few things. But overall,  
10 I think that you will do a good job and I only  
11 expect that from you knowing who you are.

12 My three issues that I have, as you  
13 indicated in your statements about the limousines,  
14 the car services which northern Manhattan mainly  
15 depends. Obviously yellow cabs are available but  
16 you don't really see them up in northern  
17 Manhattan. You see very few and those that you do  
18 see are basically heading back downtown.

19 Obviously that's how the people in  
20 northern Manhattan get around. So I just want you  
21 to be aware of that and obviously you've been in  
22 northern Manhattan so you are. But with our  
23 colleagues in northern Manhattan, we would like to  
24 invite you to have like a town hall meeting with  
25 all of the members of the public and car services

2 owners in order to talk to them and for them to  
3 have an opportunity to meet you as the new chair  
4 once you're appointed.

5 I know that you were a leader in  
6 the Council in trying to move forward with the  
7 hybrid taxi cabs. Obviously some issue and  
8 concern is about the size of them, especially for  
9 individuals that have wheelchairs. So that's an  
10 issue of constituents not only of mine but all  
11 over the city.

12 So I just think that we need to be  
13 cognizant overall that the system itself needs to  
14 be made totally accessible for all and not just  
15 calling 311 in order to get several cabs that are  
16 designated for handicap accessibility. More  
17 specifically, a constituent of mine, we had a  
18 Dominican independence heritage celebration in  
19 northern Manhattan.

20 He left and approximately 20  
21 minutes to 30 minutes later when I left, he was  
22 still waiting outside for a yellow cab that has  
23 wheelchair accessible to come. He had called.  
24 Before I left and loaded my car, it did arrive.  
25 So it did arrive obviously, but that's an issue.

2 Luckily it wasn't freezing out, it wasn't raining  
3 and he was out waiting. So accessibility for all  
4 is extremely important.

5 So with that, my former colleague,  
6 I still consider you a colleague of ours, we wish  
7 you well and I look forward to you coming to a  
8 town hall meeting to introduce yourself to the  
9 people of northern Manhattan. Thank you, Mr.  
10 Chair.

11 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very  
12 much. We also have a question from Council Member  
13 Jimmy Vacca.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: It's really  
15 not a question. I want to welcome you and tell  
16 you that I'm honored to support you. The mayor  
17 has made a very wise selection. I have a list in  
18 my office, so you will get to the list once you  
19 are confirmed.

20 I appreciate you being who you are.  
21 It was my pleasure with Chairman Jackson to serve  
22 with you on the task force where we explored  
23 school governance. But also sitting right behind  
24 for four years and knowing who you are, this is a  
25 great fit for you.

2 I do want to publicly mention my  
3 concern about the so-called scam that you alluded  
4 to in your testimony and the fact that that  
5 investigation has to be concluded expeditiously.  
6 If there was a scam within the taxi industry,  
7 certainly we want to know.

8 But also, if there was not a scam,  
9 we have to know. If there was not a scam, then  
10 people's reputations are questioned. It's hard  
11 for an industry or for an individual who was  
12 wrongfully accused to get back their reputation.  
13 Yet, reputation means everything to a person.

14 So I hope among other things you  
15 may think are first, I hope that that is first  
16 because it's first with me at this point. Being  
17 given conflicted information about something so  
18 serious to me requires that we have an immediate  
19 resolution.

20 On a mostly positive note, there is  
21 no question that you being such a capable person  
22 and insightful person continuing in service to the  
23 city of New York is a very positive thing for our  
24 city. I join my colleagues in supporting your  
25 nomination.

2 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you. We  
3 also have a question from Council Member Karen  
4 Koslowitz.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: It's not  
6 a question. I just want to say that I didn't have  
7 the privilege of working with you before, but I  
8 certainly look forward to working with you now.  
9 There's a lot of work to be done in my district  
10 also. I wish you the best of luck.

