

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY  
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

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January 21, 2011

Start: 12:12 pm

Recess: 4:08 pm

HELD AT: Queens Borough Hall  
120-55 Queens Boulevard

B E F O R E:

LETITIA JAMES  
ELIZABETH CROWLEY  
PETER F. VALLONE, JR.  
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS  
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Letitia James  
Elizabeth Crowley  
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.  
Jumaane D. Williams  
Christine C. Quinn  
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.  
Daniel Dromm  
Julissa Ferreras  
James F. Gennaro  
Daniel J. Halloran  
Peter Koo

## A P P E A R A N C E S

## COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Karen Koslowitz  
Diana Reyna  
James Sanders, Jr.  
Eric Ulrich  
Jimmy Van Bramer  
Mark Weprin  
Ruben Wills

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

Helen M. Marshall  
Borough President  
Queens

Ignacio Terranova  
Citywide Community Affairs  
NYC Department of Sanitation

Grace Meng  
Assembly Member  
22nd Assembly District

David Weprin  
Assembly Member  
24th Assembly District

Lois Menyweather  
Representing  
New York State Senator Shirley Huntley

Laura Freeman

Sanford Rubenstein  
Attorney  
Representing Freeman Family

Malcolm Smith  
New York State Senator

Gary Giordano  
District Manager  
Community Board 5 Queens

Lawrence T. McClean  
District Manager  
Community Board 13 Queens

Karyn Petersen  
District Manager  
Community Board 10 Queens

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

Frank Gulluscio  
District Manager  
Community Board 6 Queens

George Onuorah  
Chair  
Consumer Affairs  
Community Board 4 Queens

Yvonne Reddick  
District Manager  
Community Board 12 Queens

Mike Mulvaney  
Community Board 6 Queens

Giovanna A. Reid  
District Manager  
Community Board 3 Queens

Jonathan Gaska  
Community Board 14 Queens

Joseph E. Hennessy  
Community Board 6 Queens

William Scarborough  
Assembly Member  
29th Assembly District

Patrick Beckles  
Community Board 3 Queens

Italo Sgaraglia  
VFW Post 4787

Yvonne Plummer

Jackie Baker-Kemp

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

Clifton Rutherford

Doreen M. DiLeonardo

Vichnu Mahadeo

Richmond Hill Economic Development Council

Thomas Diama

Marvin Holland

Transport Workers Union

Local 100

Michelle Orenstein

Naomi B. Altman

Queens Community House

Walter Kowsh

President

Cedar Grove Civic Homeowners Association

Richie Lipkowitz

CASA

Cynthia Zalisky

Queens Jewish Community Center

Derick Echevarria

Division Chairman

Stations Department

Transport Workers Union

Local 100

Paul Schubert

Community Advocate

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

James Jagiellu

Buhler Roland

Michael Feiner  
Bayside Hills Civic Association

Martin Bromson

Robert Valdes Clausell  
Executive Member  
Newtown Civic Association

Adele Bender  
Queens Interagency Council on Aging

Chan Jamoona  
Founder  
United Hindu Senior Center

GOPAL

Robert Rappo  
United Spinal Association

Randy Solomon  
Co-op Board President  
Claridge

William F. Johnert

Marilyn Mays

Rev. Charles L. Norris, Sr.  
Clergy United

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to this joint hearing of the New York City Council. I am Letitia James, Chair of the Council's Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management. Is Queens in the house?

[Cheering]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Just checking. I'm joined this evening by my colleagues. All the way to my far right: Council Member Diana Reyna from Brooklyn.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: And Queens.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And Queens. I apologize. And Council Member Koo, Council Member Koslowitz, Council Member Crowley, Council Member Vallone, Council Member Halloran, of course the Borough President who will speak in a minute, the Speaker of this house, Christine Quinn, of course, Council Member Leroy Comrie, our Deputy Majority Leader, Council Member Wills, our newest arrival. Welcome, Council Member Van Bramer, and Council Member Weprin.

On December 26th and 27th, the City of New York was hit by a blizzard. In a span of less than 24 hours, the entire city was blanketed

1 with snowfall ranging from 14 to 29 inches. The  
2 city's snow removal services and infrastructure,  
3 for reasons not yet totally clear, completely  
4 failed to keep up with the storm. When most New  
5 Yorkers awoke on the morning of the 27th, a  
6 significant number of roads were untouched by  
7 plows, making normal modes of transit nearly  
8 impossible.  
9

10 In conjunction with, and as a  
11 result of that failure to remove snow from city  
12 streets, emergency response, including Fire,  
13 Police and ambulances were crippled. Mass  
14 transit, which technically continued to run  
15 through the storm, was paralyzed.

16 The result of these failures  
17 brought very real and tragic consequences. These  
18 failures raised questions about the city's  
19 preparation for and response to the storm.  
20 Furthermore, these questions also extend to our  
21 preparedness for other and greater disasters.  
22 These questions should and must be answered.

23 New York City has dealt with plenty  
24 of storms similar scale. And I, like many other  
25 Council Members, have often sung the praises of

Commissioner Doherty and the Department of Sanitation for their excellent response and hard work in addressing those storms. But this time, the city failed to meet its own high standards or even the basic needs of its citizens.

We are here today to hear from residents of Queens about how this failure impacted your lives and what you think we can do to prevent those impacts in the future.

At a Council hearing last week, Commissioner Doherty testified in a very constructive and open manner about what took place during the Christmas blizzard. At that hearing, we focused on the larger systematic and operational issues that impacted the city's preparation and response to the storm.

We also heard Administration testimony from Deputy Mayor of Operations Stephen Goldsmith, the Commissioner of the Office of Emergency Management Joseph Bruno and Fire Commissioner Salvatore Cassano. In addition, we heard from a variety of unions and civic groups impacted by the storm and its cleanup. I believe that most viewers and participants in that hearing

found it both constructive and respectful.

Today, we are continuing the second phase of hearings which involves gathering direct testimony about the storm and its aftermath from the public on a borough by borough basis. We have already heard from several borough-based hearings: Brooklyn, Staten Island, and Manhattan. Today, we hear from the people of Queens.

Yes, you may clap.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And now, we will hear from the leader of the great Borough of Queens, our Borough President and my very good friend, Helen Marshall

[Applause]

HELEN M. MARSHALL: I'm happy that so many people came out. Of course, today, this morning when we woke up, we were greeted by another snowstorm. So we're going to have a lot of snow. We've had a lot so far and we don't know what's in the future. We've got to be able to handle it better.

It does get better because I would say that about, maybe at about 7:30 this morning,

1  
2 the snow plow went through, and the salt, which  
3 didn't happen before. But unfortunately, we have  
4 piles of snow from the first blizzard, from the  
5 first one, all right.

6 Good afternoon. Let me start by  
7 thanking Council Speaker Christine Quinn, Chair  
8 Letitia James, and all the members of this  
9 committee and the members from Queens for their  
10 swift response to the city's uninspiring handling  
11 of the recent blizzard. It paralyzed our great  
12 city.

13 I have come today to share with you  
14 what I saw and heard in the 109 square miles that  
15 is Queens. I, along with most people, am at a  
16 loss to explain what happened from Sunday night  
17 when the blizzard began until Wednesday afternoon,  
18 and Thursday when we finally began to get relief  
19 in a major way in Queens.

20 During the intervening period,  
21 Queens, along with most of the rest of the city,  
22 was a mess. Bus routes, including those such as  
23 the major thoroughfares of Queens Boulevard, Union  
24 Turnpike, Hillside Avenue, and Linden Boulevard,  
25 were in chaos with the movement of buses

1 constricted.

2  
3 Now, Queens has a very poor rail  
4 network. Nearly everyone has to pay a two-fare  
5 zone to get to their train. On 29th Avenue, which  
6 is one that starts really almost at the waterfront  
7 and goes all the way over to Queens Boulevard, and  
8 that means you can intersect with 7 train, you can  
9 intersect with E or F on Queens Boulevard or  
10 Hillside Avenue and they were not plowed. They  
11 were not plowed. I went and I checked with the  
12 people who lived on that block. They said it was  
13 not plowed and they had not seen a bus all day.

14 Now that means hundreds of people,  
15 hundreds of people would have a difficult time  
16 getting to their jobs. So not having bus routes  
17 cleared is definitely a bad thing for Queens.

18 Most of the buses that were  
19 dispatched in Queens with chains on the tires were  
20 an afterthought. They didn't have them on in the  
21 beginning. In the southern reaches of Queens,  
22 hundreds of people waited for more than six hours  
23 to be rescued from a stranded A train, while tens  
24 of thousands more became virtual prisoners in  
25 their own homes as streets went unplowed and

1 remained snowed in.

2                   The worst of it all, though, were  
3 the deaths of several individuals due to the fact  
4 that ambulances were unable to reach them during  
5 the storm and the hours after it had passed  
6 through our area. The first call that I got that  
7 morning, the lady is sitting here with me right  
8 now.  
9

10                   Her mother woke up and she was  
11 having difficulty breathing. The daughter, first  
12 of all she had to hassle with 911, okay. And  
13 then, finally when they sent the ambulance, it got  
14 stranded and it couldn't turn into the block. I  
15 don't know why. I mean, that was terrible. And  
16 her mother passed away. Her mother was an  
17 outstanding citizen, lived in that home for years,  
18 participated in keeping the community clean, so  
19 that was a big blow to all of us.

20                   The ambulance was unable to reach  
21 them during the storm and in the hours after it  
22 had passed through our area. A longtime friend of  
23 mine, Yvonne Freeman, passed away after her  
24 daughter waited for approximately two and a half  
25 hours for an ambulance to arrive. When the

paramedics got there, all they could do was pronounce Yvonne dead.

This is when her daughter called me because they weren't coming. She went and she just screamed to her neighbors and one came running and tried to give her mother artificial respiration but it was too late. Are you the man? Thank you for trying. She was a great lady. I know that her family appreciates it very much.

Following a five-alarm fire in Elmhurst, victims of fire were transported to Elmhurst Hospital by sled and toboggan. Clearly, the city let these people down.

I have lived in my home in East Elmhurst for 50 years. It is a wonderful neighborhood, and I must say that this was a great exception compared to the blizzard of '69. This was the worst job of snow removal in all time. Of the hundreds of calls my office received following the storm, the worries of great Queens' residents summed up the situation as eloquently as anyone.

As a snowbound resident of Kew Gardens Hills, where I have been a homeowner on Gouverneur Road for 17 years, I urgently appeal to

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1  
2 what Dr. Bunch experienced some 42 years ago. My  
3 own experience over more than half a century of  
4 life and civil life here in Queens tells me that  
5 something was amiss.

6 The commissioner is the same, most  
7 of the men and women in Sanitation here are the  
8 same. The men and women of the Department of  
9 Sanitation who have dedicated their lives to  
10 making our city clean all year round and safe to  
11 pass through the winter months work hard and know  
12 what they're doing. I have great faith in  
13 Commissioner Doherty and consider him a friend as  
14 well. He has been under three mayors. This is  
15 the third mayor that he's been under.

16 Trucks break down; get stuck in  
17 every storm, where's our experience for blizzards  
18 control. Was something more than that that was  
19 totally and completely unacceptable? Of course.  
20 A blizzard warning was issued by the National  
21 Weather Service nearly a full day before the first  
22 flake flew.

23 MALE VOICE: Put it up here.

24 HELEN M. MARSHALL: This wire I  
25 think.

The real question, the one that is on everyone's tongue is what was done differently this storm as opposed to other storms in the past. Or why, perhaps, what was not done at all. The chair of this committee, Letitia James, was quoted as suspecting that equipment and personnel were dispatched from City Hall. If this is the case, it is outrageous.

The City Charter is quite clear on co-terminality of services and we have worked very hard in Queens for decades to ensure the proper distribution of resources. When hundreds of residents call to complain that days passed before they saw a plow, I can only say I concur with the chair's remarks. There was certainly not the same amount of equipment and personnel in Queens as there was in the past.

In closing, let me again thank the Speaker for tackling this issue head on and the chair of the commission, Letitia James, and all the members of our Council that are here and listening. We're delighted that you've moved it from borough to borough and just didn't have it in one borough. We really appreciate that. Let's

1  
2 give her a hand for that.

3 [Applause]

4 HELEN M. MARSHALL: I look forward  
5 to working closely with you on this matter to  
6 ensure that all residents of New York City are  
7 never subjected to such a problem again. Thank  
8 you very much.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
10 Thank you, Borough President. The next speaker is  
11 the Speaker of the New York City Council. Ladies  
12 and gentlemen: Speaker Christine Quinn.

13 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very  
14 much.

15 [Applause]

16 SPEAKER QUINN: I fear our  
17 microphone resembles the city's snow cleanup to  
18 the storm. Are we okay over there?

19 HELEN M. MARSHALL: We'll fix it  
20 right away.

21 SPEAKER QUINN: Not for nothing,  
22 you give me a little agitation with everybody on  
23 the chairs and this duct tape, but it's a  
24 professional operation we're running here. Are  
25 you all right over there? Seriously? Okay.

1 First, let me thank Borough  
2 President Marshall for hosting us this afternoon.  
3 I also want to thank the Sanitation Committee  
4 Chair Tish James, the Public Safety Chair Peter  
5 Vallone, the Fire and Criminal Justice Chair Liz  
6 Crowley and the Oversight and Investigations Chair  
7 Jumaane Williams of Brooklyn. They are the chairs  
8 who led the hearing that we had at City Hall that  
9 Chair James referenced and also have been leading  
10 these borough-based hearings.  
11

12 I just want folks to understand  
13 what's going to happen next. You'll hear brief  
14 statements from the chair of the committees that  
15 are doing these hearings, then a brief opening  
16 from the chair of the Queens delegation and then  
17 we'll hear from the representative for the  
18 Department of Sanitation and then we will hear  
19 from the public.

