

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION

-----X

November 23, 2009

Start: 1:25 pm

Recess: 3:00 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
SIMCHA FELDER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Kenneth Mitchell
Maria del Carmen Arroyo
Larry B. Seabrook

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Jeremy Laufer
District Manager
Community Board 7

Jeff Kay
Director
Mayor's Office of Operations

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION

3

MALE VOICE: Can I ask who--

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: John Schultz?

Who's John Schultz? What are you here testifying--
-

[Pause]

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Are you here
for an education hearing?

MALE VOICE 3: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: That's across
the street, which floor is that on?

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah, Ralph,
give him--

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah, you want
to give him his... Is that Jeremy Laufer
[phonetic]? Does that--

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Hi Jeremy.

[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Are you here
on the SCOUT program?

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

JEREMY LAUFER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Okay. I just..., so we're going to allow you testify first.

[Off mic]

[Pause]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: You don't have to. Whenever you're ready. Ralph, are you ready?

RALPH: Yes, sir [off mic].

[Long pause]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Jeremy.

JEREMY LAUFER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Give Ralph your testimony 'cause I don't want to get into trouble with him, all right? And whenever you're ready, we're ready.

Hi, my name is Councilman Simcha Felder, the Chair of the Sanitation and Waste Management Committee, and we are about to start the hearing, and, as has been the tradition in this committee, any time that we have an issue which is not a piece of new legislation, we have one panel from the public speak first and today Jeremy Laufer from Community Board 7 in Brooklyn will be our first witness. And whenever you're

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

ready, we're ready.

JEREMY LAUFER: Thank you. Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for this opportunity to share our experiences with this Committee concerning our more than 30 year effort to reduce the number of street sweeping days in a large portion of the Sunset Park community.

Community Board 7 and the Sunset Park community has three distinct street sweeping regulations within Sunset Park--our industrial area generally west of 3rd Avenue has midnight sweeping regulations; the area west of 6th Avenue has two day a week regulations, one day per side of the street; and the area between 3rd and 6th Avenues is four a day a week street sweeping regulations, two days per side. All three of these areas are located within sections 3 and 4 of BK 7.

In the past, we have been told by Sanitation that they will not reduce the four day a week regulation because our scorecard shows that these areas are the dirtiest in our community and do not reach a 90% cleanliness threshold, they're at about 89%. However, under Operation Scorecard,

1
2 neither we nor Sanitation can find out what
3 streets are being measured. So if it is our
4 industrial area or east of 6th Avenue that's being
5 measured, it is those that live within 3rd to 6th
6 Avenues who are literally made to pay. Without
7 knowing which streets are actually being
8 evaluated, we have no opportunity to even show if
9 four day a week cleaning is cost effective because
10 of the incongruous nature of the regulations in
11 sections 3 and 4. Perhaps the area between 3rd
12 and 6th Avenues are already sufficient clean, but
13 there's no way to prove that under the current
14 system of evaluation.

15 Ironically, although our streets
16 are allegedly dirtier than those of our neighbors,
17 BK 7 does not have a dedicated cleaning staff. We
18 share BK 6A, located within Community Board 6,
19 with BK 6, while we house the cleaning staff and
20 vehicles of BK 10. This seems illogical as we
21 believe the dirtiest streets, as we are told ours
22 are, should have a dedicated staff rather than
23 share these resources with another community.

24 Community Board 7 has long held
25 that our community does more than its fair share

1
2 when it comes to sanitation infrastructure. In
3 addition to the Hamilton Avenue Marine Transfer
4 Station, which will eventually take about half of
5 Brooklyn's trash, we host the garage of our
6 neighbor to the south, BK 10, and soon the Sims
7 Recycling Facility, which will take most of the
8 city's recycling. We are additionally burdened
9 with the IESI Commercial Waste Facility, which
10 currently takes more than 1,000 tons of
11 residential trash per day. All of this garbage
12 comes to our community by truck and currently
13 leaves by truck.

14 As there are no ramps to the
15 Gowanus Expressway, the closest highway to our
16 industrial area in our community, these trucks
17 have to navigate our streets, often on residential
18 blocks or alongside schools to make it back to the
19 highway. Could this importation and export of
20 other community's garbage via truck also be a
21 reason for our dirtier streets? How does the
22 addition of all these trucks to our already
23 overburdened community impact our air quality? We
24 believe that such additional burden should be
25 taken into account and not simply some

1
2 unchallengeable, indeterminate statistic when
3 deciding the appropriate regulations for our
4 community.

