

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATIONS

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OCTOBER 14, 2015
Start: 10:29 A.M.
Recess: 11:08 A.M.

HELD AT: 250 BROADWAY - COMMITTEE RM, 14TH FL

B E F O R E: CHAIRPERSON
MARK LEVINE

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
ANDREW COHEN
ALAN MAISEL
DARLENE MEALY
MARK TREYGER
JIMMY VAN BRAMER

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

Brad Lander
Council Member

1 COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATIONS 3

2 CHAIR LEVINE: As soon as we have the
3 recording equipment on we're going, ok. I'd like to
4 ask the, we're going do things in reverse order
5 folks, we have some tight timing, so I'd like ask the
6 committee clerk to call the vote for Intro #154-A
7 please.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
9 Committee Clerk roll call vote Committee on Parks and
10 Recreations. Chair Levine.

11 CHAIR LEVINE: I.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Van Bramer.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Cohen.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER COHEN: I.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: MAISEL

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MAISEL: I.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 4 in the
19 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
20 items have been adopted.

21 CHAIR COHEN: Thank you very much now
22 good morning everybody, I'm Mark Levine, Chair of the
23 City Council Committee on Parks and Recreation.
24 We're here to give a post-game analyst on the vote of
25 Intro #154-A who's lead sponsor Council Member Brad

2 Lander is here with us and we'll hear from him
3 momentarily. We're going to keep the vote open I
4 think we're still expecting at least on more
5 colleague to bond into the door. But in the meantime
6 I did want to say a few words about this very
7 important bill which is an outgrowth of our efforts
8 to bring more equity to the Parks system, including
9 by getting more reporting in public transparency on
10 the park conservancies and now very importantly
11 bringing to light how would distributing resources
12 within the Parks system. This bill Intro #154-A will
13 require the Department of Parks and Recreation to
14 submit an annual report to the Council on maintenance
15 work performed at each property under its jurisdiction
16 on or before December 1st of every year. The report
17 will include the name, size and identification number
18 of each park, whether each park has permanent or
19 mobile maintenance staff assigned to it. The weekly
20 average and dollar value of work hours performed by
21 maintenance staff at each property on a quarterly
22 basis. The total weekly average dollar value of
23 specific maintenance services provided at each
24 property and the value of specialized work performed
25 such as plumbing or electrical work. It would also

2 require statistics on pep officer allocations per
3 Borough.

4 The second part of this bill will provide
5 us with more needed information regarding the status
6 of the many capital projects under the department's
7 portfolio. It would require DPR to include on its
8 website the starting date and estimated completion
9 date of each project, the total amount of funds
10 allocated to each project, the identification of each
11 separate source of funding allocated to each project,
12 a description of each project, the location of each
13 project and finally that the website be updated at
14 least on a quarterly basis.

15 This is an incredible trove of
16 information, much of which we in the public have
17 never had access for. And it is going to expand our
18 understanding of equitable distribution resources in
19 the Parks systems and understanding of the capital
20 process in ways that we... we can only dream of not too
21 long ago and I really want to credit Councilman
22 Lander for fighting this fight for years dating back
23 into the previous session and for working very very
24 hard over the past 1 ½ or more to hammer out this
25 agreement which is incredible substantive. This is

2 not a bill which is just for show. This is not just
3 about feeling good, there is substantive benefits
4 that come out of this. So congrats to you Brad and
5 I'm going to pass it to you for a few words.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thank you to
7 Chair Levine. First I thought the vote went
8 outstanding. I thought it was a fine vote. Everyone
9 really delivered so including Council Member Meizel I
10 thought he was great especially. But in seriousness,
11 I want to thank you for your partnership in... in
12 making this happen. This... this bill starts in
13 frustration and is coming today through a great
14 partnership in the council with you, with the parks
15 department, with the administration in a way that I
16 really think is going to carry this city forward in a
17 great direction in the future in the long term of the
18 Parks system. And really it starts in 2 different
19 frustrations, 1 is just the challenge that we've have
20 understanding what historically has gone on in parks
21 department spending. It has been very difficult for
22 members of the council, member of the public to know
23 what's being spent in any particular Park and to
24 understand the resource allocation across the system.
25 You know when this, when the advocacy for this bill

2 began, we didn't yet have the Parks capital trackers
3 so just knowing what had happened with capital
4 dollars, where a project was, where a project wasn't
5 in it process or how capital allocations were taking
6 place across that City and across the system was all
7 unknown. New Yorkers for Parks started doing some
8 research and showed for example that in the prior
9 administration I think actually dating back 2 prior
10 administration, resources for capital allocation in
11 the Bronx were a lot less then in some of the other
12 Borough's but it was very difficult for the Council
13 or members of the public to see that. So we lacked
14 some basic transparency and then as you rightly know
15 the whole issue of Parks equity and the distribution
16 of resources was something that became a big issue
17 and a lot of that attention rightly focused on the
18 question of the conservancies and where resources
19 were coming in and the legislation that you passed
20 earlier in this session will help go in that
21 direction and the work that the Mayor has done around
22 parks equity and working the conservatives also go in
23 that direction, but what we also learned was we
24 didn't have the ability to understand whether there's
25 equity across the dollars that the Council allocating