20 Let me first say that the  
21 representative from the Department of Sanitation  
22 who is here, we thank for being here. That said,  
23 we are incredibly disappointed that he was sent to  
24 this and every other hearing.

25 [Background conversation; technical

difficulties]

SPEAKER QUINN: The gentleman from the Department of Sanitation and this is certainly not his fault. So I want to be clear that it is not his fault. But he has been sent to all of the borough hearings with the same opening statement.

Our request had been that someone from the Department of Sanitation at each borough level come and answer a few pointed questions from the delegation, maybe three, maybe four, maybe five, because most of the time it's from the public. But we did believe that having that hearing would have allowed us to drill down to borough-based reasons why the snow fighting went wrong.

At the hearing at City Hall, as you can imagine, we couldn't ask a lot of neighborhood or borough-based questions. We were looking at things at the macro level. Part of the reason we wanted to have these hearings was to also look at the micro level. The City Administration has decided not to participate in that level and we are extraordinarily upset about that decision and disappointed by it.

1  
2 Again, not this gentleman's fault,  
3 but I think it is a missed opportunity in all of  
4 our problem solving efforts and a missed  
5 opportunity in all of you getting more information  
6 about what happened.

7 That said, what happened during the  
8 days of this storm and during the days of cleanup  
9 was, in a word, unacceptable. The City of New  
10 York was brought to its knees by a snowstorm. The  
11 sixth worst, but not the worst we've ever had.  
12 And a department that usually does extraordinary  
13 work for some reason was unable to keep up with  
14 this storm and New Yorkers suffered. Some  
15 suffered unimaginable losses.

16 We are here today in Queens, as we  
17 have been in every borough, for some very simple  
18 reasons. One, we want to make sure that that  
19 never happens again. That the City of New York is  
20 never again stopped because of a snowstorm; that  
21 the City of New York never again fails to deliver  
22 basic services that you pay for as taxpayers.

23 At the hearing we had at City Hall,  
24 the Administration came with a 15-point plan to  
25 improve snow service. Some of those suggestions

1  
2 are good and will be helpful. We learned a lot at  
3 that hearing. But we simply cannot learn the  
4 whole picture of what happened if we don't hear  
5 directly from New Yorkers.

6 So I want to thank all of you in  
7 your busy lives and schedules for coming out  
8 today. I want to let you know that at the  
9 hearings we've already had, we've heard things we  
10 didn't hear at City Hall.

11 We heard in Staten Island that 311  
12 calls were referred to a community board. We  
13 didn't know that. We heard of clear outreach from  
14 neighborhood-based ambulance services who were  
15 told that if they wanted to help on the day of  
16 this blizzard, they had to go to a different  
17 location to get the right radio for the day that  
18 would have enabled them to be helpful. How could  
19 they get to that location from where they were in  
20 Brooklyn? Again, information we would not have  
21 gotten had we not heard directly from the public.

22 We are working on our own set of  
23 proposals to release. Some will be done through  
24 legislation, others to push through policy changes  
25 to make sure something like this never happens

1 again. So I urge all of you to make sure you sign  
2 in this morning, because we want to send those  
3 proposals to you so you can tell us where we hit  
4 the nail on the head and where we didn't and what  
5 else we need to do.

6  
7 Most importantly, I want you to  
8 know today that we are as upset, dissatisfied and  
9 angry about what happened as you are. That's why  
10 we are here with you today to make sure we get  
11 your input so the plans we put in place really  
12 reflect the reality of what happened in every  
13 neighborhood in our city.

14 So thank you very, very much. What  
15 we pledge is we will be following up on this to  
16 make sure we change the protocols again so nothing  
17 like this ever happens again. New Yorkers  
18 shouldn't end up prisoners in their own home  
19 simply because we had a bad snowfall. Thank you,  
20 Madame Chair.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

22 [Applause]

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I'd like to  
24 recognize, to my far right, Council Member Danny  
25 Dromm; to my far left, Council Member Jumaane

Williams, the chair of Investigations and Oversight and also to my far right is Council Member Eric Ulrich.

MALE VOICE: To your left.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Left, sorry, thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER: You're used to him being on the right.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: To my left. Yes, I mentioned Danny Dromm. Now, we'll hear opening remarks from the Chair of Public Safety, Council Member Peter Vallone.

COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you, Council Member James. Speaker, I agree with you. I think it's fitting that on the day of the Queens public hearing regarding the failure to remove snow, the Queens public parking lot next door is not plowed. I don't know if that's a message to people to be late, to not come, but it's made it a little bit more difficult for us.

As the Speaker said, we've learned a lot from these hearings. We're going to learn more today. I was in Brooklyn when he learned the heartbreaking story of a man who waited with his

1 wife while she slowly died, waiting for an  
2 ambulance. I'm sure we're going to hear another  
3 story similar to that from this young lady here,  
4 another heartbreaking story.  
5

6 I speak for Michael Halberian, the  
7 beloved owner of the Steinway Mansion who died  
8 that evening while he waited over a half hour for  
9 an ambulance, and two calls were made. First he  
10 was unconscious and then he was having a heart  
11 attack. He died in the home that he loved and  
12 lived in for 75 years on the top of a lonely,  
13 unplowed Astoria hill. We'll hear more stories.

14 The city may not have the proper  
15 people here, but we're here and you know we know  
16 how to relay your concerns to the Mayor and to the  
17 Administration. We pledge to do that. I'm not  
18 here to listen to myself talk and hopefully  
19 everybody up here speaks only for a few seconds so  
20 that we can get to hear from you. So thank you  
21 all for coming out today.

22 SPEAKER QUINN: Just before we go  
23 on to the next speaker, I know there are a lot of  
24 people here. There are some open seats. We're  
25 going to need to clear the aisle here in the

front, keep the doors clear because that's where speakers are going to come. There are open chairs. So if we could fill up all the chairs before we go to standing room, that would be a big help, particularly since we're going to have people lining up to speak. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. I just want to recognize, before we go to Council Member Crowley, Assembly Member Weprin is here, Assembly Member Ming is here, representatives from Shirley Huntley is here and a representative from Assemblywoman Michelle Titus. Now we will hear from the Chair of Fire and Criminal Justice, Elizabeth Crowley.

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you, Madame Chair, Madame Speaker. Good afternoon. My name is Elizabeth Crowley and I am the chair of the Fire and Criminal Justice Commission, which includes oversight on the emergency medical services.

I'd like to thank Speaker Quinn for her leadership in organizing this series of hearings throughout the City of New York and to my colleagues on the City Council, to the other

1  
2 elected officials for being here today, especially  
3 our host, the Borough President Helen Marshall.

4 Before I begin, I think it's  
5 important to recognize our emergency medical  
6 service workers, the paramedics, the firefighters,  
7 the technicians who during and after the storm  
8 worked around the clock in treacherous conditions,  
9 all with the intent to help save the lives of New  
10 Yorkers, and also our Sanitation workers. Since  
11 the storm, they've worked around the clock.  
12 They're trying to catch up on garbage pickup and  
13 they've been handling a couple of new storms.

14 But what is basic? It's basic for  
15 our local government that when it snows our  
16 streets get plowed. Days after the blizzard, most  
17 of Queens was still buried, impassable and  
18 neighborhood residents were completely trapped.  
19 As Chair of Fire and Criminal Justice, I'm tasked  
20 with specifically focusing on the Fire Department  
21 and EMS response.

22 During the storm, fire trucks and  
23 especially ambulances could not get to emergencies  
24 fast enough. What is usually measure in minutes  
25 and seconds, in some cases, was measured in hours.

1  
2 That's a clear signal to me that during these  
3 times of tough budgets that we cannot cut  
4 services, especially as it relates to our  
5 emergency medical services including our fire  
6 companies.

7 This happened because there was a  
8 failure of the City of New York to declare a snow  
9 emergency, a failure to get the right people  
10 moving at the right time. We as a Council, we're  
11 united here today to get to the bottom of this  
12 dysfunction to make sure that this never happens  
13 again.

14 I'd like to thank all the people  
15 who are here today to testify, and also again, to  
16 my colleagues. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
18 Council Member Jumaane Williams, he's also a co-  
19 chair and he's Chair of Investigations and  
20 Oversight.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you,  
22 Miss Chair. Thank you, Speaker and the Borough  
23 President Ms. Marshall, and all of my colleagues.

24 I have to say, I was a little  
25 concerned about the hearing being at noon and if

1  
2 people would show up. It just goes to show how  
3 angry people are that will take time out in the  
4 middle of the day to come and express their anger.  
5 I'm glad we're able to give that opportunity.

6 Again, I just hope this message  
7 goes back. I hate picking on you every hearing,  
8 but it's just unfortunate that the Administration  
9 continues to send people to talk to these angry  
10 men and women but not to talk with them and not to  
11 hear their concerns. This is a lot of people.  
12 This is 12 noon on a workday and they decided they  
13 needed to come here because they were so affected  
14 by the storm. It's this kind of nonchalant  
15 arrogance I think that caused a lot of this to  
16 begin with. It doesn't seem to be changing. So I  
17 hope you send that message and perhaps in the next  
18 two they can send someone to have these people who  
19 lost family members who took time out of their day  
20 to have some of their questions answered.

21 We have the hearings and I think  
22 it's safe to say that people are angry. You have  
23 a right to be angry: loss of services, loss of  
24 lives. I'm glad we're giving this opportunity to  
25 express your anger, and hopefully we can also get

1  
2 some information from you that can help us so this  
3 doesn't happen again.

4 I think most of us are aware that  
5 there was just a complete meltdown and breakdown  
6 in city services. There was testimony of such.  
7 There was no really leadership. When the Mayor  
8 and Deputy Mayor left there was no one to take  
9 charge and make the decisions that needed to be  
10 made. They did not declare a snow emergency.  
11 They also did not declare a local emergency.

12 I don't think they understood the  
13 tools that they had and even knew that they could  
14 call a local emergency. I don't think they  
15 understand the difference between what the Deputy  
16 Mayor's powers were and what the OEM's powers  
17 were. There was a complete meltdown. The  
18 nonchalant arrogance in it, I think that's being  
19 displayed here when they're not showing up or  
20 they're showing up just to talk to us.

21 [Applause]

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: They also  
23 wouldn't listen at that point to the many Council  
24 Members who on this dais, who were feeing them  
25 information, telling them that what they were



1  
2 unfortunately, we cannot hear from all of the  
3 members. He will be representing the Queens  
4 delegation. He is the Deputy Majority Leader.  
5 Ladies and gentlemen: Council Member Leroy Comrie.

6 [Applause]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Thank you.  
8 Good afternoon. First, I want to convey my  
9 special thanks to you, the public, for being here  
10 today. I had no doubt that we would have a full  
11 house at noon today. I had no doubt that we will  
12 hear from you some very thorough and pointed  
13 complaints, suggestions and especially ideas on  
14 what the city can do to improve from the debacle  
15 that happened on December 26th.

16 The blizzard that hit our city on  
17 December 26th was not the worst. It was not  
18 unprecedented. It was not anything that the city  
19 hadn't handled in past years. In fact, last  
20 February we had two similar storms within a week  
21 of each other and the city's response was better.

22 It was completely unacceptable what  
23 happened on that weekend. It was completely  
24 unacceptable what has happened since as the city's  
25 response has been tepid and indifferent and even

1  
2 insulting, especially to Queens' residents that  
3 was still stuck up until almost a week later with  
4 being unable to get access to the city streets.

5 As you know, Queens is different  
6 and Queens is the best borough.

7 [Applause]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: It's  
9 different from all the other boroughs. Sorry,  
10 Madame Chair.

11 SPEAKER QUINN: You tell them,  
12 Leroy.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: We rely  
14 heavily on buses to get to work. We don't have  
15 subway access two blocks away like many others do,  
16 especially in the eastern and southern parts of  
17 our borough. If we don't have bus service to get  
18 to work, we can't get to work. If our secondary  
19 streets are not plowed, we can't get access to the  
20 main roads. We had many incidents where our main  
21 roads were not taken care of and where our bus  
22 service was totally inadequate and even when it  
23 was failing, they continued to send bus after bus  
24 down routes that continued to block main access to  
25 roads that cut off emergency services.

1  
2 I regret to inform you that I just  
3 heard of another death that happened as a result  
4 of a person not being able to get access to  
5 medical services on that day. That was Michal  
6 Angel Velar [phonetic]. He was a dialysis patient  
7 that lived in Southeast Queens, in Rosedale. He  
8 just passed away on January 13th. The funeral was  
9 January 19th. I want to express condolences to  
10 his family.

11 It's just one example of so many  
12 people that were more than disturbed by this  
13 storm. Their lives were disrupted. Their quality  
14 of faith in this city was disrupted. We need to  
15 restore that faith. We need to make sure that  
16 whatever we do here today, and will assure that  
17 your complaints, your ideas, your suggestions will  
18 be taken back to the city. We will make sure that  
19 even above the so-called 15-point plan that Deputy  
20 Mayor Goldsmith put forth, we're going to make  
21 sure that this city never fails us again.

22 My concern is that if this were a  
23 terrorist attack or a major attack on the city,  
24 that we would have the same people running around  
25 in circles trying to figure who was on first so

1  
2 that they could have a coordinated response. We  
3 need to make sure that whatever is done in the  
4 city is done better and that this blizzard is the  
5 last example of chickens running around with their  
6 heads off. We're making sure that this city,  
7 which is the best city in the world, has a proper  
8 response to whatever challenges that happen to it.

9 This is the strongest city in the  
10 world and the best borough in the city. We know  
11 that together working with you and listening from  
12 your concerns, your ideas and your examples today  
13 we will make sure that this never happens again.

14 I want to thank all of the co-  
15 chairs. I want to thank Speaker Quinn for wanting  
16 to hold these hearings in each borough. I know  
17 that we will learn a lot from you today. Thank  
18 you also to our Borough President for hosting us  
19 here at Borough Hall. We will be here until the  
20 last person speaks. We will be here to listen to  
21 all of your concerns. Again, thank you for being  
22 here today. Thank you very much.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

24 [Applause]

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,

1  
2 Council Member. First, before we begin, let me  
3 just make a couple of notes that the attendance  
4 here today is really a testament to the outrage  
5 and the inconvenience that was suffered by  
6 citizens of Queens.