5 Our board also strongly believes
6 that moving vehicles four times per week adds
7 emissions to a community that is already in non-
8 attainment with federal clean air standards,
9 possibly due to the Gowanus Expressway. This
10 cleaning schedule only exacerbates the poor
11 quality of our air in a community with a high
12 asthma rate. If the additional sweeping days make
13 our streets cleaner, is this being offset by
14 dirtier air from all the vehicles that are being
15 forced to move almost daily? Furthermore, these
16 additional days also make it more likely that
17 people in our community will drive to work because
18 they are forced to move their cars during the
19 workday, further reducing air quality.

20 As we have seen our neighboring
21 communities achieve reduced street sweeping days
22 often with little difference in cleanliness rating
23 from our community, we're forced to ask again, why
24 not us.

25 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: I want to

1
2 thank you, Jeremy Laufer, who is a district
3 manager at Community Board 7, first of all, for
4 coming down to testify, second, for the record, I
5 just want to mention that it's an honor to have
6 worked on occasion with you, and the city is lucky
7 to have a district manager such as yourself
8 serving in the city on the Community Board. I
9 would say that some of the boards leave a lot to
10 be desired in terms of the people running them, so
11 we're really lucky to have you. I wish you were a
12 district manager in my district, I really do.
13 That doesn't mean to say that all of them aren't
14 good, but--

15 JEREMY LAUFER: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: --I would
17 certainly replace one at least.

18 JEREMY LAUFER: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Without
20 mentioning which one. But I just wanted to say
21 for the record that as a result of some of the
22 information we got, we are not going to be
23 spending time on the scorecard issue today, but we
24 appreciate your coming down--

25 JEREMY LAUFER: Yeah.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: --to testify
3 on this issue.

4 JEREMY LAUFER: I appreciate it.

5 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: And thank you
6 very much--

7 JEREMY LAUFER: Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: --for coming
9 in.

10 JEREMY LAUFER: Thank you.

11 [Pause]

12 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: The next
13 witness is Jeff Kay, Director of Mayor Office of
14 Operations. We thank you for coming in and you'll
15 be testifying about the other item on the agenda
16 which is the SCOUT program that the city has.

17 [Pause]

18 JEFF KAY: Good afternoon, thank
19 you for your indulgence, I apologize I was a
20 little late. [Off mic] Yeah, sure.

21 Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, my
22 name is Jeff Kay, I'm the Director of the Mayor's
23 Office of Operations, thanks for inviting me here
24 today to discuss the SCOUT program.

25 SCOUT officially launched in

1
2 October 2007. The SCOUT team was developed with
3 two primary objectives in mind. First, SCOUT was
4 intended to inform city agencies of conditions in
5 city neighborhoods in a proactive manner. The
6 Mayor's belief was that city agencies should not
7 wait for a constituent to complain about a
8 problem, instead they should be out there taking
9 the initiative to seek out potential issues to
10 repair and, therefore, enhancing the quality of
11 life for New York City's customers.

12 Second, the SCOUT program strives
13 to hold agencies accountable for the way they
14 respond to conditions that are reported through
15 the 311 customer call center. Through SCOUT's
16 quality assurance program, a percentage of each
17 month's conditions are reinspected to ensure that
18 agencies have actioned the condition
19 appropriately. In addition to checking for agency
20 response, we are able to compare the agency's
21 action on the street to the message it sends to
22 customers through the 311 system.

23 SCOUT reports conditions to five
24 city agencies: Department of Transportation, the
25 Sanitation Department, Department of Environmental

1
2 Protection, the Parks Department, and the
3 Department of Buildings. Each month, the SCOUT
4 team drives every city street in the five
5 boroughs, covering over 6,500 miles.

6 Using GPS-enabled wireless
7 technology, the team reports upon a list of
8 conditions based on what one could see walking or
9 driving through the neighborhoods, such as
10 graffiti, potholes, and sunken catch basins. Once
11 the condition is located, the inspector logs it
12 into his or her Blackberry device and the
13 condition is sent to 311 and then sent to the
14 appropriate agency for action--the exact same way
15 a 311 caller service request would be sent to an
16 agency. SCOUT reports come to agencies as if they
17 were reported anonymously. Since the program
18 began, inspectors have reported over 110,000
19 conditions to city agencies.

20 In the fall of 2008, Operations
21 launched SCOUT on the web, a mapping tool which
22 allows users to search for SCOUT reports by
23 location. The map also reports the last time an
24 inspector was in a community district.