11 DAVID YASSKY: Right.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Are there any  
13 other questions from members? We actually have  
14 two people who wanted to come testimony. We have  
15 Bill Lindauer from the New York Taxi Workers  
16 Alliance. You can follow the sergeant-at-arms and  
17 he'll designate which chair for you to sit in and  
18 ask your questions. We also have Ethan Gerber who  
19 will follow him. Mr. Lindauer, just state your  
20 name for the record and you may proceed with your  
21 testimony.

22 BILL LINDAUER: My name is Bill  
23 Lindauer. I'm with the New York Taxi Workers  
24 Alliance. We represent over 12,000 yellow cab  
25 drivers. This is a momentous occasion, one of

2 relief and joy. The big bad wolf is dead.

3 Matthew Daus single-handedly ushered in an era of  
4 an excess of evil, a repressive, misguided,  
5 incompetent regime. Curly, Larry and Moe are  
6 finally gone.

7                   It was Matthews Daus' delusional  
8 thinking and failure to properly evaluate an  
9 unnecessary, unreliable technology that cost  
10 drivers thousands of dollars every year and now  
11 their entire reputations. This is a shameful  
12 legacy. Drivers want the American dream, not the  
13 American scheme.

14                   But we have a new chairman-  
15 designate, Mr. Yassky. He starts off with a  
16 tabular roster. I believe he will serve with  
17 great distinction. He's proven to be a dedicated  
18 public servant of uncommon intelligence and  
19 decency and understanding. Let's stop the TLC  
20 jabberwocky. Let's stop malice in taxi land.

21                   My name Bill Lindauer and I approve  
22 of this message.

23                   CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very  
24 much, Mr. Lindauer. Ethan Gerber, just state your  
25 name for the record and you may proceed.

2 ETHAN GERBER: My name is Ethan  
3 Gerber. I'm from the Greater New York Taxi  
4 Association. GNYTA is a progressive owners  
5 association. Its members represent the majority  
6 of owners of hybrid and accessible taxis in New  
7 York City.

8 Several years ago our members had  
9 the vision to see clean air taxis and hybrid taxis  
10 in particular as an important step in achieving a  
11 sustainable City and industry. They invested  
12 millions of dollars in clean air taxi medallions.  
13 Even though the benefits of cleaner air and more  
14 efficient transportation should have been obvious  
15 to everyone they were only confronted with a  
16 bureaucratic brick wall when they tried to put  
17 hybrid taxis on the road.

18 Then Council Member David Yassky  
19 and members of this Council shared our vision. He  
20 was highly instrumental in pushing for their  
21 acceptance by the Taxi and Limousine Commission.  
22 He went further by also introducing legislation  
23 that made the use of clean air taxis a more  
24 attractive alternative for taxi operators. The  
25 benefits of cleaner air and more efficient

2 transportation are now clear to everyone.

3 GNYTA is grateful to David Yassky  
4 for spearheading the effort for government  
5 acceptance of hybrid taxis and for helping make it  
6 easier for taxi operators to afford these more  
7 expensive vehicles at no cost to the City or to  
8 the taxpayer.

9 GNYTA endorses Mayor Bloomberg'S  
10 nomination of David Yassky to be a member of the  
11 New York City Taxi and Limousine Commission and  
12 the Mayor's intention to then designate him as the  
13 next Chair of that commission. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Do you approve  
15 the message?

16 ETHAN GERBER: I approve my  
17 message, yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I just wanted  
19 to confirm that. Do we have anyone else here that  
20 wants to provide testimony for Mr. Yassky's  
21 appointment? Seeing none, now we'll go on to Mr.  
22 Ryan. Do you have an opening statement?

23 MICHAEL J. RYAN: Briefly, I would  
24 like to thank Committee Chair Rivera and the  
25 members of the committee, as well as the remaining

2 City Council persons that are in the room with us.

3 I believe that the right to vote in  
4 America is a sacred public trust. That right  
5 without an effective administration of the voting  
6 process and giving the voters the ability to vote  
7 is hallowed. If approved, I take the appointment  
8 to the Board of Elections very seriously.

