

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

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February 5, 2013  
Start: 2:33 p.m.  
Recess: 2:45 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
JAMES F. GENNARO  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Elizabeth S. Crowley  
G. Oliver Koppell  
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.  
Brad S. Lander  
Stephen T. Levin

CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Good

afternoon. I'm Council Member Jim Gennaro, chair of the Committee on Environmental Protection.

Today the Committee will hold a vote on Intros 75-A and 399-A, those are two of the three bills. -

- These bills once law will improve New York City's planting initiatives by incorporating

principles of biodiversity and storm water

retention [phonetic]. We will also be having a

vote on Intro 887-A, a bill which will advance the use of renewable energy in New York City by

forming a renewable energy web portal. Just going

forward here. New York City by means of its green

infrastructure plan proposed an alternative

approach to monitoring water quality that would

integrate green infrastructure such as - - and

green roofs with investments to optimize the

existing system. It's at this point in my

statement that I realize I should have brought my

reading glasses. This alternative requires a

massive planting effort. Intro 75-A mandates the

creation of a storm water retention manual by the

Parks Department that would apply to all plantings

conducted by the Department that will maximize the

1  
2 use of storm water retentive plantings. This  
3 manual will identify plants suitable for the  
4 purpose of facilitating storm water retention and  
5 describe their qualities. It would identify  
6 suitable planting materials, soil types, mulch for  
7 the purpose of facilitating storm water retention  
8 and set forth guidelines for the planting and  
9 organization of plantings including the  
10 appropriate mixes of plants. Intro 399-A will  
11 increase biodiversity by requiring the Department  
12 of Parks to revise its design manual by November  
13 1<sup>st</sup> of this year to increase biodiversity in its  
14 landscape practices where native species are not  
15 appropriate. Their practices shall require the  
16 use of any plant species that has not been  
17 determined to be invasive. Intro 887-A defines a  
18 renewable energy system - - and requires the city  
19 to establish a renewable energy portal and a link  
20 to that website on the Department of Buildings  
21 homepage and other relevant city homepages. The  
22 portal will inform the general public about the  
23 economics and feasibility of renewable energy  
24 systems in plain language and allow the user to  
25 calculate the estimated cost and benefits of

1  
2 renewable energy systems. The user would be able  
3 to review lists of financial incentives available  
4 at the federal, state and local levels and tools  
5 and guidelines to evaluate the feasibility of  
6 installing these technologies. I'm particularly  
7 happy not only on the planting bills, which I  
8 think are very important, but those are kind - -  
9 it's this part of government working with our  
10 sister part of government to make sure they do the  
11 right thing like with regard to plantings;  
12 however, 887-A I think is very critical that we do  
13 this because this opens the door to homeowners  
14 that want to be more green in what they do with  
15 their own homes to get all the facts on how they  
16 would go about doing that. I think the average  
17 homeowner doesn't have much knowledge about what  
18 kind of incentives would be available to them from  
19 the federal government, state government, local  
20 government in terms of tax credits—various kinds  
21 of incentives and what kind of payback they would  
22 get from the installation of like a solar panel,  
23 whether it's PV [phonetic] or hot water or like a  
24 wind turbine or a geothermal and I think it's  
25 critically important that homeowners are fully

1  
2 empowered to get this information in one place and  
3 the goal is to make this one stop shopping—that  
4 they can get full knowledge on how they can  
5 proceed. In talking with the administration, they  
6 even indicated that on the web portal they would  
7 make available the forms to sign up for these  
8 various kinds of incentives and it's very  
9 important that if the city is going to go green as  
10 we needed to do that buildings are the best source  
11 of greening the city, and to the extent that we  
12 can get your average homeowner in the city to kind  
13 of partner with the city and turning their home  
14 green, I think that is what we really need to do  
15 to meet the mandated greenhouse gas reduction of  
16 30 percent by 2030 and do everything we need to do  
17 to clean the air and clean our city and make our  
18 buildings greener. I am particularly happy about  
19 that one. The plantings bills were long in the  
20 making, and we had originally wanted to do a bill  
21 that would preclude the sale of any kind of  
22 invasive plant species here in New York City.  
23 We worked on that bill for so long that the state  
24 ultimately beat us to the punch and they did a  
25 statewide bill, which would preclude us from

