

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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December 14, 2021
Start: 11:41 a.m.
Recess: 11:56 a.m.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 2)

B E F O R E: Robert Cornegy, Jr.
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Fernando Cabrera
Margaret Chin
Mark Gjonaj
Barry Grodenchik
Farah Louis
Bill Perkins
Carlina Rivera
Helen Rosenthal
Kalman Yeger

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

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Cloud underway.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Backup is rolling.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: And welcome to today's
5 remote New York City Council hearing for the
6 Committee on Housing and Buildings. At this time, we
7 ask that Council members and staff please turn on
8 their video for verification purposes. To minimize
9 disruptions, please place all phones and electronics
10 devices to vibrate or silent. We thank you for your
11 cooperation. Chair, we are ready to begin.

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. Can you
13 hear me? Thank you. Good morning, everyone, and
14 thank you for coming. I'm Council member Robert
15 Cornegy, Chair the Council's Committee on Housing and
16 Buildings. This is the very last Housing and
17 Buildings photo of the session in my very last boat
18 as Chair of the committee. We are here to hold a
19 vote on a number of important bills that will help
20 promote and explore affordable housing options,
21 protect certain tenants and small landlords, and
22 provide needed tax savings to some developers.
23 Proposed Intro 2246-A, sponsored by Council member
24 Brannan, would establish a task force that would
25 explore converting vacant or commercial unviable

2 office spaces into other uses, including for
3 affordable housing. Proposed Intro number 2265-B,
4 sponsored by Majority Leader Laurie Cumbo, will
5 require landlords to provide tenants with either
6 stove safety knob covers or permanent self locking
7 stove knobs at the tenant's request where a child
8 under the age of six resides in the unit. Proposed
9 Intro 2411-A, which I sponsored, would allow the
10 Department of Housing Preservation and Development,
11 or HPD, to enforce certain provisions of the New York
12 City cab zoning Resolution. Proposed Intro number
13 2449-A, sponsored by Council member Gibson, would
14 limit the penalty issued by the Department of
15 Buildings for the failure to certify correction and
16 reinspection requirements. Proposed Intro number
17 2476, sponsored by Council member Yeger, would extend
18 the J 51 tax exemption and abatement program through
19 June 30, 2022. Finally, resolution number 1840,
20 sponsored by Council member Kallos, would call upon
21 the New York State legislature to pass and the
22 Governor to sign A5573/S.1603 in relation to
23 providing eviction without good cause. I'm joined
24 today by members of the Committee. I can only see
25 Barry. Good morning, Barry. Barry Grodenchik and

2 other members, if you would please acknowledge the
3 other members that are present in today's hearing?
4 Anybody?

5 UNIDENTIFIED: Thanks very much. Were
6 joined by Council members Cabrera, Chin, Gjonaj,
7 Grodenchik, Louis, Rosenthal, and we are also joined
8 by Council member Yeger.

9 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Which means we
10 actually have a full house. Council member Yeger,
11 would you like to read in opening statement as it
12 relates to your bill? You resolution? I'm sorry. I
13 mean your bill.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER YEGER: No, Mr. Chair. You
15 are able to do it such great justice. I'll just
16 stand here and watch the show.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you so much.
18 I will now ask the committee clerk to call the role.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning. This is
20 the Committee on Housing and Buildings roll call vote
21 on all six items already articulated and coupled by
22 the Chair. We will start with Chair Cornegy?

23 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I vote aye one all.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Cabrera?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I vote aye.

2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Chin?

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I vote aye on all.

4 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member

5 Rosenthal?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Permission to
7 explain my vote?

8 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yes, ma'am.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you,
10 Chair Cornegy. I am voting aye on all except for the
11 bill-- I'm not remembering the number-- about
12 extending the J 51 and the reason being that I
13 think-- this is a no vote simply to send a reminder,
14 a message, to the next Council and New York State
15 legislature that we really need to amend J 51 so that
16 it can do more to ensure that apartments are built
17 for low income New Yorkers. I'm a big supporter of
18 affordable housing has been my entire two years and I
19 see J 51 421-A-- all of these tools as wonderful
20 opportunities to build more affordable housing. So,
21 this is more of a ceremonial know, although I know it
22 lists as a no I committee records, but-- so I'm
23 voting yes on everything else. Chair Cornegy, thank
24 you for being such an amazing, amazing Chair of this
25 Housing and Buildings Committee. We were actually

2 just talking about Council member Cabrera. Like him,
3 you leave a lot of space for people to talk and share
4 their ideas and I really appreciated your leadership.
5 So, thank you for that and thank you for giving me
6 the time to explain my vote.

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Council
8 member.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member
10 Grodenchik?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you.
12 Permission to explain my vote, Chair Corengy?