25 In August of this year we announced

1
2 a partnership with MINI USA to pilot a fleet of
3 their electric vehicles. SCOUT inspectors now
4 make use of eight fully electric Mini Coopers to
5 do their daily inspections, free of charge to the
6 city. We're very proud of the SCOUT program and
7 believe it has led to many more conditions being
8 actioned by city agencies, as well as an
9 improvement in the way agencies address complaints
10 that come through 311.

11 From our quality assurance program,
12 we have been able to address some operational
13 challenges in the way agencies address street
14 level complaints. For example, as a result of the
15 program, we've improved the way that the city
16 agencies address graffiti. Through SCOUT
17 observation and quality assurance, we work with
18 city agencies and the City Council to streamline
19 the process for cleaning graffiti and reduce the
20 average time it takes to clean graffiti from 70
21 days in 2007 to approximately 30 days today.

22 In addition, as result of the SCOUT
23 program, the city is studying the best way to
24 handle taking action on a variety of street
25 conditions, including those that in the past had

1
2 bounced between agencies like the Department of
3 Transportation and the Department of Environmental
4 Protection. In addition to creating a street
5 defect glossary and revamping content and
6 resolution codes, we are currently in the midst of
7 a pilot program whereby DOT is inspecting DEP
8 conditions and holding them accountable for street
9 conditions, in a very similar way to the way we
10 deal with contractors. We believe this will
11 eventually lead to more consistent, efficient, and
12 transparent treatment of street conditions.

13 These improvements are in addition
14 to the basic benefit of the program, which is the
15 city finding and resolving thousands of conditions
16 without waiting for the public to complain first.

17 Thanks for your time today and I'll
18 be happy to respond to any of your questions.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Thank you very
20 much. We've been joined by Council Member
21 Mitchell, Council Member Arroyo, and Council
22 Member Seabrook. Again for the record, there are,
23 I think, three or four hearings going on
24 simultaneously, three across street, one here. As
25 you can see, ours was the most important, that's

1

2 why we were given the Chambers, and the other
3 three are not chopped liver, but not as important
4 as us and that's why they're across the street.

5 So I'm just going to go through
6 some--asking some information, because we're very
7 intrigued about the program and I think it's a
8 wonderful program. The 311, again, can you
9 clarify whether the SCOUT program initiates
10 complaints or did you say that they sort of try to
11 see whether complaints that were given to 311 were
12 taking care of?

13 JEFF KAY: The SCOUT program
14 initiates complaints and then goes back out at the
15 end of each month, after we've completed all the
16 city streets and double-checks and goes back to
17 the SCOUT inspections to see if in fact they were
18 actioned on.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: But in other
20 words, they're not given random samples of 311
21 complaints from the five areas that we talked
22 about while they're out to see whether they were
23 corrected--

24 JEFF KAY: [Interposing] We do
25 random samples of what the SCOUT inspectors

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

inspected on their own--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Right.

JEFF KAY: --we could, of course,
include random samples of 311 which we can do--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

JEFF KAY: --which, you know--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]

I don't know if it makes sense, I'm just throwing
it out that perhaps, if you know the routes with
the technology and you're so ahead of the curve,
that with the technology you have, perhaps maybe
that would be something to include.

So how many reports do SCOUT agents
issue in a given year?

JEFF KAY: Last year and calendar
year--well actually for calendar year 2008, the
full calendar year, was 50,514 incidents.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: And how many,
again, how many SCOUTs do you have out?

JEFF KAY: We have about 15
inspectors at any given time.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: And throughout
the city.

1
2 JEFF KAY: Yeah, absolutely. And
3 as I mentioned, we cover every city street once a
4 month.

5 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: That's
6 unbelievable. What percent of those reports
7 relate to sanitation?

8 JEFF KAY: Believe it's about 25%.
9 Give me one second to double check that. It's
10 about 25%.

11 [Pause]

12 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: So the 311
13 hotline is great, does it have the capacity to
14 handle the extra complaints that you're--

15 JEFF KAY: [Interposing] Oh, sure,
16 absolutely--

17 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

18 JEFF KAY: --you know, 311 handles
19 about 50,000 calls a day. That doesn't mean every
20 single call produces an incident or a service
21 request, but certainly there's no reason why we
22 can't handle the calls, you know, the more calls,
23 the better.

