

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY IN GOVERNMENT

-----X

October 23, 2008

Start: 10:00am

Recess: XX:XX

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
GALE A. BREWER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Bill de Blasio
G. Oliver Koppell
Letitia James

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Sergeant, are you ready? Okay. Good morning. I'm Gale Brewer, Chair of the Committee on Technology in the City Council. And, we're here to talk about proposed Resolution Number 1613-A. We had a hearing on this on October 23rd, here in the Committee Room. And, this particular Resolution talks about white spaces, which is the aspect of our planet that will become more available when we go from analog to digital. And, there is a great deal of interest in providing space for other kinds of technology when those channels are then available.

To make a long story short, this Resolution urges the FCC, which is the Federal Communications Commission, to talk about ways that assist the City of New York and people who are concerned about digital divide. There are three issues. We have, in New York City, the Broadway productions, which are really, really important to all of us. And, the Broadway folks are concerned that as this space becomes opened up that they don't get any interference. That's one concern.

Second concern is that the television stations feel that there may be some

1
2 interference as the white spaces also compete with
3 people who are going to be using new devices, this
4 sounds like we're in a new world here, to be able
5 to communicate with each other. These new PDAs
6 are yet to be built or described specifically in
7 our hands, but they will enable us to wirelessly
8 communicate. And, that is a really good thing
9 because the community that is now having to pay a
10 great deal to communicate will be able to do so
11 perhaps at lot less cost. Those devices are being
12 tested. FCC feels that they are able to be used
13 and that they will make sense after quite a few
14 years.

15 The only thing we're asking in this
16 particular Resolution is that, as we move forward,
17 to give a little bit more time to the FCC to
18 actually promulgate exactly how these devices
19 would work. And, we want a little bit more
20 comment period from the City of New York and from
21 others to be sure that there's no interference,
22 that there is an opportunity to use the devices to
23 erase, or to at least diminish the digital divide
24 and, more importantly, perhaps everybody can
25 agree, make sure that Broadway productions, our

1
2 livelihood, is not interfered with.

3 So, I think that is a general
4 overview of this particular Resolution. I don't
5 know if there's anybody who wants to testify.
6 Does anybody want to testify? Okay. I do want to
7 recommend a yes vote on this. I want to thank
8 Jeff Baker, who has spent a great deal of time
9 working on this. I also want to thank Kenall
10 Mahaltra [phonetic], from our office, who has put
11 in a great deal of time, and, always Colleen
12 Pagter for her amazing writing abilities, amongst
13 other things.

14 So, are there any questions from my
15 colleagues? Will you please call the roll?

16 WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin,
17 Committee Clerk. Resolution 1613-A. Council
18 Member Brewer.

19 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: I vote aye.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: De Blasio.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DE BLASIO:

22 Permission to explain my vote? I vote aye as
23 well. But, I'd like to note I think the Chair and
24 the Committee have focused now for years on the
25 question of media and technology and democracy and

1
2 information and how they all go together. And, I
3 think this is another example of us trying to make
4 sure that there is a full debate on anything that
5 could affect people's ability to communicate in an
6 open society. I think we've all had reason to be
7 concerned about the way the Federal Communications
8 Commission has done its work in recent years.

9 So, I think the Resolution is
10 exactly right to make it a formal public debate on
11 the issue and to make sure that whatever is
12 decided does not compromise open access and
13 democratic free speech and, in fact, encourages
14 and opens up new avenues for that. So, with that,
15 I vote aye.

16 WILLIAM MARTIN: Koppell.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Aye.

18 WILLIAM MARTIN: James.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: I abstain.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote of three
21 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and one
22 abstention, item's adopted. Members, please sign
23 the Committee Report. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very
25 much. And, we'll hold the vote over for a half an

1

2

hour per the Rules for any incoming members.

3

Thank you.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, DeeDee E. Tataseo 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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "DeeDee E. Tataseo". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Date October 30, 2008