9 I also recognize that if approved I  
10 will be coming in at a very critical time as we're  
11 about to roll out brand new voting machines. Our  
12 mission will be to make the voters both confident  
13 and comfortable in their use of the new machines,  
14 particularly in light of the fact that it is a  
15 gubernatorial election year when the voting  
16 attendance tends to be higher.

17 With that having been said, I look  
18 forward to working with the City Council moving  
19 forward. For those of you who have had an  
20 opportunity to review the materials that have been  
21 submitted, I have a pretty good background in  
22 government.

23 I understand how it works, but I  
24 also understand that you have to work every day to  
25 make sure you make it a little better tomorrow. I

2 look forward to working with the City Council  
3 moving forward. If anyone has any questions of  
4 me, I'll be happy to answer them.

5 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Minority  
6 Leader Jimmy Oddo.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Not a  
8 question, just a statement again, Mr. Chairman.  
9 If you look for a place in this country where  
10 there is a bipartisan spirit, I think Staten  
11 Island is the epitome of it. Whether it's the  
12 elected officials or the voters themselves who  
13 often cross party lines, Republicans and Democrats  
14 get along. I'm in a different party than Mr.  
15 Ryan, but I applaud the Democratic Party on Staten  
16 Island for his selection.

17 This is not the first time he's  
18 been in this chamber. He has appeared here on  
19 behalf of various agencies over the years. I've  
20 known Mike probably since we were about 9 or 10-  
21 years-old. I want to put that on the record. I  
22 consider him a friend. But that's really not  
23 germane to this process.

24 I think he's a very talented guy.  
25 For this position I think the most important thing

2 is the level of integrity. I think he is held in  
3 high regard in the Bar on Staten Island and the  
4 greater Staten Island community. This Republican  
5 applauds the selection made by my colleagues on  
6 Staten Island.

7 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: There you go,  
8 you have bipartisan support for your nomination.

9 MICHAEL J. RYAN: Thank you,  
10 Council Member.

11 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: We have  
12 Council Member Debbie Rose, who is also a good  
13 advocate.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Mr. Chair, I  
15 am really pleased to be here today. First of all,  
16 it's the first time that I'm a part of a  
17 confirmation for any position in my district.  
18 It's at a time when I can sit here very proudly  
19 and know the person who is being confirmed for  
20 this position.

21 I know Mike Ryan as a hard worker,  
22 a person who has integrity. Just to second what  
23 Council Member Oddo said, he does have high  
24 integrity but he also understands the  
25 constituencies on Staten Island and the need for

2 accessibility and transparency, not of their  
3 individual vote but of the operation of the Board  
4 of Elections. I can't think of a better choice  
5 than Mike Ryan to fill the vacancy left by Mr.  
6 Sampel who was highly revered.

7 Mike is a friend and he's also  
8 someone who understands all of the constituencies  
9 on Staten Island. I'd like to congratulate him  
10 and actually Staten Island for having the  
11 foresight to appoint him. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very  
13 much. Are there any other questions or statements  
14 from colleagues? Seeing none, at this point in  
15 time I'll ask the committee clerk to call the  
16 roll.

17 WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin,  
18 Committee Clerk, roll calling the Committee on  
19 Rules, Privileges and Elections. Council Member  
20 Rivera?

21 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: I obviously  
22 vote aye and I want to congratulate both of you  
23 individuals because you are taking on an endeavor  
24 that's extremely in these respective paths in the  
25 city of New York. One with making sure the riders

2 in the city have a safe and enjoyable experience  
3 while getting to and from location to location and  
4 that can possibly be the voting booth. To the  
5 voters of the city of New York, like you said,  
6 confidence in the voting system is extremely  
7 important and the integrity and transparency in  
8 the process itself. Obviously with the Board of  
9 Elections there's a fine team there that is doing  
10 a phenomenal job. Just follow J.C. Polanco and  
11 you'll be doing just fine. Congratulations Mr.  
12 Ryan and congratulations Mr. Yassky.