7 My first note, and this is really  
8 not a personal attack upon Mr. Terranova, I'm  
9 beginning to like him because he's following me  
10 around, but a criticism of the Administration that  
11 during the original hearing, a number of Council  
12 Members were limited in their questions and they  
13 did not get the answers. They wanted to ask these  
14 pointed questions at these borough hearings so  
15 that they can get some answers. The failure to  
16 present and/or produce the borough superintendent  
17 of the Department of Sanitation is a slap in the  
18 face to the body of the City Council, but more  
19 importantly, a slap in the face to the citizens of  
20 Queens.

21 [Applause]

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: My last point  
23 is that I thought it was necessary that the Mayor  
24 should have included in his State of the City  
25 address one sentence, one sentence to all New

1  
2 Yorkers and the sentence is: I'm sorry. I think  
3 that would have been in order.

4 The first speaker is Iggy  
5 Terranova, representing the Department of  
6 Sanitation, Citywide Community Affairs. Mr.  
7 Terranova?

8 SPEAKER QUINN: No. This man was  
9 sent here by the Commissioner. He doesn't get  
10 booed. He doesn't come, he loses his job. He's  
11 doing the job he was told to do. You want to boo  
12 the commissioner is you see him, that's fine. But  
13 this gentleman is not going to be booed. He's  
14 been sent and he's doing what he has to do to keep  
15 his job. He's gone everywhere. So I want to be  
16 very clear. We will treat him with the respect we  
17 wish we were treated with by the department.

18 [Applause]

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You may begin.

20 IGNACIO TERRANOVA: Good afternoon.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon.

22 IGNACIO TERRANOVA: My name is Iggy  
23 Terranova. I am here representing the Department  
24 of Sanitation on behalf of Commissioner John J.  
25 Doherty. I am here today to listen to the

1  
2 community's concerns regarding the department's  
3 response to the December 26th blizzard. Despite  
4 our efforts, our snowplowing operations did not  
5 meet the standards that New Yorkers have come to  
6 expect from the department, which we also have  
7 said that it's no acceptable.

8 We are continuing to assess the  
9 storm's response with other agencies and we'll  
10 implement changes necessary to enhance interagency  
11 coordination as well as communication with the  
12 public. Some of those changes were already  
13 implemented during last week's snowstorm and  
14 today's snowstorm.

15 We take pride in our work. We will  
16 continue to work hard to restore the department's  
17 reputation for being the world's best snow  
18 fighters.

19 I will now listen to your comments  
20 and report them all back to Commissioner Doherty.  
21 Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
23 Terranova. Thank you very much. Thank you.  
24 First, I'd like to submit for the record,  
25 testimony from State Senator Jose Peralta. Our

1 first witness is Assemblywoman Grace Meng.

2 Assemblywoman?

3 [Applause]

4 GRACE MENG: Good afternoon. I  
5 want to thank our wonderful Queens Borough  
6 President Helen Marshall and her entire staff for  
7 hosting us here today. I want to thank Speaker  
8 Quinn and all the chairpersons of the various  
9 committees and my wonderful colleagues in  
10 government for taking the time out of their busy  
11 schedules to attend this hearing and to listen to  
12 what we, as our Councilman Comrie said, the best  
13 borough in New York City, people have to say.

14 I knew that the snow removal was  
15 taking too long when I asked my two year old what  
16 color snow was, because we were learning colors,  
17 and he told me black and gray. This was really  
18 disturbed. But all joking aside, snow removal  
19 usually is handled very well by the Department of  
20 Sanitation and goes relatively unnoticed. As a  
21 result, New York City residents have come to  
22 expect excellence from the department following  
23 most major snowstorms.

24 It's only when the department fails  
25

1  
2 to meet New Yorkers' expectations that their  
3 performance is scrutinized. While my constituents  
4 and I appreciate the difficulty of clearing more  
5 than 6,000 miles of roadways after a major  
6 snowfall, it's important for the resources of the  
7 department to be allocated fairly.

8 A focus on Manhattan leaves our  
9 residents here in Queens and other boroughs with  
10 more hardships and more inconveniences that have a  
11 real effect on the vulnerable. I want to ensure  
12 in the future that Queens will not be neglected  
13 and that we will receive our fair share of New  
14 York City's resources.

15 Though Queens is not considered the  
16 center of New York City, it is the largest in size  
17 and the second largest in population. With over  
18 2.2 million residents, Queens is more populated  
19 than most major American cities. Queens, along  
20 with some of the other boroughs, are unfortunately  
21 called and treated as the outer boroughs. This  
22 definitely showed this time when it came to snow  
23 removal.

24 Simply by looking at the number of  
25 snow removal complaints by borough, between the

1 start of the storm, we can see the discrepancy.  
2 According to many reports, for example, while only  
3 approximately 400 to 500 people in Manhattan  
4 called 311 to complain, more than 13,000 people in  
5 Queens did. Those are the ones that could get  
6 through via internet or the telephone.  
7 Additionally, many of my constituents could not  
8 even get through to 311, so they had to call my  
9 office and many of the people's offices here  
10 today.  
11

12 In Queens, snow removal did not  
13 meet residents' expectations and needs. While  
14 some may say that the snow only caused  
15 inconvenience, people who had no choice but to go  
16 out suffered real hardship. The most extreme  
17 example that we've also heard today was the  
18 inability of ambulances to reach emergencies  
19 because streets were not plowed. More commonly,  
20 however, the elderly were unable to travel for  
21 food, medical treatment and could not even rely on  
22 public transit.

23 People who could not afford to take  
24 the day off from work had difficulty traveling  
25 because the snow hampered even major roadways in

1  
2 Queens. My district, Flushing, is home to two of  
3 the few hospitals remaining in Queens and has one  
4 of the largest senior citizen populations in New  
5 York State. The people who were most affected are  
6 the most vulnerable in our city. We must in the  
7 future be able to provide better service to New  
8 Yorkers who already face the most hardship.

9 I hope that in the future, and it's  
10 already showing in the last few snowstorms, that a  
11 better system will be in place to monitor and  
12 react to conditions, especially here in Queens.

13 I want to thank you for the  
14 improvement that has been shown with the City  
15 Administration. Lastly, thank you to those who we  
16 don't testify about, thank you to those who the  
17 media doesn't always cover, those who did their  
18 jobs well and those, whether you're Sanitation  
19 workers or just ordinary citizens who went above  
20 and beyond the call of duty to help those who  
21 couldn't help themselves.

22 And most of all, our condolences to  
23 those who lost family members; our hearts go out  
24 to you. This is just one part of what we're doing  
25 to make sure that this never happens again. Thank

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you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,  
Assemblywoman.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Assembly Member  
David Weprin, for brief comments.

DAVID WEPRIN: You have the copies  
of my testimony.

COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Can we boo  
him?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No.

SPEAKER QUINN: What you do around  
the family dinner table is up to you guys, but  
playing the role of your other, no, you can't boo  
your brother. Go right ahead, David.

DAVID WEPRIN: Mom always liked him  
best. It's to be on this side once in a while.  
Obviously, I'm used to being on that side.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The clock is  
on, Assemblyman.

DAVID WEPRIN: It's nice to see so  
many of my former colleagues. I want to thank  
Borough President Marshall for hosting this and of  
course Speaker Quinn for being here. In her busy

1  
2 schedule, obviously, it shows that this is very  
3 important to hear from all the residents of the  
4 city. Thank you to all of the co-chairs and my  
5 colleagues.

6 I submitted a copy of a letter I  
7 wrote to Commissioner Doherty, outlining my  
8 community's complaints, which is attached to the  
9 testimony. Unfortunately, I just received a  
10 response from Commissioner Doherty today. He's  
11 basically enclosed a copy of his testimony to the  
12 City Council at a prior hearing and did not  
13 address my specific issues. So I just wanted to  
14 point that out.

15 I live in Holliswood, Queens, down  
16 the block from the Holliswood Hospital. Hospital  
17 administrators knocked on my door at approximately  
18 2:30 p.m. on Monday, December 27th to advise me  
19 that the streets in front of the hospital and the  
20 intersecting roadways had not been plowed and  
21 prevented ambulances from getting to the hospital.

22 This created a very hazardous  
23 situation for the patients and staff currently at  
24 Holliswood Hospital as well as for the patients  
25 that were supposed to be coming vis-à-vis the

ambulances. After repeated phone calls and emails to local Sanitation supervisors, the hospital perimeters were finally plowed but not until the following morning.

On Tuesday, December 28th, my staff fielded hundreds of calls and emails from constituents still stuck inside their homes because vehicles plowing the main road had inadvertently blockaded their streets with snow from the main roadways. Many of the side roads in the area had yet to see Department of Sanitation vehicles plowing their streets.

Four days after the December 26th storm, I was still receiving many calls at my district office from constituents who were unable to leave their homes because of the large amount of snow on their streets. Several streets had not even been plowed once. This is four days later.

Cleanup efforts after the smaller recent January 11th storm markedly improved in most areas of my district, but were still below standards in many crucial areas. P.S. 221Q, the North Hill School located at 57-40 Marathon Parkway in Little Neck, just up the hill from my

1 district office, reported treacherous road  
2 conditions in front of the main entrance of their  
3 school. The students at this school use the 60th  
4 Avenue entrance to enter and exit the building.  
5 Buses also use the 60th Avenue entrance to pick up  
6 and drop off students each day.  
7

8 On Wednesday, January 12th, after  
9 Mayor Bloomberg declared conditions were safe  
10 enough for schools to open, the students and  
11 teachers of P.S. 221 were met with impassable  
12 unplowed roads. A bus traveling down 60th Avenue  
13 skidded and was stuck in the road. As 60th Avenue  
14 was impassable, children were forced to be dropped  
15 off on the heavily trafficked Marathon Parkway and  
16 cross the icy street to get to the school. It is  
17 unacceptable to put our children in such a  
18 dangerous situation.

19 While there were definitely many  
20 issues with snow removal efforts this season, I  
21 must point out that the individuals at First  
22 Deputy Commissioner Sullivan's office were  
23 extremely helpful in getting local Sanitation  
24 boards to dig out some of my elderly constituents  
25 who were repeatedly plowed in by the Department of

Sanitation trucks.

Some Sanitation boards in my district were highly responsive to faxes and emails from my staff regarding un-cleared roadways during both storms, making it a point to promptly contact my office after the roads were cleared.

I would also like to thank and recognize many of the community volunteer ambulance corps throughout Queens but particularly in my district the Glen Oaks Volunteer Ambulance Corps who basically filled in after EMS did not respond immediately. I know we have a number of tragedies and deaths. Again, I also want to extend my condolences to you and the other people we will hear from about the deaths that never should have taken place.

I hope that in light of these public hearings we can maintain an open dialogue and work alongside the New York City Department of Sanitation in a more cooperative and collaborative manner in both my Assembly District 24, but really throughout the entire City of New York.

Once again, I want to thank you all for conducting this hearing in the Borough of

Queens. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could we put the clock to three minutes. Ladies and gentlemen, as we go to the public testimony, you will have three minutes because we have so many individuals who would like to say a few words. The next speaker is Lois Menyweather, representing Senator Shirley Huntley.

LOIS MENYWEATHER: Good afternoon. On behalf of State Senator Shirley Huntley, I would just like to say thank you to the Speaker, to our Chairperson Letitia James and to the Borough President for hosting this hearing today.

I want to just keep my comments very brief, but I agree and the senator agrees with all of the comments that have been made so far. I think it is appalling, and we really take exception to Mayor Bloomberg for disrespecting us as taxpayers in the Borough of Queens. He has totally disrespected us by not sending his committee chairs, his chair people to attend this meeting. I commend the ones that are here today.

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So it is totally unacceptable.

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2 Like Borough President Marshall said, we are in a  
3 two-fare zone. We need to get to the buses and  
4 subways. Bus stops have not been plowed as we  
5 stand here today. It's totally unacceptable.  
6 311: totally unacceptable. Garbage pickup:  
7 totally unacceptable.

8 Some of the houses, we don't know  
9 when the garbage truck is coming. When they did  
10 come, they picked up garbage at every other house  
11 on my block. I don't know what happened on other  
12 blocks.

13 SPEAKER QUINN: What block is that?

14 LOIS MENYWEATHER: This is in  
15 Community Board 13.

16 SPEAKER QUINN: For everyone: if  
17 you give specific streets and blocks, we do know  
18 the gentleman from Department of Sanitation is  
19 taking that back. To the degree to which people  
20 in their testimony or afterwards want to grab the  
21 DOS representative and give him specific streets  
22 or give it to the Council staff and we will  
23 forward it to Sanitation.

24 LOIS MENYWEATHER: I sure will.

25 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

LOIS MENYWEATHER: I sure will.

The other complaint is they said do not put out your recycling garbage because recycling would not be picked. Yet, some blocks have had recycling picked up. I'm still waiting for notification.

I want to, again, say thank you to all of you and I commend my Councilman Comrie and Wills. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Lois. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Our next witness, if you can remove the clock, Ms. Laura Freeman, would you like to say a few words? No clock.

LAURA FREEMAN: Ms. Marshall, this is the first time I'm here without my partner, my mom, Yvonne Freeman. On the morning of December 27th, as I told you, Ms. Marshall, my mother asked for help. She said she couldn't get her breath. I did everything I could do. I did what they tell you to do in an emergency is call 911, and I called, and I called, and I called, and nobody

1 answered. I just kept getting a message. Why?

2 I being of all of you, please, why,  
3 why? I still want my partner to clean up the  
4 neighborhood with. I want my partner. She was my  
5 life. Please, Ms. Marshall, get to the bottom of  
6 this, plus you knew us personally. Please,  
7 whatever you do, please, so I can ease my mind. I  
8 cry every night. I miss her so much. Please,  
9 whatever you do, I miss her so much. Please.