2 and how is money being spent. Is it you know and it
3 might be being spent in an appropriate and equal way
4 and it might not be and we have not had the ability
5 to understand by Park, by Borough, by Park District
6 what the resource allocation is. And that made it
7 very difficult at budget time for us to do our job.
8 So this bill but is so, that's, those are the
9 frustrations and as you rightly know that they
10 started you know, really they started with each
11 Council Member whenever they started serving in the
12 Council and started trying to work and understand
13 where the projects were and we had some very
14 contentious hearing in the previous term and the
15 previous administration rooted in that lack of
16 knowledge and understanding, but we have really since
17 the start of this Administration with you as Chair,
18 with Commissioner Silverious (sic), Commissioner with
19 Major De Blasio have been able to make some real
20 progress, so the Capital Parks tracker is up. This
21 bill takes it even 1 step further. Requires it by
22 law and gives us that information in a way that can
23 be researched and sorted and analyzed but the Parks
24 Capital tracker got created. The Parks equity
25 initiative both the Administrations elements and the

2 pieces that you've lead have moved us forward and we
3 have been able to have a real dialogue about that set
4 of issues and this is one next great step forward in
5 that effort to as a result of this legislation, I
6 guess I want to say it's not only the legislation
7 it's a partnership with the Parks Department who are
8 working hard to manage in general for their own
9 purposes with better information and part of why
10 this... this have taken a while to get here, is it's
11 not only a question of what information are we
12 getting, it's a question of the department itself
13 doing the strategic work to understand it's data,
14 it's a massive and wonderful system but collecting
15 that data and each piece of it is a little
16 complicated because a lot of the maintenance staff or
17 the pep workers serve multiple Parks, so how do you
18 understand what the resource allocation is to a
19 particular Park. We need to understand that in some
20 way. So I want to thank the Parks Department for
21 their efforts, not only with this legislation but
22 restructuring there system to be able to give us the
23 information in ways that'll carry us forward. I
24 think with this information it will be far more
25 possible for New Yorkers to know that status of their

2 own Parks, resources being spent in their Parks and
3 for us all to make sure that were you know will
4 hopefully we could always keep increasing the
5 resources as you've been a leader on but with the
6 resources that were able to put to the Park system,
7 where are they going, are we satisfied with that
8 allocation, how should that be adjusted moving
9 forward and especially when you balance that with the
10 information that'll come from the conservancy
11 transparency bill you passed previously in the term
12 will really be able to look at what going to each
13 Park and are we satisfied with that allocation and is
14 that... is that where things should be. So a few thank
15 you in this process of getting us to this place in
16 the Council, the Chair, you and your staff, Aia Keith
17 (sic) and Amy Slattery (sic) have been extremely
18 helpful, so thank you to you and to them. The
19 Council central staff, Chris Atori (sic) who drafted
20 the bill and Patrick Mulvihill (sic), and Chema
21 Ovachery (sic), the Committee staff thank you, are
22 they hiding behind you? Thank you, very good. This
23 is, it's been a lot of work. We had great and
24 subsitive first hearing. We actually made some
25 changes to the bill afterwards based on that hearing.

2 To Ben Smith, my Policy Director and actually because
3 this did go to the prior Administration, Michael
4 Freedmansnap (sic) was very involved in the beginning
5 and I guess the Parks, you know Parks Department you
6 know their commissioner Matt Durey (sic), Kate
7 Spellman (sic) and Russ Antinutchy (sic) have been,
8 have worked very closely with us in moving this
9 along. So thank you very much to everyone for your
10 support. I want to say a special thank you to
11 Council Member Cohen. No no, this is he does get the
12 big credit here because he got no other meeting at
13 City Hall today and solely for his vote on this bill
14 that he had to track all the way down from the Bronx,
15 so I believe this will help the Bronx's Parks but
16 thank you for coming down. Alright enough thank you.

17 CHAIR LEVINE: Thank you so much
18 Councilman Lander and Council Member Cohen would you
19 care to comment on the merits of this bill or on the
20 status of flu vaccination in Riverdale today?

21 COUNCIL COHEN: I will say if I was going
22 to come down today which I did, I'm glad I came down
23 on such a great bill, I'm been on the bill for a long
24 time and I... I someone who represents the district
25 with an enormous amount of Park land I think that you

2 know lifting some of the veil as to how resources are
3 allocated will really benefit my district and my
4 constitutes so well. I do want to thank Council
5 Member Landers and the Chairman for their leadership
6 here in getting this done and I'm happy to come down
7 and vote I on this today.

8 CHAIR LEVINE: Thank you so much. We're
9 going to keep the vote open we're waiting I believe
10 for council member Treyger but this will conclude the
11 formal proceedings of this meeting. Thank you very
12 much.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll call
14 Committee on Parks and Recreation. Council Member
15 Mealey.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I vote I.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vote now currently
18 stands at 5 in the affirmative.

19 {pause}

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll call
21 Committee on Parks and Recreation Introduction #154-
22 A, Council Member Treyger.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Vote I.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote in Committee
3 on Parks and Recreation is now 6 in the affirmative,
4 0 in the negative and now abstentions.

5 CHAIR LEVINE: And with that we could
6 adjourn the hearing.

7 {gavel}

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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 October 19, 2015