13 DAVID YASSKY: Thank you very much.

14 WILLIAM MARTIN: Dilan?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER DILAN: Mr.

16 Chairman, I'd like a moment to explain my vote. I  
17 just want to take a moment to attempt to do  
18 something that I'm not too good at. I want to  
19 follow my colleague Jimmy Oddo at an attempt at  
20 shtick. Jimmy, as we know, is the best at it  
21 here, but I'll give it a shot.

22 Before I begin that, I want to  
23 congratulate both nominees and just say after what  
24 I'm about to say, I do intend to vote yes. So I  
25 just want them both to relax.

2 To my colleague David Yassky, I  
3 still consider you a colleague, but I was just  
4 sitting just thinking to myself. At about this  
5 time last year you would have loved all these  
6 invitations to attend Council Members' districts  
7 and probably would have been there already.

8 I listened to your testimony about  
9 customer safety with mobile phones and I just only  
10 hope you can lead by example of course. He knows  
11 what that means. I don't know if the rest of you  
12 get it.

13 Quite sincerely, I said at the  
14 beginning I wasn't as good at shtick as Jimmy  
15 Oddo, so I'll stop here because if I go any  
16 further I'll ruin it. I think David will be an  
17 excellent member of the TLC. After working eight  
18 years with him, I think there is no better  
19 appointment. I'm kind of disappointed that David  
20 Yassky can no longer throw stones at the  
21 administration anymore. He's become a part of the  
22 administration.

23 David, I'll say one thing, I hope  
24 to never see you in my district because that means  
25 I have a problem with taxis and I don't have any

2 problems right now, so here's to never seeing you  
3 again. With that, Mr. Chairman, I vote aye.

4 WILLIAM MARTIN: Jackson?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: First, let  
6 me congratulate our former colleague David Yassky  
7 and Mr. Ryan. I'm sure based on what was said and  
8 based on what I've read that you both will do a  
9 great job. But let me give you a piece of advice  
10 that I gave to my two nephews that are public  
11 servants. One is a New York City police officer  
12 in Brooklyn and another one works for the NYPD as  
13 a traffic enforcement agent.

14 To my nephew who's a traffic  
15 enforcement agent, I said to him, treat people  
16 like you wanted to be treating, knowing how  
17 difficult it is to find a parking space in New  
18 York City. So if someone is over by this much,  
19 don't give them a ticket. But if they're over  
20 this much, that's a different story.

21 To my nephew who is a police  
22 officer, I said to him, treat people like you want  
23 them to treat your mother, your father, your  
24 sister, your brother, your child. That's how I  
25 want you to handle your business on behalf of New

2 Yorkers, knowing that that average New Yorker is  
3 struggling and the average New Yorker is also cab  
4 drivers. So, please understand that in your  
5 deliberations either at the Taxi and Limousine  
6 Commission, or at the Board of Elections, please  
7 understand. Carry that message throughout your  
8 deliberations on behalf of the people of New York  
9 City. Congratulations to both of you. Thank you.  
10 And I vote aye on all.

11 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vacca?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Commissioner  
13 Ryan, I am pleased to vote for you. When I hear  
14 Council Member Rose and Council Member Oddo speak  
15 of your integrity I really don't need to ask  
16 anything else. It speaks volumes of you. I know  
17 you'll do a good job.

18 With Commissioner Yassky, as I  
19 indicated, it's my pleasure. I vote yes on both  
20 appointments.

21 WILLIAM MARTIN: Speaker Quinn?

22 SPEAKER QUINN: Well I was for Ryan  
23 until I heard that Oddo is a friend. I need to go  
24 down and rethink things. I wish you the best of  
25 luck, sir.

2 David, think of all the new torture  
3 that lies ahead. I'm only kidding, kind of. We  
4 are very lucky to have you continuing on in public  
5 service in New York City.

6 I know issues of transportation are  
7 ones that are near and dear to your heart. Issues  
8 of how to make our taxi fleet greener and more  
9 accommodating and accessible to disabled people  
10 are something you spent a lot of time thinking,  
11 talking, annoying us about. No, I'm only kidding.  
12 They are things you've taken very, very seriously  
13 and given a lot of attention during your years on  
14 the Council.