10 HELEN M. MARSHALL: You got me.

11 LAURA FREEMAN: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.  
13 Freeman.

14 HELEN M. MARSHALL: Thank you for  
15 having the strength to come today.

16 [Applause]

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Freeman,  
18 our thoughts and our prayers are with you and your  
19 family during this difficult time. We, again,  
20 will get to the bottom of it and try to prevent  
21 this from happening again. Sanford Rubenstein,  
22 representing the Freeman family.

23 SANFORD RUBENSTEIN: Unfortunately,  
24 I now represent two families who suffered--  
25

1  
2                   SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] Folks  
3 just need to identify themselves when they start  
4 to speak.

5                   SANFORD RUBENSTEIN: Sanford  
6 Rubenstein, attorney for the Freeman family and  
7 the Reed family. I unfortunately now represent  
8 two families who suffered the wrongful death of  
9 loved ones as a result of multiple failures of  
10 city agencies.

11                   Here in Queens, the family of  
12 Yvonne Freeman, and to be more specific, she died  
13 of a heart attack on December 27th, while waiting  
14 for an ambulance to get through unplowed blizzard  
15 streets. Her daughter was unable to reach 911.  
16 all she got was a recorded message and buzzing  
17 tones. Why did it break down? Why was it not  
18 working? How do we prevent this from happening in  
19 the future?

20                   In Brooklyn, the family of Clara  
21 Reed called 911 at 7:42 a.m. It wasn't until 11  
22 minutes after 9:00, an hour and a half later, the  
23 Fire Department responded. It was too late.  
24 Clara Reed died of a heart attack.

25                   The failure to declare a snow

1  
2 emergency was inexcusable, as was the breakdown of  
3 911. The city has an obligation to correct these  
4 deficiencies to prevent future wrongful deaths  
5 during snowstorms.

6 The city must also improve its  
7 preparedness for all types of emergencies in the  
8 snow. If fire trucks can get to fires in snow-  
9 filled streets then certainly the city can have  
10 vehicles that can get through the snow-filled  
11 streets for medical emergencies as well.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

13 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very  
15 much. Senator Malcolm Smith? After Senator Smith  
16 is Gary Giordano, representing Community Board 5,  
17 if you could move behind the Senator, that would  
18 be greatly appreciated. Good afternoon, Senator.

19 MALCOLM SMITH: Good morning.  
20 Thank you very much, Madame Chair. To Speaker of  
21 the Council Christine Quinn, to my colleagues in  
22 the City Council, Councilman Leroy Comrie, Ruben  
23 Wills, Van Bramer, Honorable Mark Weprin, Jumaane  
24 Williams, Councilman Ulrich. If I keep going,  
25 I'll never get to my comments.

1  
2                   SPEAKER QUINN: You're eating the  
3 clock.

4                   MALCOLM SMITH: Given the timeframe  
5 of what one is allowed to say, let me just thank  
6 you for following up to these five boroughs. I  
7 don't think you've heard testimony throughout the  
8 city that was not horrific. We all have personal  
9 stories. I have family members, one of which was  
10 on dialysis, who could not get to treatment.  
11 Another who had suffered sickle cell could not be  
12 taken to the hospital.

13                   My only hope is that going forward  
14 that the City Council would be part of the  
15 planning of the response. We did our snow patrol  
16 the last snow storm, and there were actually still  
17 streets that had challenges during that second  
18 snowstorm. There were challenges right on the  
19 Grand Central Parkway, as I expressed it to the  
20 Mayor and to some of his colleagues.

21                   But most importantly, is the fact  
22 that the city failed the people of the city. I  
23 classified it as we now call ourselves a first  
24 class city but I think we experienced what was a  
25 first class embarrassment. If you look around at

1 the people who are here, the young lady who just  
2 testified here who lost a family member, there is  
3 no excuse for that. There was no excuse for that.

4 What I hope, when the time comes  
5 for the city to deliver, whether to settle or not,  
6 as one cannot put a price on anyone's life, there  
7 is no discussion about how much or when do we  
8 settle with this young lady. Because there is no  
9 limit to what she has lost, there is no limit to  
10 what she should get in return. It's your tax  
11 dollars, it's my tax dollars, but you know what,  
12 so what, so what, because we all failed her. It  
13 wasn't just the City of New York, it was all of  
14 us.

15 So I would ask going forward,  
16 Madame Speaker, and Chairwoman, that you continue  
17 to use the guidance of your office, the expertise  
18 of your office, the diligence that both of you  
19 have shown and do not let the Mayor off the hook.

20 [Applause]

21 MALCOLM SMITH: The Mayor is a  
22 friend. I talk to him from time to time, but this  
23 is no time for friendship. This is business. The  
24 Mayor failed this city. He failed the residents  
25

1  
2 of this city. So therefore, going forward, we are  
3 now going to count on you to run this city, at  
4 times, when it comes to snowstorm action like  
5 this. So I thank you very much for the time. I  
6 thank you for giving me a moment.

7 For those that are speaking behind  
8 me, I thank you for allowing me to break the order  
9 in which the testimony was coming. Thank you very  
10 much.

11 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you, Senator.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,  
13 Senator.

14 [Applause]

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,  
16 Senator. I just want you to know I have a shovel  
17 in the back of my car. Around the boroughs,  
18 everyone talks about how they suggested local  
19 control, giving some more power to the Borough  
20 Presidents. I know that those who are more local  
21 are our community boards. We'd first like to hear  
22 from Community Board 5, Gary Giordano, followed by  
23 Lawrence McClean of Community Board 13, followed  
24 by Karyn Petersen from Community Board 10 and then  
25 Frank Bulluscio from Community Board 6.

1  
2                   SPEAKER QUINN:  If we could have  
3     some quiet in the hallway.  If they're doing  
4     interviews, if they could, just step down the  
5     hallway.

6                   GARY GIORDANO:  Thank you.  I'm  
7     Gary Giordano.  I'm the district manager of  
8     Community Board 5 Queens.  Thank you, Speaker  
9     Quinn and Borough President Marshall and the  
10    dedicated members of the City Council for having  
11    this hearing today.

12                   We see that a poor response to  
13    plowing people's roadways or plowing our roadways,  
14    in a snowstorm can be the difference between life  
15    and death, and may this sort of thing never happen  
16    again.

17                   I think to get to the bottom of  
18    this, one has to talk to the people on the ground  
19    who were at the Sanitation Department and the Fire  
20    Department and EMS and the Police Department, just  
21    to name a few.  Then maybe you'll get some  
22    straight answers about whether any kind of  
23    shenanigans were being played out in the street.  
24    I think the chain of command is very important in  
25    who's responsibility is it at what point in time

1  
2 to call a snow emergency.

3 I've been district manager of  
4 Community Board 5 for 21 years.

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could we just  
6 have a little bit more quiet in the background?

7 GARY GIORDANO: For 21 years.  
8 We've had other real bad snowstorms. I forget  
9 whether it was January '96 or '97 when 20  
10 something inches fell in the city. My opinion was  
11 that things could have been done a heck of a lot  
12 better, and I hope you can find out the reasons  
13 why they weren't.

14 I think, to some extent, some of us  
15 who were not as versed as you've become in the  
16 last couple of weeks, don't know all those answers  
17 and those specifics, but I'll tell you this: in  
18 the 21 years that I've been district manager, in  
19 my opinion, this was the worst snowstorm that I  
20 saw, and I'll tell you why. It occurred the day  
21 after Christmas. I think people were lulled to a  
22 certain extent. The severity of the storm was not  
23 predicted right away. First, it was supposed to  
24 be not much more than a dusting. Then it go to 6,  
25 then it got to somewhere between 12 and two feet.

10                   When I went out at 9:00, the  
11           situation was totally different. The wind was  
12           blowing from two different directions minimum. I  
13           was just demoralized and stopped shoveling. After  
14           9:00, the amount of snow that fell in short  
15           periods of time, I wouldn't dare drive my car. I  
16           don't know what it would be like to drive a  
17           Sanitation plow. These, mainly men, have been  
18           working 14 hour days since the storm until very,  
19           very recently. So this wasn't a normal snowstorm  
20           and we haven't been tested since then.

The last thing I'll say is to have front-end loaders when you get behind and to be dumping that snow on a consistent basis, you know you can't have enough of that. Once you have a half a foot of snow in the street, the plow is not

going to do it.

So I thank you and I'm sorry for those who had catastrophes and we need to do a lot better next time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you. I just want to let you and other folks know that we have requested from the Department of Sanitation a breakdown of what type of machinery they have by borough. We haven't gotten that yet. Again, if you sign in, particularly if you give us your email, we'll be able to as we get info to send it back to you. When we find out about end loaders, ice melters, et cetera, we've asked for all of that specific by borough designation and we will get that to you once we get it.

GARY GIORDANO: Thank you very much.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: There are seats up here, for anybody that wants to sit down, we have seats up here.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Lawrence

1  
2 McClean, if you can come to the podium. We've  
3 been joined by--are you okay? Let's get settled.  
4 We've been joined by Council Member Julissa  
5 Ferreras. Everyone is seated and everyone is  
6 comfortable?

7 LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: Borough  
8 President Helen Marshall, Speaker Christine Quinn,  
9 Honorable Council Chairs Letitia James, Elizabeth  
10 Crowley, Peter Vallone and James Vacca. Community  
11 Board 13 wishes to thank you for holding this  
12 hearing. Good day. My name is Lawrence McClean.  
13 I'm district manager for Community Board 13  
14 Queens.

15 First and foremost, what defines  
16 the residents of Community Board 13 Queens, as can  
17 be said for New Yorkers throughout the five  
18 boroughs, is their resiliency. No matter the  
19 tragedy or obstacles, they will find a way to  
20 persevere. They can only deal with the situation  
21 at hand, however, if there is a clear picture of  
22 what is going on.

23 From the perspective of District  
24 Office of Board 13 Queens, the level of  
25 aggravation is compounded by the following facts.

1  
2 I've been serving as a district manager for almost  
3 20 years, starting with Board 9 in Manhattan on  
4 the West Side and for the past 3 years in  
5 Southeast Queens in my home borough. The last 15  
6 years I have developed a snow removal policy via  
7 our district service. That's attached at the back  
8 of your report.

9 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

10 LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: This was the  
11 first storm where no attempt was made to adhere to  
12 the plan. In fact, the previous two years, the  
13 community residents applauded the responsiveness  
14 of our Sanitation workers, commending them in  
15 writing. The key to this success was our  
16 superintendent.

17 In the winters of 2009 and 2010, if  
18 we received reports of streets missed, there was  
19 an immediate response. More importantly, if we  
20 received reports of seniors, diabetics or cancer  
21 patients unable to get off their streets for  
22 medical treatment from Bellerose, south of  
23 Rosedale, once this information was relayed,  
24 within a half an hour, the block was cleared.

25 This year, despite our complaints,

1 we lost this invaluable asset to our district,  
2 which is, at 13 square miles, as big as Savanna,  
3 Georgia. When the superintendent was reassigned,  
4 in fact at a Public Safety hearing, chaired by  
5 Jonathan Raines, held on November 18th, which is a  
6 month before the first snowflake fell, in  
7 Laurelton, the residents raised concerns with  
8 Sanitation representatives, right here, about snow  
9 pickup with the new superintendent, we were  
10 assured that snow removal would continue to be on-  
11 point.  
12

13 With this storm, calls to the  
14 Sanitation Department went unanswered. Our  
15 current superintendent did not respond to emails  
16 sent to him by Bryan J. Block, Chair of Board 13  
17 Queens until January 13th, 2011. Reports were  
18 published in the newspaper that by Tuesday 4:00  
19 p.m., 60 percent of the tertiary streets in Queens  
20 had been plowed. So as civilians, we're compelled  
21 to ask for a definition of plowed, for with my  
22 experience I did not see it.

23 The Honorable Vivian E. Cook,  
24 Assemblywoman for the 32nd District reported to me  
25 that many of the drivers she observed seemed

1  
2 poorly trained in operating plows in her area,  
3 which includes Board 12. Our plan calls for major  
4 roads and bus routes to be done. Instead, the Q84  
5 and 77 were not running. The 84 was still on  
6 Wednesday, the 29th, stopping 20 blocks from a  
7 destination.

8                   You have the rest of my statement  
9 there. The key for us was that we had a plan and  
10 other boards had plans to work with Sanitation.  
11 Community Boards and the district managers should  
12 be in constant contact with Sanitation. Our board  
13 and several other boards have contact lists of  
14 people that we can reach out to and find out  
15 what's happening throughout the district and  
16 dispatch Sanitation if they're going to listen.  
17 They did not listen.

18                   The fact that I'm aggravated is the  
19 fact that we took the time and have taken the time  
20 to sit down and say this is what we want for our  
21 particular district. We know that other boards  
22 have done the same. We were ignored. Thank you.

23                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. McClean,  
24 before you leave, Council Member Williams has a  
25 question.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you very much for your testimony. You said this is the list of the most important roadways.

LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: What we do at our district service cabinet meeting where the Community Board manager meets with the agencies is by October we look at our district and try to come up with the areas of greatest concern for our district.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Is this unique to your community board?

LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: That plan is unique to our community board. I know there's one in Board 9 in Manhattan because I wrote that one.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do most of them have it?

LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: Not that I know of but we've passed it along to others. That's what we set up for our district and working with the superintendent, it was supposed to be followed and it was not.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Was it followed before, previously?

LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: As I said, it

was followed right up until our superintendent and we got a new one in.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.

LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: All right.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You got a new one?

LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: No, the new one was brought in four months ago. The first time we heard from him was January 13th.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Your former superintendent was fired?

LAWRENCE T. MCCLEAN: No, he was reassigned. As a matter of fact, he covered the nighttime snow pickup in Board 13 at the last snow. So they brought him back for that, after we sent them a copy of our statement.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Ms. Petersen, Community Board 10.