1  
2 acting, but I'm glad that the state has taken that  
3 step, so we didn't need to do that bill, but we  
4 did the other two planting ones. They are very  
5 important, and like I said 887-A is one that I  
6 think can make a real difference to the average  
7 homeowner, and as they navigate through the  
8 process of making their homes green. We are very  
9 happy to be joined by Council Members Levin and  
10 Koppell and Crowley. It's our understanding that  
11 Council Member Vallone is on his way here as well.  
12 I thank the Committee staff and the administration  
13 and my colleagues for their support of this  
14 legislation and with that said, I would ask the  
15 clerk to call the roll on these bills, and I urge  
16 the members of the Committee to vote yes on all  
17 three, and Bill, I guess we can couple them? Is  
18 that how we are going to do that? Okay. And so,  
19 we will couple the bills, and I ask for a yes vote  
20 and there you have it.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
22 Committee Clerk. Roll call vote, Committee on  
23 Environmental Protection. Council Member Gennaro?

24 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Yes.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Koppell?

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Yes, and  
3 please add my name onto the [off mic]

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Crowley?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I vote  
6 aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levin?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Aye.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of four  
10 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, no  
11 abstentions—excuse me. Council Member Lander?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Aye.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: The vote  
14 currently stands at five in the affirmative, zero  
15 in the negative and no abstentions. Members,  
16 please sign the committee reports.

17 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: I want to  
18 thank the committee members for their support and  
19 particularly those that sponsored these bills, and  
20 I am kind of jealous of Council Member Lander to  
21 make that great entrance as he did at the perfect  
22 moment, and so, yes, so we would ask that everyone  
23 sign. So with that said, we are going to leave  
24 the record open for Council Member Vallone to come  
25 and make his vote, so I am not going to gavel the

1  
2 hearing closed. So the record will be—so the  
3 hearing will be left open for I guess 30 minutes.  
4 That is the time that we allow. I'll note the  
5 time that it's—let's just say it's 2:45 just to  
6 give Peter a little extra cushion there. With  
7 that said, I thank everyone for being here today  
8 and for voting yes on these bills. Just as we  
9 said, let me call upon Council Member Vallone to  
10 vote on the package of bills, Intro 887-A, 399-A  
11 and 75-A. Council Member Vallone, how do you  
12 vote?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I vote  
14 aye, and I want to complain about the sergeants  
15 who came up to get Oliver Koppell sitting next to  
16 me saying he was needed for a vote and just like I  
17 wasn't there, and I finally realized, wait, that  
18 is my Committee, but I am here, and I vote aye.  
19 Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you,  
21 Council Member Vallone, and I guess we are—maybe  
22 it's a lesson in self-reliance or something, but  
23 knowing you, Peter, you were probably here before  
24 anyone else and found out that I wasn't here yet,  
25 so here I am pontificating, and you were here



1  
2 before I was. So with that said, with everyone  
3 having voted on these bills, and so the clerk is  
4 going to read the final vote.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote in the  
6 Committee on Environmental Protection now stands  
7 at six in the affirmative, zero in the negative  
8 and no abstentions.

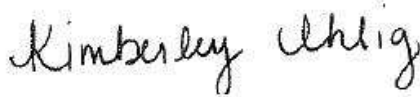
9 CHAIRPERSON GENNARO: Thank you,  
10 Bill. I am going to adjourn the hearing with a  
11 very loud gavel clap. Is everybody ready? It's  
12 going to be a loud one, okay? So this hearing is  
13 adjourned.

14 [gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig 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

Handwritten signature of Kimberley Uhlig in cursive script, written over a horizontal line.Date 2/20/13