13 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Of course.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: First, let me
15 join with Councilwoman Rosenthal in thanking you for
16 your leadership of this committee. It's been a
17 privilege and honor and a great pleasure to serve
18 with you on this committee for the past four years
19 and I greatly appreciate your leadership here. I do
20 want to talk about Councilman Yeger's bill, 2476
21 Which will provide very modest relief for people in
22 my district. And when I say people, talking about
23 probably 15,000 units of working-class and middle-
24 class co-ops here in eastern Queens. I understand
25 the questions with overall J 51 program, but I urge

2 my colleagues to vote for Councilman Yeger's bill.
3 This is an extension for six months. Hopefully the
4 problems that now this program can be fixed in the
5 next session of the legislature, that I've been
6 working closely with Assemblyman Bronstein and State
7 Senator Stavisky on this and I would appreciate the
8 support of the people on this committee on this bill
9 for not only people in my district, but for many
10 people across the city of New York who are co-op
11 owners and are struggling like so many New Yorkers
12 during this pandemic. With that, I vote aye on all
13 with the exception of Resolution 1840 on which I
14 abstain. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Council
16 member.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Gjonaj?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: Permission to
19 explain my vote?

20 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Of course.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I want to thank
22 you, Chairman Cornegy, for your leadership, your
23 friendship, and for what you were able to do with
24 this committee. Many of the things that we were able
25 to deliver wouldn't have been possible without your

2 commitment and your leadership. So, for that, I
3 thank you for making New York City a much better
4 city. And, with that, I vote no on Resolution 1840
5 and aye on the rest. Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Council
7 member.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council member Louis?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I vote aye on all.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chair Cornegy, can you
11 give me one moment, please?

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yes, sir.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you, Chair
14 Cornegy. All items have been adopted by the
15 committee by a vote of seven in the affirmative, zero
16 in the negative, and zero abstentions with the
17 exception of Intro 2476 which was adopted by a vote
18 of six in the affirmative, one negative, and zero
19 abstentions, as well as Resolution 1840 which was
20 adopted by a vote of five in the affirmative, one
21 negative, and one abstention.

22 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. Today
23 is bittersweet for me. As we come to the end of this
24 legislative session and the end of my term, having
25 served in the prior term as the Chair of Small

2 Business and, in this term, the Chair of Housing and
3 Buildings. I believe wholeheartedly that this was
4 the best committee and the Council because I'm very
5 competitive like that, but I wanted to thank every
6 member of this committee. Your perspectives on
7 issues that are germane to the city of New York have
8 shaped this committee as far as safety, as far as
9 affordable housing, as far as--

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chair Cornegy?

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yes?

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: I'm sorry, Chair
13 Cornegy. May I interrupt you? I think--

14 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yes, sir.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: I think Council member
16 Rivera is attempting to log on.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Oh, absolutely.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

19 JEFF BAKER: Chair, this is Jeff Baker.

20 If you wanted to finish your statement, we'll just
21 hold the vote open after you're done for a few more
22 minutes with Council member Rivera.

23 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. I
24 believe I was in the process of thanking the members
25 of this committee for your insight, for your robust

2 discussion around issues that were germane to the
3 city and moving us forward in relation to
4 affordability and safety and a host of other issues.
5 I would not have been able to lead this committee
6 without your voice is, without your insight, and
7 without your input, and without the robust discussion
8 that we've had. We haven't always agreed on every
9 single issue, but this Committee has sought to make
10 sure that everyone's voices are heard and to make
11 sure that the perspectives of the representatives of
12 this committee and the constituencies that they
13 represent will always be heard in these hearings. I
14 want to lastly thank the committee staff for really,
15 really working hard behind the scenes. We get to see
16 these committee hearings, but all of the work really
17 happens prior to and after these hearings. So, I
18 wanted to thank every member of the Housing and
19 Buildings Committee who has been a part of making
20 this last four years pleasurable and making me look
21 good. So, thank you and we will hold the vote open
22 for Council member Rivera.

23 [background comments]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Congratulations.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you, Council
3 member Louis. Always good to see you. I know you're
4 going to do incredible work in the next session.
5 I'll be watching and listening.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: I'd be
8 watching, too, but I never know when we're going to
9 get going. You've got to have it permanently turned
10 to the right channel.

11 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Just leave it on,
12 Barry.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Just leave it
14 on.

15 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Council member Rivera
16 has joined.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. Continuing
18 the roll call vote. Council member Rivera?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you. Chair
21 Cornegy, the revised vote is, on all items, is eight
22 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and zero
23 abstentions except for Intro 2476 which is seven in
24 the affirmative and one negative, zero abstentions

2 and Resolution 1840 which is six in the affirmative,
3 one negative, one abstention. Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Council member
5 Rivera, I suggest that you go back to the records to
6 hear my long soliloquy at your leisure.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: And I can say-

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I'm looking forward
9 to it.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: It's worth
11 waiting for. There's no question about that.

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Two very sarcastic
13 Council members. Thank you so much.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well, thank you for
15 taking the time to put a statement together, I guess.

16 [laughter]

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I'll see you guys
18 later.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Thank you, Mr.
20 Chairman. Well done. Is this the room for all votes
21 today?

22 [background comments]

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24

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 27, 2022