KARYN PETERSEN: If quotes from Charles Dickens come to mind during the Christmas season, they are usually those found in a Christmas carol. This year, some from Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities, seems to be more apropos. Lines such as: it was the worst of times, it was

1  
2 the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of  
3 incredulity and it is the winter of despair come  
4 to mind.

5                   Clearly, the negative perception  
6 that we have two cities: Manhattan and outer  
7 boroughs, was strengthened among Queens' residents  
8 by the city's inadequate response to this  
9 blizzard. The snow cleanup in our district was  
10 far less than satisfactory. Major roadways and  
11 our commercial strips generally were plowed on  
12 Monday, December 27th, 2010. Overall, residential  
13 streets not blocked by abandoned vehicles were  
14 plowed on Wednesday, December 29th, 2010, although  
15 a few were done earlier.

16                   Our residents were not just  
17 inconvenienced; their lives and homes were  
18 endangered because of a situation when the  
19 movement of emergency response vehicles was  
20 impeded for an inordinate length of time.

21                   Emergency services were impacted as  
22 the ability of emergency vehicles to navigate was  
23 hampered by streets that were impassable due to  
24 the lack of plowing and/or private vehicles left  
25 stuck in the snow by drivers who were on the roads

during the storm and in the hours immediately after the snowfall stopped.

The closest hospital facility to our area is Jamaica Hospital, which is located in Community Board 9. The hospital's director of public affairs indicated to us that although the Van Wyck Expressway was plowed on Monday, its service road and other local streets were not plowed until Tuesday night with some not plowed until Wednesday. He reported to us that the hospital was not able to get deliveries of medical supplies or food and that to his knowledge at least nine ambulances were stuck in snow.

Community Board 10 is one of the few areas in the city served by a volunteer fire department as well as the FDNY. The West Hamilton Beach Volunteer Fire Department has indicated to us that their ability to respond was severely curtailed. It should be noted that there is only one roadway providing vehicular access or egress to Hamilton Beach and many streets in that community are of narrow widths.

That community is immediate adjacent to JFK Airport where the possibility of a

1 disaster is always present. Even though planes  
2 were not flying, the fuel tanks and other airport  
3 facilities are still there. The Hamilton Beach  
4 area is also subject to tidal flooding during many  
5 nor'easter storms. During major storms like this  
6 recent one, the area often requires special  
7 attention. Unfortunately, at this time, it did  
8 not get the immediate attention and luckily there  
9 was no high tide flooding along with the storm.  
10 Fortunately, there was not an event requiring FDNY  
11 fire or ambulance response in the Hamilton Beach  
12 area during the storm that we are aware of while  
13 the area was completely cut off.

14  
15 Many roadways in other areas of our  
16 community, like Lindenwood and Richmond Hill were  
17 also impassable. Ozone Park and South Ozone Park  
18 fared no better. Although we did not receive any  
19 specific information detailing response problems  
20 from the local police precinct or fire companies  
21 located in our board area, it would seem that  
22 given the overall level of un-cleared and/or  
23 blocked streets in our area and all the outer  
24 boroughs, emergency response to any type of  
25 emergency was severely impacted.

Although there may have been some salting on major roadways prior to Sunday, December 26th, 2010, we are not aware that any salting was done. It would have probably lessened negative impact if Crossway Boulevard, Rockaway Boulevard, Liberty Avenue, Lefferts Boulevard and North and South Conduit Avenues in our district had been salted prior to snow falling.

In the past, following heavy snowfalls, we have experienced some isolated problems with specific streets and/or areas within our boards. But they were quickly addressed when the responsible agencies were notified of them. Overall, we have not seen a district-wide unacceptable set of conditions like this for decades that our residents have experienced.

And although there are always some problems in major snowstorms and by and large the city's response to them has been acceptable over the years, therefore, our residents' dissatisfaction now is exacerbated by their knowledge that the city is capable of doing an acceptable snow cleanup in December and it didn't.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Petersen,

1  
2 if you could do that one sentence about the A  
3 train on the last page.

4 KARYN PETERSEN: Absolutely. Can I  
5 read that passage? The A line subway train  
6 reported in the media as being stuck in the  
7 Aqueduct station and Rockaway Boulevard station  
8 overnight during the storm is of concern as this  
9 occurred in our board area. It is not uncommon  
10 during any snowstorm for service on the Rockaway  
11 segment of the A to be curtailed.

12 Therefore, we are concerned that  
13 MTA dispatched that particular train in the midst  
14 of a blizzard. We are also concerned that it  
15 appears no attempt was made to remove those  
16 persons stranded to a safer location or to provide  
17 some water or food to them.

18 From our understanding of where the  
19 train was stalled, there are two schools and a  
20 police precinct in the immediate vicinity. Had  
21 that train been held in the Howard Beach station,  
22 at least those passengers would have been stranded  
23 in one of the city's newest, cleanest and heated  
24 stations and one that has sanitary facilities.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

KARYN PETERSEN: I thank you. The rest is in my statement.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you for your testimony.

KARYN PETERSEN: Thank you very much.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Frank?

MALE VOICE: I wanted to say something about my testimony. Just two seconds and I do thank your indulgence, Madame Chair and Speaker, but Karyn Petersen was 100 percent correct, or Betty's testimony I should say. I know Betty isn't here to deliver it herself.

But respect to the people being stranded on the A train for hours on end, completely unacceptable. That rain could have been held at the Howard Beach station which is also the air train station where there is a bathroom, where there is an elevator, where there is access to an emergency road, where there is a convenience stand, where there is food. Completely unacceptable that the MTA let that

1  
2 train leave that station and get stranded and left  
3 those people on the train for hours. I want to  
4 thank the board for their testimony because they  
5 were absolutely on the front lines involved with  
6 the constituent issues in my district. So thank  
7 you very much.

8 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

10 FRANK GULLUSCIO: Gulluscio, it's  
11 big G, little O, on a lighter note. But  
12 seriously, I come here today very, very angry. I  
13 want to say to the Speaker and Chair James and my  
14 Borough President and my Council Member also,  
15 thank you for brining this to the people. It's so  
16 important. The last time we did this Speaker  
17 Quinn was in Broad Channel and we got a lot out of  
18 it. We probably should do more of these, just a  
19 suggestion.

20 Anyway, I know I'm using my time.  
21 That storm wreaked havoc throughout the City of  
22 New York, the greatest city in the world. But in  
23 this greatest borough in the City of New York,  
24 Queens, we suffered enormously. It would only  
25 have taken commonsense solutions to figure out

1  
2 what was going on. We didn't need people with all  
3 kinds of degrees to figure out that we had to call  
4 a snow emergency.

5 My concern as a community board  
6 district manager is very simple: 311. What about  
7 it? Why weren't they taking and tracking numbers?  
8 They were telling people to call community boards.  
9 We were inundated with calls: my block, my  
10 garbage, this one, that one. You're going to hear  
11 it all today. But they called us, which is great,  
12 we are the eyes and ears, we are the people on the  
13 ground. My anger is so inside me that you can't  
14 believe because we didn't know what to do.  
15 Luckily, I had a good relationship with our  
16 Sanitation people. But that wasn't the answer.

17 Where was the cover-up, is what I  
18 want to say with the Administration. Why weren't  
19 they counting how many calls really came in? How  
20 many calls really went out to you people and the  
21 community boards? Yes, what was the cover-up?  
22 Why did they really want to say to the people of  
23 New York City this is what it was about, how  
24 serious? We know how serious it was. That's why  
25 we're all here.

1  
2 In September, only a few months  
3 ago, we had a great disaster right here and  
4 throughout Brooklyn and Queens, particularly here:  
5 a tornado. In a couple of hours, a couple of  
6 hours, people were there, city, state, federal  
7 people. And things were being done by OEM. Where  
8 were they this time? They were nowhere to be  
9 found, nowhere to be found.

10 As Councilman Leroy Comrie said a  
11 little while ago, what if there was a real major  
12 blowup or disaster, God forbid? You have my  
13 testimony. Thank you.

14 SPEAKER QUINN: Frank, I just want  
15 to...

16 FRANK GULLUSCIO: Sure.

17 SPEAKER QUINN: I just want to make  
18 sure that the record shows. So callers called the  
19 community board and indicated that 311 told them  
20 to call the community board?

21 FRANK GULLUSCIO: Absolutely.

22 SPEAKER QUINN: You're the second  
23 board we've heard that from, and it's kind of  
24 shocking, so thank you.

25 FRANK GULLUSCIO: When we asked

1  
2       them for their number because we take that number  
3       ourselves and track it, they were not giving out  
4       any numbers. They were told, the people were told  
5       that they know what the story is, Sanitation or  
6       whoever knows what the story is.

7                   SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

8                   FRANK GULLUSCIO: You're welcome.

9                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. The  
10       next speaker is George Onuorah, from Community  
11       Board 4, followed by Yvonne Reddick from Community  
12       Board 12, followed by Mike Mulvaney from Community  
13       Board 6.

14                   GEORGE ONUORAH: Good afternoon.

15                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon.

16                   GEORGE ONUORAH: Good afternoon  
17       everyone.

18                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Is that on?

19                   SPEAKER QUINN: Can you check the  
20       mike? I think it's on. Speak up a little bit.

21                   GEORGE ONUORAH: Good afternoon  
22       everyone.

23                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon.

24                   GEORGE ONUORAH: It's a pleasure to  
25       be here. Council Speaker Quinn, I welcome you to

1  
2 Queens. Honorable Borough President, our best  
3 borough president we have seen in a long time,  
4 continue to do the good work that you've done. I  
5 also want to commend the Queens delegation for  
6 showing up here, including Honorable Letitia  
7 James. I want to commend my Councilman Daniel  
8 Dromm, who is doing a fantastic job for my  
9 district. Council Member Dromm, I thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could you  
11 identify yourself? I'm sorry.

12 GEORGE ONUORAH: Sorry. My name is  
13 George Onuorah. I live in LeFrak City, but I'm a  
14 member of Community Board 4. I'm also the chair  
15 of the Consumer Affairs.

16 I'm very passionate about my  
17 community and Queens. In the aftermath of the  
18 December 26th snowstorm--

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]  
20 Quiet please.

21 GEORGE ONUORAH: --I felt very  
22 disappointed about what happened. The streets  
23 were clogged up. LeFrak City, Queens Center Mall  
24 was almost impassable. I personally took a couple  
25 of residents and walked around the area and we

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were very disappointed in what we saw.

As someone that's very passionate about his community, because you're either a part of the solution or you're a part of the problem. I feel that for some that I've always liked to be on the part of the solution and how to solve our problems.

Having said that, one of my favorite philosophers Rene Descartes says "I think, therefore I am." So anyone that is serious about where the community goes must try to work hard to make sure that everything goes right for constituents. I'm very happy to say that in LeFrak City, where we have more than 35,000 families in that very location, that we are really truly disappointed.

People come up to me and say: what is going on, where are our officials? They come over here only when it's convenient or maybe during election. I said to them: this is not really about the elected officials but someone dropped the ball. I'm not here to find out where anyone was during this incident.

But I have to say to my borough

1 president, I have just one recommendation, how  
2 about looking out for this borough by making  
3 setting up a snow removal group in Queens. You  
4 can call it Queens Emergency Snow Removal  
5 Organization or whatever, so that we can take care  
6 of our borough. Because our borough is where we  
7 would be concerned about what goes on. Then we  
8 can work out about the other part of New York  
9 City.  
10

11 HELEN M. MARSHALL: We all pay  
12 taxes and we have people who are trained and get a  
13 decent salary to do that. I called every single  
14 Sanitation garage in our borough. I mean the  
15 supers weren't there. They were out there  
16 fighting the snow. But I want my citizens to be  
17 able to get the benefit of their work. I've been  
18 in my house 50 years and I have never seen what I  
19 saw after the December 26th storm. Something went  
20 wrong. Something went wrong. We should have  
21 declared an emergency. There are other things  
22 that are going to make--parking and stuff will be  
23 kind of hard for people, but we should have done a  
24 better job. No, you don't have to do. It's a job  
25 of those who are paid to do. They're professional

and they know what to do.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Let me just also say that all throughout the city we've heard about individuals who are certified to deal with disasters. They were not activated during this snowstorm. I don't know if there are any CERT members here. Usually they're associated with the community boards. So what we need to do, again, is establish a protocol and procedure to activate CERT teams.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member Dromm I believe has a comment.

COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: I just want to respond a little bit to what Mr. Onuorah said. He is from my district. I want to say that many of the questions that you raised were questions that we had as well. In fact, as Council Member Williams said, we were giving information to the Administration throughout various times during the day. We were wondering where they were as well.

One of the biggest frustrations for us as City Council members was when the Mayor said in response to a reporter's question about our

1 concerns that we were raising in the neighborhood:  
2 oh, they just want to complain because they have  
3 nothing else better to do. It was not just an  
4 insult to us as Council Members, but to our  
5 residents and to our constituents in our districts  
6 because the reason we were complaining was because  
7 we were getting phone calls from people like you  
8 in the district and we were trying to convey those  
9 messages to the Mayor to let him know what was  
10 happening at the ground level. So thank you very  
11 much for coming in today.

12  
13 GEORGE ONUORAH: Thank you.

14 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very  
15 much. I just want to give my apologies. I am not  
16 going to be able to stay for the rest of the  
17 hearing, but again, I want to thank everyone.  
18 Rest assured, I'm getting full reports back from  
19 anybody I don't hear from. Thanks very much to  
20 Chairs James, Crowley and Vallone and Williams who  
21 are going to chair the rest of this hearing.  
22 Thank you guys all very, very much.

23 [Applause]

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yvonne Reddick.

25 MALE VOICE: Thank you, Madame

1  
2 Speaker.

3 SPEAKER QUINN: You're welcome and  
4 thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yvonne Reddick,  
6 Community Board 12.