24 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Right. I just
25 want to mention something, that you have no

1
2 jurisdiction or responsibility over--and that's
3 why you should be happy that I'm mentioning it--
4 but maybe you can relate it again. On the 311
5 issue, it would seem that there's some complaints
6 that in the system there's really no follow-up,
7 especially those with language issues, I'm just
8 using you as a messenger for complaints.

9 JEFF KAY: No, that's fine, we've
10 actually--

11 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]
12 I don't know if--

13 JEFF KAY: --I'll be willing to--

14 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

15 JEFF KAY: --talk to you about
16 this, it is something we've worked with 311.

17 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]
18 It's an interesting issue because what happens is,
19 you know, it's your fault that there's a problem,
20 you created a system that's so great where if you
21 get on the phone, you attach somebody to language,
22 but in terms of getting back to the person,
23 there's somewhat of an issue. I do want you to
24 answer it because--

25 JEFF KAY: [Interposing] I can

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

answer it--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yes?

JEFF KAY: --if you'd like, yeah,
sure.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Okay.

JEFF KAY: We've worked very
closely with 311--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yes.

JEFF KAY: --Liz Weinstein to my
right is our Director of Customer Service--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yes.

JEFF KAY: --and she spends 80% of
her day easily working with 311. We've done a
number of things, and well we're trying, and we
can always do better and certainly expect--the bar
always raises higher and that's fine, we should
always meet that bar. One of them is now, anytime
you have a service request, not only will you get
your service request number, but you can get that
e-mailed, if I'm not mistaken, to you, you can get
it texted as well, if I'm not mistaken, so you can
have that service-level request.

We've also worked to make sure with
the 311 program when it comes to more language

1
2 line, you know, up until just a few years ago, the
3 number of 311 calls in the non-English-speaking is
4 much lower than you would anticipate. In fact,
5 just two or three years ago, only 2% of all calls
6 to 311 were non-English-speaking. We've got that
7 up in this past year to about 5%, half of the non-
8 English-speaking calls I believe are Spanish. And
9 what we've done, we've tried to put farther up on
10 what they call the IBR, when you first call,
11 there's information right up that front in non-
12 English speaking to divert you. So people know
13 and that they're willing to have that call, 'cause
14 certainly we have the language line and we can
15 access up to 180 different languages. So in the
16 last two years we've doubled the amount of non-
17 English speaking calls, certainly does not reflect
18 the makeup of the city of New York, and so we're
19 continuing to push that.

20 And the whole closed loop, as you
21 mentioned, getting back to you and back to the
22 caller is something we've been looking at very,
23 very seriously over the last year. Besides the e-
24 mails and the web--is there anything else that--
25 we've also done, just so you know, we've done, not

1
2 on behalf of 311 but in conjunction, is we've done
3 random samples. So every few months, Liz and her
4 team do some calls to 311 and we do anonymous
5 calls, what we call secret shoppers, and we'll
6 call 311, see if in fact they're processing our
7 complaint, whether they're courteous, they're
8 kind, you get the information in the right time,
9 and then going back and double checking to see
10 that closed loop.

11 And then lastly, one of the things
12 we've been pushing 311 is when you call for 311
13 and you put in a service request, is for them to
14 tell you exactly how long you expect it to be
15 done. There are some examples of things that
16 won't get done for two or three years--

17 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Right.

18 JEFF KAY: --and so you could do
19 two things: you can not tell the customer that
20 'cause you're scared to say it'll take two years
21 to get done, or you give them an honest belief,
22 here, it's going to take two years, because this
23 is the process why and that's what we call our
24 service-level agreements that we've worked really
25 hard since 311's been established. And over the

1
2 last year or so, reestablishing those service-
3 level agreements to let people know when they do
4 call the city, when they do put an incident, that
5 there is a timeframe in which they can expect
6 action to happen.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: That's very
8 interesting and I would like to participate. What
9 did you call the phony calls?

10 JEFF KAY: Secret shoppers.

11 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Secret
12 shoppers?

13 JEFF KAY: Absolutely.

14 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Myself and my
15 staff would like to volunteer to do the secret
16 shopper calls.

17 JEFF KAY: [Interposing] We'll have
18 to train you first, but we'll be happy to do that.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: I think I can
20 be a quick learner on this program.

21 Does the SCOUT focus more resources
22 on neighborhoods with a higher incidence of
23 quality-of-life concerns? I know you said that
24 every street is seen at least once, I just want to
25 know whether you see some more because of problems

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

that exist.