15 I know that thought and attention  
16 and commitment will reap tremendous benefits for  
17 the TLC but most importantly for the city of New  
18 York. So we are very lucky to have somebody of  
19 your stature and quality and intelligence taking  
20 over this position.

21 So I wish you the best of luck but  
22 I don't have to because I know you're going to do  
23 a great job for the city of New York. I vote aye  
24 on all.

25 DAVID YASSKY: Thank you.

2 WILLIAM MARTIN: Koslowitz?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I gladly  
4 vote aye on both appointments.

5 WILLIAM MARTIN: Oddo?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Madame  
7 Speaker, you'll be happy to know that the torture  
8 already has started. I just think that New York  
9 City government gets a little bit better with  
10 these two appointments, so proudly vote yes on  
11 both.

12 WILLIAM MARTIN: Comrie?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Permission  
14 to explain my vote?

15 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Of course.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: I want to  
17 congratulate both of the gentlemen on deciding to  
18 serve and continuing to stay in public services.  
19 Mike Ryan, it's good to know that there is another  
20 person with integrity along with the two great  
21 Council Members that are sitting on either side of  
22 me. Clearly, I want to welcome you to the Board  
23 of Elections and also pray for you as well. It's  
24 not an easy job.

25 Mr. Yassky, you know, you and I

2 have had a great relationship over the last eight  
3 years. I worked with you on a lot of items and a  
4 lot of bills. I came in late, so you and I need  
5 to have an extensive discussion about vans and the  
6 issues with vans. Not Al Vann, the van industry.  
7 Never Al Vann, but the van industry.

8 They are an industry that we really  
9 need to take a good hard look at that provides  
10 services in emergencies really need to be brought  
11 into the 21st century. I know that you are the  
12 person that will sit down and have those open  
13 discussions. You've always been a person that has  
14 been willing to engage and establish and create  
15 new opportunities.

16 So I look forward to working with  
17 you as TLC commissioner. I'm glad that you've  
18 decided to continue to be around so we can harass  
19 you as well. With that I gladly vote aye on both.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: Fidler?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I don't  
22 know. I'm reading this red book stuff on Mr.  
23 Yassky here and I see you're a serial mobile phone  
24 user. It raises great concern. In all  
25 seriousness, it's my pleasure to vote for both of

2 these gentlemen, Mr. Ryan and Council Member  
3 Yassky, Commissioner Yassky, Chairman Yassky, what  
4 is it now?

5 I particularly look forward to  
6 having someone who is an innovative thinker at an  
7 agency that is monitoring and overseeing an  
8 industry that evolved at a time and in a place  
9 that may not be so suitable to be functioning in  
10 the way it does today in our city. There are so  
11 many models for how the taxi is run other places  
12 that we might look at that might reduce  
13 congestion, might reduce air pollution and might  
14 be more user friendly. To have an innovative at  
15 the head of that agency I think is very, very  
16 welcome. I am happy for you and I'm happy to vote  
17 for both of these gentlemen. I vote aye.

18 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vann?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Moving along.  
20 I vote aye on both of these gentlemen.  
21 Congratulations to both of you.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN: Dickens?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you  
24 so much, Mr. Chair. Congratulations to both  
25 appointees. I trust that the former Council

2 Member will do a phenomenal job just as he did  
3 here at the City Council. And although Mr. Ryan,  
4 I'm not as knowledgeable about you, I do trust  
5 that you will do the best job for the public as  
6 possible. So I vote aye on both.

7 WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote of 11 in  
8 the affirmative, zero in the negative and no  
9 abstentions, both items are adopted. Members  
10 please sign the committee reports. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: Thank you very  
12 much. You both have a mandate to your positions.  
13 Good luck and Godspeed.

14 MICHAEL J. RYAN: Thank you.

15 DAVID YASSKY: Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRPERSON RIVERA: This meeting  
17 is adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Donna Hintze 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.



Signature\_

Date April 8, 2010