7 YVONNE REDDICK: Thank you and good  
8 afternoon.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon.

10 YVONNE REDDICK: To Madame Borough  
11 President, to Councilwoman James and to the Queens  
12 delegation. I'm Yvonne Reddick, District Manager  
13 of Board 12.

14 I would like to say that I think  
15 the question was raised about Sanitation. I think  
16 well all district managers know how many pieces of  
17 equipment is in our district. There is a  
18 breakdown, snowplow, sweeper, we have that  
19 information. I would just like to say that  
20 unfortunately, during the snow blizzard, I was out  
21 of town, but I was in touch with my office and my  
22 Council Member. Matter of fact, my first phone  
23 call was from Councilman Wills.

24 I have to say that with my Council  
25 Members I do work closely with the members, and

1  
2 especially Councilman Wills and Councilman Comrie.  
3 But I would just like to say that there is a snow  
4 plan. We also have Sanitation snow plan in our  
5 office. If the district manager, I guess, chose  
6 to write their own snow plan they can do it. But  
7 we all have that written snow plan in our office.  
8 We have how many pieces of equipment is in our  
9 district. As a matter of fact that was given to  
10 us last year at the Borough Cabinet meeting. So I  
11 know what's in my district.

12 But like my colleague said, I don't  
13 know what happened this time. I've been at Board  
14 12 for 20 some years and we've had worst snow. I  
15 think 2003, and that was the year, and I remember  
16 because I was stranded. Madame Borough President,  
17 we've been stranded in Albany in 2003. I came  
18 down to New York and we had more snow than Albany  
19 had.

20 I would like to say that for all  
21 during the snow and everything, I was constantly  
22 in touch with my superintendent. Now what went  
23 wrong, I don't know, but it didn't happen like it  
24 usually happens. As of today, we still have  
25 uncollected garbage, recycling not collected, and

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1  
2 YVONNE REDDICK: Anyway, there's  
3 still lots of snow in Board 12, there are mounds  
4 of snow. As I say, we're still affected because  
5 we still have garbage and recycling out on the  
6 streets.

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
8 Thank you very much.

9 YVONNE REDDICK: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Give that  
11 information to Mr. Terranova so we can get on it  
12 as soon as possible. Right, Mr. Terranova?

13 IGNACIO TERRANOVA: Yes, ma'am.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very  
15 much.

16 YVONNE REDDICK: Thank you to the  
17 Queens delegation and you for being here.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very  
19 much.

20 YVONNE REDDICK: I would just like  
21 to say one more thing. My office compiled a list  
22 of complaints that were called in. I was  
23 instructed and they did, they were faxed down to  
24 the Mayor's office but nothing happened. All  
25 right?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, ma'am. Next is Mike Mulvaney from Community Board 6.

MIKE MULVANEY: Hi, I'm Mike Mulvaney. I'm a member of Community Board 6. I'm just an angry resident. Rather than take up your time, I'm just going to leave my testimony. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could you summarize your testimony, sir, in a minute?

MIKE MULVANEY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You're angry and you're not going to take it anymore.

MIKE MULVANEY: I'm here not to praise our New York City workers, the MTA workers, the Long Island Railroad workers or the airline workers, I'm here to bury. That's Shakespeare, I'm here to talk about Cesar Bloomberg, especially his Deputy Mayor who could not look out the window and see a snow blizzard with 60 mile an hour winds at Kennedy Airport and City Hall.

It is hard to see a blizzard, especially from Bermuda. I know the Mayor has a nice plane, but he should have been here. It is

1  
2 hard to see a blizzard from a computer desk in a  
3 comfortable office or a home of a deputy mayor,  
4 especially a new one like Stephen Goldsmith.

5 The citizens of Forest Hills and  
6 Regal Park knew there was a blizzard. I knew  
7 there was a blizzard in 1969 when I was an intern  
8 for Mayor Lindsay and Queens was mad. Well Queens  
9 is mad again. They should stay mad. The  
10 Department of Transportation Commissioner, not  
11 Chuck Schumer's wife, but her successor, failed  
12 the City of New York and she should be fired,  
13 reprimanded or forced to resign by Cesar  
14 Bloomberg.

15 She failed in all her duties in my  
16 community. Every emergency street on a primary,  
17 secondary or tertiary road was blocked. Not one  
18 emergency vehicle could get past to any hospitals,  
19 to any doctor. Mr. Bruno, an experienced man,  
20 cleaned Manhattan, but forgot the Bronx, Brooklyn,  
21 Staten Island and Forest Hills, Regal Park.  
22 Another part of New York City, they should know  
23 where it is. They come here during Election Day.

24 I don't want to continue this  
25 anger. Mr. Doherty of the Sanitation, he should

1  
2 get an early retirement or at least we should  
3 check into his supervisors and their overtime  
4 budget. I mean, if we let them get more money for  
5 doing a lousy job, we're crazy. They should get  
6 off their duffs. Correct overtime is crazy while  
7 our streets are impassable and garbage still has  
8 not been picked up on our side streets of Forest  
9 Hills Regal Park. The roads are still blocked.

10 The Fire Department, they did a  
11 good job. But the Department of Finance should  
12 take a look at Parking Violations Bureau staff for  
13 approving tickets given during snow emergencies.  
14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
16 Mulvaney. Something told me you would be  
17 interesting. If you have specific streets that  
18 need to be plowed, if you could, provide that to  
19 Mr. Terranova, that would be great.

20 MIKE MULVANEY: I've provided it to  
21 Community Board 6.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

23 MIKE MULVANEY: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. The  
25 next speaker is Giovanna Reid from Community Board

3, followed by Jonathan Gaska from Community Board 14 and then Joseph Hennessy from Community Board 6.

GIOVANNA A. REID: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon.

GIOVANNA A. REID: My name is Giovanna Reid. I'm the district manager of Community Board 3. I'm sure everyone knows that Community Board 3 was severely impacted as a result of the blizzard of 2010. We lost two people in our community known to us: Yvonne Freeman and a three-month-old baby. It has had a very devastating impact on our community.

If I can just say a word about Ms. Freeman, she was very active in our community, very, very active in our community. She fought to preserve Corona. Unfortunately, she became one of the first casualties of the blizzard. What I want to say here is regardless of what is said in the press and what others say, the fact that the streets were not plowed reduced the possibility of her survival.

For the three-month-old baby, regardless of the circumstances under which he

1 arrived to the hospital, it delayed the  
2 possibility of him receiving the medical services  
3 that he needed because he could not gain entry to  
4 the hospital. We can't take those things lightly.  
5 Elmhurst Hospital, the emergency entrance, that  
6 street that leads to it was not plowed. So it  
7 delayed the entrance to the hospital.  
8

9 So I have a few questions if you  
10 will just indulge me for a moment. Was Sanitation  
11 equipment sufficient to the local garages that  
12 needed to do the necessary cleanup? Were  
13 personnel and equipment diverted to what I call  
14 the outer borough?

15 Do you recall February 26th, 2010?  
16 I do. It was a 20-inch snowfall, very similar to  
17 what we encountered on December 26th of 2010.  
18 February 26th, actually the snow fell the night  
19 before, on the 25th. The roads were salted. On  
20 the 26th by 3:00 in the afternoon, I was able to  
21 go down Francis Lewis Boulevard and get on the  
22 bus, get on the train, without any difficulty.  
23 We were paralyzed the 26th, the 27th, the 28th,  
24 the 30th. If you can indulge me for one more  
25 moment I'd appreciate it.

I'd like to know why CERT teams were not activated. I would like to know why the volunteer ambulances weren't called in. I'd like to know why the community, of the City of New York, wasn't given other alternatives besides 311.

The residents that contacted my office called out of frustration because they had tried to get through to 311, not for an hour, for days. I just want to underscore the fact that we really have to look at the way we're doing things. Every decision cannot be made in Manhattan. We are here in the community. We know exactly what's going on.

Manhattan did not know about the bus stuck on 83rd Street and the passengers trying to clear the snow so they could get out. They did not know about the elderly couple that was snowed in and were concerned about the fact that they may not get their chemo treatment the next day. In calling the community board, in calling the elected officials, we were able to help.

So I'm offering this suggestion. Let's have a serious plan, a snow removal plan, an emergency plan where all of the city's resources

1  
2 are utilized. It's critically important. When we  
3 don't work together, we see what happens. It's  
4 too costly to lose a life. It's too costly. I  
5 don't want to preach, I'm just trying to make the  
6 suggestion. I happen to know Ms. Freeman, and I  
7 think that she deserved much more than what she  
8 got.

9 I just also want to say let's  
10 review the snow plans. Let's tweak it where  
11 necessary. There are conditions within each  
12 neighborhood that I'm sure is not covered within  
13 that overall plan. Sometimes local garages need  
14 to make decisions. Sometimes they can't wait for  
15 the call from Manhattan to tell them to plow the  
16 snow and all of that. Let's take a look at what  
17 they call major roadways like Northern Boulevard,  
18 Roosevelt Avenue. 37th Avenue is our--

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]  
20 Ms. Reid, if you could sum up.

21 GIOVANNA A. REID: I'm going to  
22 wrap it up. 37th Avenue is our major road. So we  
23 have to really take a look at that. I'm offering  
24 my assistance, as I'm sure all of the other  
25 district managers, to work with you so that we an

1 have a viable plan. I thank you. If I didn't say  
2 thank you, I want to thank the Council. I  
3 particularly want to thank my Borough President,  
4 my Council Member Danny Dromm, Julissa Ferreras  
5 and former deputy borough president, I want to  
6 thank you all for your help in convening this  
7 meeting. Thank you so much.

8  
9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.  
10 Reid. Based on Ms. Reid's recommendations and  
11 Council Member James Sanders is joining us, I  
12 would urge that the Mayor of the City of New York  
13 meet with all of the community boards in the City  
14 of New York as well as with the Commissioner of  
15 Sanitation and Deputy Mayor Goldsmith to review  
16 snow plans in each of the respective community  
17 boards. Since he could not come here it's the  
18 least that he could do. I would urge that he  
19 would consider that recommendation and would take  
20 heed to the advice of Ms. Reid.

21 GIOVANNA A. REID: I'm going to be  
22 writing to the Mayoral Cabinet. I will have all  
23 of the district managers there. I want him to  
24 come to Queens and so that all of our district  
25 managers can share with him. He thinks that 311

1 is the answer to everything, but it's not.  
2  
3 Clearly, we do need a plan. We need to have a  
4 plan to handle snow when it comes to our  
5 communities. We have never even had to ask for  
6 that before because it was cleaned up. So we've  
7 got to find out what's wrong. That's why I thank  
8 the Council for tackling this. What happened this  
9 time? What happened this time?

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

11 Next is Jonathan Gaska from Community Board 14. I  
12 hope I pronounced that right.

13 JONATHAN GASKA: You did.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I did, thank  
15 you.

16 JONATHAN GASKA: Thank you for  
17 giving me this opportunity. I'm not going to talk  
18 about the Sanitation Department. I think we all  
19 agree that they could have done a much better job  
20 and there's no sense beating a dead snowman over  
21 that issue.

22 What I'd really like to talk about  
23 is OEM. OEM, much like most things in life,  
24 seemed like a good idea when they formulate them.  
25 Under the Giuliani, way back in the Giuliani

1  
2 administration, when they created this super  
3 agency, the goal of OEM was to coordinate all the  
4 agencies in an event of an emergency. That  
5 clearly did not happen.

6 Quite frankly, our experience in  
7 the Rockaways in Community Board 14, forget about  
8 snow for a second, we're the most vulnerable  
9 community as far as hurricanes and nor'easters.  
10 We're less than a half a mile wide. On a bad  
11 storm, our community disappears. Whenever there  
12 is a nor'easter or there's a plan for one to come,  
13 we never hear from them. It's no call: hey, Jon,  
14 you know the weather pattern is showing a  
15 nor'easter, we should sit down. This is the  
16 person that's going to be our rep. Nothing, there  
17 is never any outreach, proactive outreach from OEM  
18 in our district for any issue. I'm sure in all  
19 the other community boards it did not happen as  
20 far as the snow.

21 Why is OEM here? I don't know who  
22 my OEM rep is. I mean I know Morgan from the CAU.  
23 He's omnipresent; he does a great job. I know  
24 him. Why don't I know? Why don't the DMs know  
25 who to go to at OEM? I wouldn't know if my OEM

rep was standing next to me. Is he? All right.

[Background noise]

JONATHAN GASKA: That's the agency that's supposed to coordinate. That's the agency that should call all the DMs and the Council people and say hey, it's the big one.

You have nursing homes. We had issues. Unfortunately, we have 70 percent of--I'm a big mouth anyway.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We're recording it, so we need to get it.

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: It's on.

JONATHAN GASKA: We have nursing homes, we have adult homes. They couldn't get deliveries of medical supplies, food. There was no coordination. Quite frankly, Sanitation did a decent job at Community Board 14. We had some locations that were an issue. I think we're one of the few places that they actually did a decent job.

But that's not the point. There was no coordination. Where was OEM? Why is the DOT commissioner in charge of declaring a snow

1  
2 emergency? I'm surprised that City Hall hasn't  
3 come out with a recommendation in the last week  
4 that the answer to all these problems is more bike  
5 lanes. The bike lanes got cleared.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER: That's next week.

7 JONATHAN GASKA: It's ridiculous.

8 So I think what we need to do is we need to go  
9 back to the drawing board and decide if OEM is the  
10 agency that it's supposed to be. They should work  
11 with the Council people, with the community  
12 boards, so we can coordinate and pick the spots  
13 that need to be done, pick the trouble spots.  
14 They need to do a much better job. We should know  
15 who are reps are from OEM. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Gaska,  
17 Council Member Sanders would like to make a  
18 comment.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Thank you  
20 for being here. Thank you for saying these  
21 things. I have often said that my district is the  
22 Lower Ninth Ward of New York City. With that  
23 being said, that means that we have to make sure  
24 that we don't suffer the same fate. You're  
25 pointing it out.