JEFF KAY: Every street is seen once a month. One of the things we wanted to be sure is, there are certainly Community Boards that have a much higher incident rate, but if you're driving the street once a month, you know, the SCOUT guys aren't cleaning up the problems, they're directing it to the agency. So they're capturing the same amount of stuff. So every city street gets the same amount of attention.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Okay. So just to clarify, that would mean that, irrespective of the problems that exist in a community, the purpose of the SCOUT program is sort of a taking an inventory of what's going on, not necessarily responding to heavier or lighter--

JEFF KAY: [Interposing] That's not the SCOUT's role, but in fact, one of the things we're--we work with the agencies is, and, you know, 311 is one thing to collect and to be a call center, but 311 and the SCOUT is data management and we send these report to the agencies and the agencies see what Community Board they're going to. And if you see high incidents--and graffiti

1
2 is a good example of that, I mentioned that in my
3 testimony. We saw large incidents of graffiti,
4 larger than we ever anticipated, and then we went
5 back and said, well how do we do it quicker and we
6 worked with Sanitation, we worked with CAU, we
7 worked with the police department, and we
8 completely revamped the system. We then worked
9 with the City Council, got some new legislation
10 passed, which will hopefully make it so much
11 easier to do that. We only found that by looking
12 at the data, so we're, not just collecting it,
13 sending it to 311, we are looking and analyzing
14 it, and in fact agencies will notice in some
15 locations there are more complaints than others.

16 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: But again, I
17 think you answered it very clearly, I just want to
18 make sure--you're in essence saying that no matter
19 whether they're neighborhoods with high quality of
20 life complaints, low quality of life, the SCOUT
21 program does every block--

22 JEFF KAY: Correct.

23 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: --exactly the
24 same amount of times.

25 JEFF KAY: Correct.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Okay. Now,
3 apart from counting the number of reports that
4 agents make, is there any way that the operations
5 with Sanitation can measure the success of the
6 SCOUT program? Or maybe I'll ask it in a more
7 positive way. Or more constructive, I don't want
8 to say positive because that wasn't negative. How
9 do you measure the success of your program?

10 JEFF KAY: I think it's two things.
11 One is taking a look at the number and we can use
12 Sanitation as an example. As I mentioned, about
13 25% of all of the incidents are sanitation, so
14 since the inception, Sanitation's got just under
15 35,000 incidents over the last little over two
16 years. So the first thing we look at is what
17 exactly are those incidents, are they actual
18 service requests, and what are they, and we take a
19 look and see what's the highest amount and by
20 which borough. And the highest number of
21 incidents for Sanitation is--one of the highest is
22 graffiti, the lowest is the dirty vacant lots and
23 so that's important.

24 And the second thing we look at is
25 how many of those incidents that we logged have

1

2 been closed? How long did it take to Sanitation
3 to go out and take a look at it. And since that
4 time, even up until now, 96% have been closed. So
5 there's a 4% that are still open and we're double-
6 checking and continuing to go through them.

7 But they lead to the next step, how
8 come there's only 220 dirty vacant lots? So are
9 there more vacant lots or are there not more
10 vacant lots, and so we're always going through
11 that. Al and Liz know, when we have a question to
12 say, hey, I saw a vacant lot, did it get picked up
13 in 311. That's a question in SCOUT. That's a
14 question we always ask ,that's a question I always
15 ask, that's a question the Mayor always asks.
16 Hey, did you see this, did the SCOUT guy pick it
17 up, or woman, and if they didn't, why. So we're
18 constantly retesting ourselves to make sure that
19 we cover that.

20 [Off mic]

21 [Pause]

22 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: So and, again,
23 just to take as an example, if one of the SCOUT--
24 what do you call them?

25 JEFF KAY: Inspectors.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Inspectors notice a sanitation complaint that's forwarded to 311 or sanitation?

JEFF KAY: It's forwarded to 311.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: And 311 forwards it--

JEFF KAY: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: --to Sanitation. Now they come back at some point, right?

JEFF KAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Following month perhaps to see whether that complaint was corrected or what the status is?

JEFF KAY: Correct.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: And do they do that for all of them or for a percentage of them?

JEFF KAY: [Interposing] We do a percentage.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Okay.

JEFF KAY: I mean it would be virtually--what we--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

JEFF KAY: --do is we cover all in

1

2 one month and there's a couple days at the end
3 where we do quality assurance and we do random
4 tests. Now at the same time, if in fact, the next
5 month they're driving the same city street and see
6 the same problem, we see that--

7

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

8

9

JEFF KAY: --and that becomes a
self-test as well.