Let me also remind us that the place that OEM wants us to go to may be underwater by the time that we get there, those of us who make it, of course. So there are many, many questions that we have to raise here. The snow should serve as a wakeup call to everybody that there are things wrong and they're not going to get better just when the weather gets a little better. Thank you for coming out and presenting that.

JONATHAN GASKA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
Excellent recommendations. Council Member William Scarborough?

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Huh?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Assembly  
Member. I'm sorry.

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I'm sorry. I'm  
sorry. I didn't have breakfast. I'm sorry.

MALE VOICE: Let the lion die  
first.

MALE VOICE: Is that something that  
I don't know?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Assembly Member  
William Scarborough.

[Crosstalk]

WILLIAM SCARBOROUGH: Good  
afternoon, members of the City Council, ladies and  
gentlemen. My name is William Scarborough and I  
am the Assemblyman from the 29th Assembly District  
which covers parts of Jamaica, St. Albans,  
Laurelton, Rosedale, and Springfield Gardens.

I welcome this opportunity to speak  
to you about the impact of the December 2010  
blizzard on my community and to comment on the  
city's response to that blizzard.

All weather reports leading up to  
the blizzard clearly and accurately forecast the  
magnitude of the storm. So the first and foremost  
reaction I had was that I was stunned by how  
unprepared the city services were in dealing with  
this storm. My understanding is that the city  
protocol is to first clean the main thoroughfares  
then the secondary streets and then the tertiary  
streets.

On the first business day after the  
storm, our major thoroughfares had not been

1 touched. I received countless calls stating that  
2 Merrick Boulevard, a major roadway that runs from  
3 downtown Jamaica through five communities to the  
4 Nassau County line, had not been plowed and was  
5 impassable. Residents seeking to get to the  
6 Jamaica subways to get to work were either walking  
7 or catching rides in a haphazard manner.  
8

9 When I called my local Sanitation  
10 district to report this and other problems with  
11 main thoroughfares, I was told that the snow plows  
12 were impeded due to the cars stuck and buried by  
13 the snow. That begs the question: how could the  
14 city decide not to declare a snow emergency and  
15 order unnecessary vehicles off the streets? That  
16 allowed them to become stuck and abandoned on our  
17 main streets.

18 Some of our main boulevards did not  
19 see a plow until the second day after the storm.  
20 In some instances, they were not passable until  
21 the third day after the storm.

22 Adding to our frustration were  
23 reports that not only were the streets in  
24 Manhattan below 96th Street sparkling clean on the  
25 first day, but the bike lanes in Manhattan were

1  
2 cleared before our major thoroughfares were  
3 cleared in Southeast Queens.

4           Now, I understand the importance of  
5 downtown Manhattan and it's importance to business  
6 and so on. But to paraphrase an old statement, it  
7 seems to me that the Administration should be able  
8 to walk and chew gum at the same time. The fact  
9 that we have to clean midtown Manhattan does not  
10 prevent or give an excuse to leave our major  
11 thoroughfares unplowed for days. They are not  
12 only major transportation vehicles but they  
13 represent the economic vitality of our  
14 communities. They're just as important to our  
15 communities as Manhattan to the region in general.

16           This just confirms the Manhattan-  
17 centric method of service delivery in New York.  
18 It conjured up memories of 1969 when Queens was  
19 buried and abandoned during a similar snowstorm.  
20 This feeling of second class treatment was  
21 exacerbated when many of our side streets still  
22 had not seen a plow five days after the storm.

23           This disaster and the way it was  
24 handled raises a number of questions that I hope  
25 the Council will demand answers to. One, as I've

1  
2 said, who made the decision not to declare a snow  
3 emergency and why? Given what was known in  
4 advance, such a decision, in my opinion, bordered  
5 on irresponsibility and led to predictable  
6 results.

7                   How does the city and the  
8 Department of Sanitation explain and justify the  
9 way Manhattan was serviced and the way Queens and  
10 other outer boroughs were treated? We seem to  
11 almost become accepting of the fact that Manhattan  
12 will always receive preferential treatment,  
13 although we all pay our taxes for the same city  
14 services. The disparity in this case was blatant  
15 and unconscionable.

16                   What changes in protocol and  
17 procedures are planned by the city to ensure  
18 residents of Queens and other boroughs that we  
19 will not receive such shabby treatment in the  
20 event of a major storm in the future?

21                   I think this administration's claim  
22 to management efficiency was shredded by this  
23 episode. We deserve some concrete assurance that  
24 it will be capable of handling a future emergency  
25 better than the blizzard of December 2010 was

1 handled. We have the right to deserve and demand  
2 the best from our services.

3  
4 I would like to close by making a  
5 point which I think speaks to a larger issue. Let  
6 me say it's my opinion. Everybody has the right  
7 to disagree with it. Clearly, it's an issue that  
8 we on the state level will also confront. This  
9 was a major failure by the city and its relevant  
10 agencies in handling the huge emergency. I think  
11 residents in my area would right now rate the NYPD  
12 as a failure, given the huge increase in crime  
13 that we've seen over previous years.

14 What these agencies have in common  
15 is that they have lost huge numbers of manpower in  
16 recent years. I'm concerned that we may have  
17 reached the point, not only in the city but in the  
18 state, where technological innovation and pushes  
19 for higher productivity can no longer offset the  
20 services reductions and the reductions in manpower  
21 that our budget circumstances require. The result  
22 may be a diminution in the quality of life that we  
23 have all come to expect.

24 If that is the case, then we all  
25 need to have some frank discussions with our

1 constituents about what can be expected from  
2 government. That's not to say that we should ever  
3 expect higher crime or poor snow removal, but we  
4 may clearly need to have some discussions about  
5 what we can expect government to do and what we  
6 would like government to do but given the  
7 circumstances it can't do.

8 I don't know that we can put this  
9 snowstorm in that category because clearly some  
10 decisions were inexplicable, but I think we're  
11 coming close to those realities. Thank you very  
12 much.

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,  
14 Assembly Member. Thank you very much.

15 [Applause]

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: As we face a  
17 \$10 billion deficit in the State of New York.  
18 Thank you. Next is Joseph Hennessy, representing  
19 Community Board 6. Thank you for allowing the  
20 Assembly Member to preempt you.

21 JOSEPH E. HENNESSY: Thank you very  
22 much, Madame Borough President and the cream of  
23 the City Council, the Queens delegation. I'm here  
24 to make a brief statement. You've already got our  
25

report.

I'm a simple man. It's hard for me to believe that Mayor Bloomberg, deputy mayors and commissioners, that nobody looked out the window, picked up the damn telephone and said hey Mike, we've got a problem in New York City. They did it from out in space. They said hey Houston, we've got a problem. This is New York City.

Today's modern age, communications, yet nobody did. I mean, he should fire all of his commissioners. I'd be completely upset if any of my commissioners, I don't care what commission, Parks, Sanitation, whatever, that nobody picked the phone up and said Mike, hey we've got a problem in New York City, can we declare a snow emergency?

I honestly believe that somebody did that and that they were told not at this time. I honestly believe that. I appreciate your time. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.  
Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sir, Council

1  
2 Member Weprin would like to say a few remarks to  
3 you, Mr. Hennessy.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Mr.  
5 Hennessy, just before you leave, I just want to  
6 compliment you actually. You just hit what I  
7 think is the proverbial nail on the head that this  
8 was an incredible lack of communication by the  
9 administration. They admitted to it in some ways.  
10 One hand did not know what the other one was  
11 doing. No one knew who was in charge. No one  
12 knew who had to make that decision about a snow  
13 emergency. It really was the biggest problem that  
14 happened. It seemed like nobody really was  
15 willing to take charge and make these decisions.  
16 I think that was one of the biggest problems of  
17 all. There were a lot of factors, but there's no  
18 question this administration's lack of  
19 communication was one of the biggest factors.

20 JOSEPH E. HENNESSY: If some  
21 problem happened in your district and one of your  
22 staff didn't notify you immediately, you'd be very  
23 upset with them.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Absolutely.

25 JOSEPH E. HENNESSY: This mayor is

1 only protecting all of his commissioners and  
2 deputy mayors. Somebody should have made the  
3 phone call and this would never have happened.  
4 You wouldn't have had these hearings. Nothing  
5 would have happened if someone had commonsense,  
6 picked up the phone. I don't care where you are,  
7 he could be in China. Communication. Say hey  
8 Mike, we've got a problem. I don't have the  
9 authority but do you want me to contact somebody  
10 else and have him do it.  
11

12 HELEN M. MARSHALL: Hennessy, can I  
13 tell you that I watched on television and they had  
14 a press conference. Bruno was asked. Someone had  
15 a question about declaring an emergency. Bruno  
16 said only the governor can do it. But somebody  
17 has to ask the governor to do it.

18 JOSEPH E. HENNESSY: That's  
19 correct. Regarding OEM, they've got CERT programs  
20 throughout the borough. I happen to be a member  
21 of the CERT program in Forest Hills. We got no  
22 communication from OEM regarding that. They  
23 communicated about the bicycle lanes. They  
24 communicated about this, everything. But nobody  
25 communicated to us saying maybe I need the CERT

1  
2 program to help the Police Department and  
3 whatever.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, Council  
5 Member Koslowitz?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I just  
7 want to say that that was one of the questions I  
8 asked at the hearing. If there were other people  
9 that were allowed, like the CERT team. We had  
10 CERT teams and we have CERT teams for a reason.  
11 They started from this office when I was deputy  
12 borough president. We recommended the people who  
13 should be the neighborhoods. So I don't  
14 understand. In the tornado that we had, they were  
15 there but the CERT teams weren't notified for  
16 three days after. Now, once again, in this  
17 horrible snowstorm where people needed their  
18 medicine, the CERT teams were also notified three  
19 days later. It's a disgrace.

20 JOSEPH E. HENNESSY: There's nobody  
21 to make a decision. That's the bottom line. One  
22 other thing, I'm a member of the Queens Community  
23 House, on the board of directors who supply meals.  
24 I know there is somebody who is going to give  
25 testimony later on. But if you need that meal or

1  
2 you need that visit and you're not getting it, not  
3 only the meal but just the visit to see that  
4 you're okay. I mean this is what happened in our  
5 city. This is our city. This is what happened to  
6 us.

7 I don't want to take up your time,  
8 because again, there are a lot more people with  
9 testimony. Unfortunately for me, I was sick in  
10 bed for the whole ten days. But the company I  
11 work for, I was on the phone with them and I said  
12 to the staff: are you cleaning the lot, we got the  
13 snow plows working and everything else. I say to  
14 myself why can't that be done by city  
15 administration. There something there that nobody  
16 has responded.

17 I honestly believe that because I  
18 cannot see a mayor of this city not taking the  
19 phone call from one of his staff, otherwise he  
20 should fire all of them because they didn't do  
21 their job.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
23 Hennessy.

24 [Applause]

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: During the

1 testimony, they indicated that they did not reach  
2 out to the governor at the time. They did not  
3 declare a snow emergency on a local level. They  
4 did not declare any type of emergency whatsoever.  
5 There was a clear breakdown in communication. A  
6 significant number of them, as you know, were out  
7 of town. In fact, the Emergency Management Office  
8 was not open until 4:00 the next day. It was a  
9 complete failure of this administration. You're  
10 absolutely right, heads should roll. We will see  
11 whether or not heads--

12  
13 JOSEPH E. HENNESSY: [interposing]  
14 They should refund their salaries for those days  
15 back to the city.

16 [Applause]

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
18 Next is Patrick Beckles from Community Board 3,  
19 followed by Italo Sgaraglia. I really messed that  
20 one up.

21 PATRICK BECKLES: Ladies and  
22 gentleman, good afternoon, Madame Borough  
23 President, the absent Speaker but the deputy  
24 speaker is here.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, he is.

PATRICK BECKLES: There is a tide  
is the affairs of men, which taken at the flood,  
leads on to fortune.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The prose and  
poetry--

PATRICK BECKLES: [interposing] All  
the voyages of life are bound in shallows and in  
miseries. It is not what you do but the way you  
do it. Ask the Borough President. I met this  
lady. We are from the same heritage as it were.  
The successes and strides that she has made and  
accomplished through the years here is amazing and  
something to follow. I tried doing that. It is  
not easy, but we together have worked on several  
projects and have made success with them.

Our past president, Jimmy Carter,  
said when you have things to do like clean the  
waters around the United States of America, you  
must have people on the ground who can help and  
who knows the place, or who knows how the wind  
blows and how the water flows. It happened.

I wrote to him and got permission  
to form the Flushing Bay task force and who sits  
and heads it today, the Honorable Helen Marshall.

1  
2 Anybody from any organization or any part of the  
3 city or any part of the government must attend  
4 that meeting. We got together and confirmed me to  
5 sit on the water cleaning program. I was able to  
6 beat back some of the engineering divisions who  
7 wanted to clean the Hudson first and I said no.

8 As a result, we got ten tributaries  
9 in the Borough of Queens and money funded for  
10 them--

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]  
12 Mr. Beckles, we appreciate your testimony. Mr.  
13 Beckles, we appreciate your testimony and all that  
14 you have done for the great city of New York and  
15 specifically the Borough of Queens, but could you  
16 just focus on this storm and how this is relevant  
17 to the snowstorm.