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Another
question that really doesn't have to do with your
jurisdiction or responsibility, is the issue of
Sanitation cleaning streets--I'm not talking about
scorecard now, I'm talking about a general problem
that's very difficult to solve/areas around police
precincts and fire houses. There's scarcity of
parking, so when police officers or firemen or
women come to work, it's very hard for them to
find parking, they usually park all around the
precinct in the neighborhood many times,
residential neighborhoods. And I have experienced
that, and I'm delighted--if you said to me would I
rather have my street swept or have police
officers roaming the streets near my house, I
would take the second because I'm delighted. But

1
2 it does involve an issue that's very difficult to
3 solve without providing--there is just practically
4 speaking, there's not enough parking for the
5 police cars, for their own cars, and then you have
6 the Sanitation trucks that, you know, trying to do
7 their cleaning. I'm making a statement, I thought
8 you would grab the opportunity to respond to it,
9 but I wasn't as lucky.

10 JEFF KAY: Not my area of--

11 [Crosstalk]

12 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]

13 I just said, no, I'm just saying to you is that in
14 your SCOUT--if I wanted to be belligerent I would
15 say these SCOUTs go out, they must be finding the
16 same streets having problems and not necessarily
17 near my house, throughout the city, I would say
18 it's a good problem or a bad problem and difficult
19 one to solve. I would just suggest if you want is
20 that we've instituted something where at least
21 twice a week, you know, we want it to be perfect,
22 but at least--I'm sorry twice a month, you know,
23 the cars are moved from one side to the other to
24 make sure they're clean. I go off on a tangent
25 and I thank you for humoring me.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

What is your budget?

JEFF KAY: We don't have a budget,
outside of--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]
You do it for free?

JEFF KAY: We have our 15
inspectors and, in fact, we borrow them from city
agencies and--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: So--

JEFF KAY: --we do that for
probably a couple of reasons. We almost have a
rotating schedule so that the inspectors become
fresh, because if you're driving every city single
street once a month, you know, you see over a four
or five-month period in some months declines. And
the question is, well are the streets getting
better in that particular month or is it just not
fresh enough, and so we try to rotate as much as
we can every six months. And it gives city
employees as they work in their agencies a
different perspective. It's sort of an
interesting thing, if you're new to the city to
spend six months driving every city street, seeing
every particular problem there is and actually

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

feeling there's make a difference. So we do borrow from our city agencies and we have sort of a loan program. So about every six months we get new inspectors, we have a whole training session that Al and Liz put together and we get new inspectors.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: So for example, inspector, how many hours a week do they do it--

[Crosstalk]

JEFF KAY: [Interposing] It's the normal city, 35 hours.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: But is it always the certain hours or--

JEFF KAY: [Interposing] We do it in about 9 to 5.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Right, and I know that's an expense--

JEFF KAY: [Interposing] We do not inspect at night.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah. So, again, I'm punishing you for doing a great job by saying is that you obviously are getting a lot, but you're not getting the pictures early or

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

later. Like scooper--you know, dog issues or some of the other issues that have become really rampant in some areas.

So, again, does operations retain records of all the calls entered into the 311 system?

JEFF KAY: Yeah--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]
Or just the--

JEFF KAY: --well from the SCOUT program--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah, or no--

JEFF KAY: --everything we put into the SCOUT program is actually up on the web, so you can look right now and see how many SCOUT incidents in your community district--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]
And where would I look that up?

JEFF KAY: It's right there on our website and I believe you can access it--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]
No, on your website, meaning--

JEFF KAY: [Interposing] I'm sorry, nyc.gov.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Right, and the
3 link would be?

4 JEFF KAY: It's probably under the
5 Mayor's Office of Operations.

6 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Okay.

7 JEFF KAY: And in fact, actually on
8 the homepage of nyc.gov you'll see on the right-
9 hand side what we call NYC Stat. If you link on
10 there, you've got every single performance report,
11 I think actually your request at your last
12 committee that you had--

13 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yes.

14 JEFF KAY: --of Gov Ops was right
15 there on that front page, you go to it and you can
16 see every statistic, and if you click on NYC Stat,
17 you'll find the SCOUT report.

18 [Pause]

19 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: If you're
20 willing, again, or if it's under your
21 jurisdiction--I should say it's not, but if it's
22 something you can tell me then that would be great
23 and if not that's fine, when the SCOUT inspectors
24 forward these complaints to 311, is there some
25 sort of system where they prioritize--yeah.

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

JEFF KAY: They don't actually know, it gets directly into their system, and when the 311 sends it to the agencies it's sent just like a normal call.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: So the agencies prioritize--

JEFF KAY: The agencies do not know if the call came in from a SCOUT inspector or if it came in from you or I or my--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]
No, I didn't mean, I wasn't making myself clear.

JEFF KAY: I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: What I was trying to say was whether the agency now we know-- I think it would make sense, prioritizes the type of complaint that they respond to. They make it, let's say, on one day 50 complaints and if one of them says that there's a dumpster full of garbage in the middle of the street and the other one is that the neighbor never cleans his sidewalk, does the agency prioritize the complaints that they're receiving?

JEFF KAY: I can't speak for each

1
2 individual agency, but I can say is that each
3 agency receives the information, there is 311
4 information now that agencies do get on a daily
5 basis, every agency knows every call that comes
6 into 311. If they see spikes in some areas, I am
7 sure, just based on my conversations--

8 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

9 JEFF KAY: --they do do that, but I
10 can't speak on behalf of any particular agency,
11 but they do get the information.

12 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: With DOT, I'm
13 just curious, what percentage of the SCOUT
14 inspections, the violations--not violations the
15 complaints that they--what do you call them? I
16 know--

17 [Crosstalk]

18 JEFF KAY: [Interposing] Incidents,
19 incidents.

20 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Incidents, I'm
21 sorry, incidents relate to potholes, broken
22 streets, things like that.

23 JEFF KAY: I don't have the exact
24 information, but I'm being told, and if you look
25 at the top-five, potholes, and failed street

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

repairs and sunken hardware, which, frankly, is not just DOT--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

JEFF KAY: --they're both on the street, make up about 50%--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

JEFF KAY: --of all of the incidents.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: That makes sense, that makes sense.

JEFF KAY: And I did mention before, some is DOT and some are DEP--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Right.

JEFF KAY: --and when we saw this, one of the unique things about this program, you know, when we initially launched it, it was to see what incidents are and how quickly you can fix it. It turned out there were a lot more of these sunken hardwares, failed street repairs, and potholes, and if I asked you what a pothole was and asked Liz to my right what a pothole was, there'd be a different definition of a pothole, and the reality is there is. And in some cases, we found the Department of Transportation faxing

1
2 the information to Department of Environmental
3 Protection, and the Department of Environmental
4 Protection faxing it back to the Department of
5 Transportation in no system whatsoever, because
6 they each disagreed whether or not it was a
7 pothole or it's the water problem and you had
8 this. And, frankly, we wouldn't have found that
9 without using the data and using SCOUT to check
10 that

11 Even more interesting is when we
12 went back out there at the end of the month to do
13 quality assurance and said hey, we put in this
14 pothole, it's still there, but 311 says that
15 action's closed, that didn't make any sense, we're
16 staring at the pothole. Well it turned out
17 Department of Transportation at the time sent it
18 to Department of Environmental Protection, DOT
19 closed the action. Yeah, the customer still sees
20 that and so we found that problem, the agencies
21 have been working very hard to fix that.

22 [Pause]

23 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah, this is
24 a question that you've been waiting for is that as
25 a result of the SCOUT program, does the city issue

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

more summonses?

JEFF KAY: None of our inspectors--

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: [Interposing]

No, I know you--

JEFF KAY: --issue summonses.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: --I know they
can't.

JEFF KAY: You know, summonses,
most of the stuff that we're finding are potholes,
we do find more graffiti, and now there's a
program in order to do that. In fact, for the
graffiti, now working with the City Council we've
changed the law, we're streamlining it, and
changing the process so you opt out. It should
actually reduce the number of violations for
graffiti because it puts the onus back on the city
to actually clean it. So you know, I can't speak
directly whether it increased the number of
violations, but that's not what our guys do and
women, they don't have the ability to write
violations.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Good, that was
the right answer. Now in terms of the garbage
cans that are on the commercial strips, do they

1

2 report--does the SCOUT investigate or would they
3 report an incident when they drive by streets that
4 the garbage cans are overflowing?

5 JEFF KAY: The SCOUT inspectors do
6 report overflowing litter baskets. The trickiness
7 with overflowing litter baskets is our SCOUT guys
8 can't be in every place at every single time, and
9 if you go there at, say, three o'clock and it
10 turns out the pickup's for four o'clock, it's hard
11 to really measure that. And so we let Sanitation
12 know that in fact there's overflowing litter
13 baskets, but we don't always open up a service-
14 level agreement 'cause the pickup scheduled for
15 probably two or three hours later that day or the
16 next day. It's when you find consistent problems
17 that are probably picked up in SCOUT and Scorecard
18 where it'll be alerted through Sanitation.

19 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: But would they
20 forward that to 311 as well?

21 JEFF KAY: We don't open a
22 particular incident for overflowing litter
23 baskets.

24 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Well, I would
25 suggest for you to consider that, because if they

1
2 did then inherently 311 with the technology you
3 have, you'd be able to know when pickups are in
4 certain districts, right, and then it would make
5 sense that the investigators, if they're going
6 into certain neighborhoods they'd be able to know
7 not to waste their time on reporting those that
8 are--

9 JEFF KAY: [Interposing] That is an
10 [off mic] point, it is something we have been
11 looking at and been working on, which is at any
12 particular point, if a SCOUT inspector is out
13 there and sees an overflowing litter basket at say
14 three clock and it turns out, you know, the
15 Sanitation came at one o'clock, well, there's a
16 problem, they missed that--

17 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Right.

18 JEFF KAY: --and so we have been
19 working with them in order to do that.

20 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

21 JEFF KAY: We don't necessarily
22 open a full incident reports, but we have been
23 working with Sanitation on that problem just for
24 that reason.

25 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: But in other

1

2 words, if I asked you in 2008 how many SCOUT
3 incidents did you have about overflowing baskets--
4 I don't need it now--would you be able to answer
5 that question?

6 JEFF KAY: I'd have to go back and
7 look, we had not put it into the 311 system, but
8 I'll have to check.

9 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah, so I
10 think that, since the Bloomberg Administration is
11 determined to be transparent and you're working so
12 diligently on it, this might be another area that--
13 -

14 JEFF KAY: Absolutely.

15 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: --would be
16 helpful because some of my colleagues, including
17 myself, especially with the budget cuts, the
18 number of pickups have taken the position that if
19 the cans on the commercial strips cannot be picked
20 up regularly, they should be removed. We've found
21 in fact, that in certain neighborhoods, I'm not
22 saying every, but in certain neighborhoods,
23 putting cans there have become a problem. So if
24 they're not picked up regularly, maybe better off
25 without the cans.

1
2 JEFF KAY: That's a fair point,
3 we'll look at the timing aspect of it.

4 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: If there were
5 no economic crunch, would you expand the SCOUT
6 program?

7 JEFF KAY: We actually have
8 expanded the SCOUT program over the last year, not
9 only putting SCOUT on the web, putting SCOUT on
10 the streets, but the one thing we did do--and more
11 of your secret shopping--is we sent some of our
12 SCOUT inspectors into city facilities. We have
13 over 400 city agency walk-in facilities, whether
14 you're going into Department of Finance to pay
15 your bill, Department of Buildings to deal with an
16 issue or NYCHA for that matter. And so we've been
17 secretly sending our inspectors into those
18 facilities and doing--also are they finding
19 graffiti on the wall, are they finding signage in
20 both multiple language, as well as what we call--
21 what do we call the--they're welcome, when someone
22 walks into an agency, is there someone there--
23 greeters, I'm looking for, so we do have that.

24 So we have expanded it, we're
25 continuing to expand it. The facilities is

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

something we did over the last year and we'll look to do more of that.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Do they review whether there are recycling policies in place--
[Crosstalk]

JEFF KAY: [Interposing] I'd have to--you mean at the facilities themselves?

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah.

JEFF KAY: I'll have to look if that was on our latest, if not, we certainly can add it.

CHAIRPERSON FELDER: Yeah, I don't think it is without you looking, even though I don't know, but of course, I wouldn't have put it there, it's not something I would have thought of. So if it is, then that's great and I will apologize publicly, but I have a feeling it's not and, you know, if it's something you might want to add, that would be great.

I want to thank you for testifying today and I wanted to, again, I think we can all do better, but I think this SCOUT program is a wonderful, wonderful program. Again, it helps the city, forgetting about the people, but the city

1
2 itself, the Administration, you know, have a
3 better idea of what's going on out there and
4 that's wonderful. So I thank you for coming. Do
5 you have any--

6 JEFF KAY: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: --questions
8 for this Committee?

9 JEFF KAY: No, I look forward to
10 our continuing dialogue on this issue and many
11 others.

12 CHAIRPERSON FELDER: That was also
13 the right answer. Thank you very much. We're
14 going to hold the hearing open for ten minutes
15 because there are members attending other
16 hearings.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, 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 Tammy Wittman

Date December 7, 2009