18 PATRICK BECKLES: We have been  
19 tinkering with Sanitation and the snow for the  
20 longest while. I can see from my window and I can  
21 see the Flushing Bay and I can see the snowplows  
22 pushing the snow back into my driveway. It is not  
23 what you do; it's the way you do it.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

25 PATRICK BECKLES: They could take

|    |  |     |
|----|--|-----|
| 1  | COMMITTEE ON SANITATION                            | 114 |
| 2  | those same plows and turn them around and pull the |     |
| 3  | snow out and spread it out and put salt and get it |     |
| 4  | to melt.   |     |
| 5  | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.                      |     |
| 6  | PATRICK BECKLES: We would have                     |     |
| 7  | lots of easy workings of that. We have tried and   |     |
| 8  | we have asked them but they move from piling the   |     |
| 9  | snow in the middle of the streets several years    |     |
| 10 | ago to pushing it in your yard now, clogging the   |     |
| 11 | sidewalks and the drains.                          |     |
| 12 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.                 |     |
| 13 | Thank you. We appreciate that. Mr. or Ms. Italo    |     |
| 14 | Sgaraglia is next. I'm sorry; I know I             |     |
| 15 | mispronounced it. Could you say it for me?         |     |
| 16 | ITALO SGARAGLIA: Sgaraglia.                        |     |
| 17 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sgaraglia.                      |     |
| 18 | Your first name, sir?                              |     |
| 19 | ITALO SGARAGLIA: Italo.                            |     |
| 20 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Italo.                          |     |
| 21 | ITALO SGARAGLIA: Good afternoon                    |     |
| 22 | all you guys.                                      |     |
| 23 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon,                 |     |
| 24 | sir.   |     |
| 25 | ITALO SGARAGLIA: Thank you, Helen                  |     |

1 Marshall, Letitia James and all you Council  
2 Members. I represent the seniors, all the seniors  
3 on fixed income, number one. A lot of seniors  
4 still work and we lost three days of pay, most of  
5 us. Now, who's going to make this pay for us?  
6 Who's going to give us this money for these three  
7 days that we lost?

8 We know it was a bad day; we  
9 couldn't get out and we couldn't work. The  
10 streets weren't paved. My block was full of cars  
11 stuck, ambulances, cop cars, and all of them.

12 I'm going back to the seniors. We  
13 live on fixed income. We live from hand to mouth.  
14 A lot of us lost three days of pay. Who's going  
15 to give us that money? I still pay my taxes for  
16 the whole year. I still pay my water for the  
17 whole year. Let's make something to give us back  
18 that we lost the three days' pay.

19 That's all I want to say. It was a  
20 terrible, horrific storm. Thank you so much.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member  
22 Williams?

23 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I appreciate  
24 that. I actually put a resolution asking the  
25

1  
2 state to give us permission to set up a fund so  
3 that we can have some money to give the people who  
4 lost due to the negligence of the city. So I hope  
5 that goes someplace.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Mr.  
7 William McDonald? Next is Yvonne Plummer.

8 YVONNE PLUMMER: Good afternoon.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon,  
10 ma'am.

11 YVONNE PLUMMER: Honorable Letitia  
12 James and Honorable Leroy Comrie, our Borough  
13 President and all of the people from our Council,  
14 thank you immensely for coming to the forgotten  
15 borough. We are very grateful to have you here.

16 I believe and I concur with  
17 everything, so I'm not going to reiterate all of  
18 that stuff. But there are a couple of things that  
19 have happened recently as a result of the  
20 snowstorm of the 26th of December.

21 In preparation of the subsequent  
22 storm that we had, we had so much ice and snow all  
23 over the place and Sanitation came with the orange  
24 trucks. I don't know what you call them. They  
25 were spreaders and they were chopping up the ice

1 and putting it right in the middle, dead center,  
2 in the streets, expecting people with ordinary  
3 sized cars to crush it up. That is unacceptable.  
4 That is totally unacceptable because it messes up  
5 the bottom of your cars and we don't need another  
6 expense. This happened probably in a lot of  
7 places, but I'm speaking for East Elmhurst and it  
8 was around 24th, 25th Avenues and the named  
9 streets.

10  
11 By the way, I'm sorry, you already  
12 heard my name. But I am a retiree and I'm a  
13 volunteer in everything that goes on in this  
14 borough.

15 But as a result of the snowstorm, I  
16 was unable to go to my assigned nursing home to be  
17 an ombudsman for the people to whom I advocate  
18 for. I couldn't read to the children for Reach  
19 Out and Read. I could not do my volunteer work at  
20 Queens Hospital and also Elmhurst. So I was  
21 really upset.

22 HELEN MARSHAL: You're not retired,  
23 Ms. Plummer.

24 YVONNE PLUMMER: I'm not retired.  
25 I know I'm not, but I like it. Then the other

thing is that I'm concerned about is the fact that in East Elmhurst we have a kind of hilly terrain and the buses can't use the regular bus stops. It to me would make common sense if MTA has some sort of pre-planned emergency arrangement with the city, letting us know where the bus stops would be. Because you could have people waiting for several hours waiting for their bus on regular level land but no bus comes for several hours. So if that could be done, I would be very appreciative. And no more ice chunks in the middle of the street. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms. Plummer. Thank you for all that you do. Did William McDonald return? If not, Jackie Baker-Kemp from Corona?

JACKIE BAKER-KEMP: Good afternoon.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,  
ma'am.

JACKIE BAKER-KEMP: Protocol has already been established. I'd like to acknowledge all of the problems that have already been verbalized, but specifically I live in Community Board 3 and I reside on 34th Avenue, which is an

1  
2 avenue from 69th Street to the Grand Central  
3 Parkway and has an island in the middle. So I  
4 would like to make a suggestion that Sanitation  
5 consider placing the plows to the left and dumping  
6 the snow on the island versus on the bicycle  
7 lanes, my driveway and the cars along the avenue.

8           What I'd like to say specifically  
9 is that on January 10th, which I still had a bank  
10 of snow from the 26th, there were four Sanitation  
11 trucks idling outside of my house. It brought it  
12 to my attention to go see what this was. Well one  
13 of the trucks came up on the sidewalk and with its  
14 plow, he took all the snow that was banked there,  
15 threw it on the sidewalk, ran into my fence and I  
16 got an estimate yesterday of \$1,500. So I just  
17 needed to verbalize that and people to know that  
18 individuals are experiencing personal problems.  
19 They did send supervisor--

20           CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]  
21 You're filing a claim, I assume?

22           JACKIE BAKER-KEMP: Oh, yes I did.  
23 I filed it and I contacted the Comptroller's  
24 Office and whatnot. But I just wanted to make  
25 that suggestion to Sanitation about maybe the

1  
2 plows could be to the left and the bicycle lanes  
3 would be available and people could travel better.  
4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very  
6 much. Clifton Rutherford?

7 CLIFTON RUTHERFORD: Good evening  
8 ladies and gentlemen, Honorable Borough President  
9 and the City Council on the whole. I am so happy  
10 that I'm here today and I would not leave without  
11 coming to attend this public hearing. I am  
12 Clifton Rutherford. I represent a large amount of  
13 the seniors in southeast Queens. I'm speaking  
14 about the blizzard.

15 I'm to mention streets like Merrick  
16 Boulevard, which is a main thoroughfare, Liberty  
17 Avenue, 161st Street, Linden Boulevard, and you  
18 name them. But when all is done, ladies and  
19 gentlemen, representing the seniors, would you  
20 understand that these seniors are very smart and  
21 intelligent. Only that they're disabled and  
22 unable to come here today. So I'm here on their  
23 behalf.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

25 CLIFTON RUTHERFORD: I'm here not

1 to testify because we all heard what happened  
2 before, how bad it is. I say it is shameful. One  
3 thing, it is the people's business to call an  
4 elected official to come into a meeting to explain  
5 to them mismanagement.  
6

7 Today I congratulate people like  
8 Leroy Comrie, all the members of the City Council,  
9 so to speak, and to say to them that when this  
10 meeting was called for the government to account  
11 to the people mismanagement. Before I leave, I  
12 don't see any reason why some punishment should  
13 not be handed down after this meeting. It is so  
14 harsh to say we ask for impeachment. But Council,  
15 thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
17 Rutherford. We've been joined by Council Member  
18 Jim Gennaro. Thank you, Council Member. Doreen  
19 DiLeonardo from Grand Central Parkway is next.

20 DOREEN M. DILEONARDO: Good  
21 afternoon. My name is Doreen DiLeonardo and I  
22 live in Bellerose Queens. I've also lived in Bay  
23 Terrace for 13 years and I also lived in College  
24 Point for two years.

25 I've heard several people, Council

1  
2 people, Ms. Marshall and people on the news say  
3 that we've had snowstorms exactly like this one  
4 and that it was taken care of efficiently without  
5 problems. I have to comment on that statement  
6 because I, for one, was up until 3:00 in the  
7 morning during that storm. My husband actually  
8 works for the Department of Sanitation as a  
9 driver.

10 When he left at 7:00 p.m. I had my  
11 phone with me and I waved goodbye to me and in  
12 front of the Monte Excelsior where I live, I tried  
13 to video the storm. And I literally couldn't even  
14 walk out the door because the wind was so strong.  
15 I thought, as my husband left, this is not going  
16 to be good. I was very worried about him.

17 He was originally scheduled for  
18 work on the 24th when he left on Christmas Eve to  
19 come to work at 12:01 on the 26th. That was his  
20 orders. So one minute after 12 on the 26th. He  
21 came home and told me, well honey, Christmas is  
22 ruined. I said, well, it's going to snow.

23 He listened to his phone later on  
24 and there was a, as he deemed it, a frantic  
25 message from his foreman saying that his time for

1  
2 arrival has now changed for the 26th. It's going  
3 to be 7:00 p.m. on the 26th. We thought that was  
4 kind of weird since there was a bad storm and why  
5 would he have to come in later, but those are the  
6 orders. Sanitation kind of works like the  
7 military, the orders come from City Hall. They go  
8 through each borough and the garages, he works for  
9 Q11, make their schedule as dictated.

10 So I got up early, I went to the  
11 food store, I went to the gym. By 11:00, it's  
12 snowing. We're watching Channel 7. The Mayor is  
13 on TV. Not alarming us; not concerned, it's  
14 already snowing. I'm looking outside. He's  
15 coming to work at 7:00. Okay, I guess everything  
16 will be all right.

17 He mentioned that they were going  
18 to have privatized companies coming to do the  
19 secondary streets. We both looked at each other  
20 and we said, huh? Every the journalists on  
21 Channel 7 said, gee, I've never heard that we've  
22 had, you know, private contractors taking care of  
23 the secondary streets. All right, he went off to  
24 work.

25 About 10:00 at night, he calls me

1  
2 and says: I'm stuck. He's never called me and  
3 said he was stuck. We've been married for four  
4 years, together five and a half. He's been on the  
5 job for 13 years. In his opinion, it was the  
6 worst storm he ever worked in.

7 7:00 p.m. until 9:00 a.m. the next  
8 day he worked. When his car got stuck in front of  
9 the school which is incidentally very close to  
10 where we live, he had to stay there and waited for  
11 the wrecker. The wrecker came, the wrecker got  
12 stuck. The police came, they got stuck.  
13 Motorists were on the road. Why? They were  
14 stuck. Everybody was stuck. He wasn't the only  
15 one stuck.

16 The following day when he went to  
17 work, or evening, he was stuck, I think, two or  
18 three more times. Many guys were stuck. The back  
19 of the trucks are empty. There's tons of snow in  
20 front of them. It's not hard to figure out why  
21 you would get stuck.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Can you sum up  
23 your remarks?

24 DOREEN M. DILEONARDO: Well, I'm  
25 also interested in why. Everybody is wondering

what was different. This snowfall was different. The other thing that was different was that the person that's director of operations or Deputy of Operations, Mr. Goldsmith, he's different. He was the Mayor of Indianapolis. Now Indianapolis has about 800,000 people and we have 8 million 8 hundred thousand people. He has even said he's not familiar with New York City, yet he's in charge of the snowfall and he's the new player in the game. So he's in charge.

He's also a person that was brought here to reinvent government and save money. Maybe that's why they weren't brought in earlier. I don't know. It's not hard to figure out. So maybe we saved money but in the end we have overtime, garbage not picked up, this terrible tragedy with this woman dying.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: If you could conclude your remarks, the recommendation.

DOREEN M. DILEONARDO: Sure. I'm just saying that I think we should look into Mr. Goldsmith. Maybe he's not suited to be looking after snow removal and Sanitation. Maybe we shouldn't be penny wise and pound foolish when

we're dealing with a snow emergency.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Vichnu Mahadeo?

VICHNU MAHADEO: Good afternoon, folks. I must say it's a great opportunity to speak to this august collection of representatives. I see my friend James Sanders.

Greetings Borough President. I'm from the Richmond Hill Economic Development Council.

My community has always been overlooked. When it came to the snow, we traveled on Liberty Avenue from Van Wyck to Woodhaven. It's about 40 blocks. And guess what? Lefferts Boulevard and 111 Street were the only two that were partially cleared. It took about four days.

Now I've heard the testimony earlier about the Sanitation this and that. What excuse is there for the Sanitation trucks to come into my community with the plow up? What is the excuse for that nonsense? We saw that. We witnessed it. That's deplorable. Their action at the street level was most unbecoming.

My community, the business, what

1  
2 you say, we were constipated. We could not do  
3 anything. Our seniors could not move. You heard  
4 a lot of sad stories, but as of right now, in  
5 Richmond Hill, the bus stops are still full of  
6 ice. We need the ice to be dug out.

7 Now, we have people who didn't do  
8 the job but were getting paid overtime. Why is it  
9 you as the legislators sitting here and tolerating  
10 such nonsense? Those people ought not to get the  
11 overtime. They should be taken back from that  
12 pay, because they have a duty to serve us. We  
13 were paying them all the time. Why did they not  
14 do the job that they were supposed to do? Don't  
15 blame somebody upstairs. You have your job to do  
16 and that's what they failed. They failed to come  
17 and represent us to do what they're obligated to  
18 do.

19 In recommendation, the business  
20 community, we will look at the opportunity where  
21 we can remove our own snow and bill the city for  
22 it, because if the Sanitation Department cannot do  
23 their job, we need to look after the interests of  
24 our business community and our general community.  
25 I would like the City Council to look on the

1  
2 opportunity where business communities cannot wait  
3 for the snow removal people to do their job, take  
4 the opportunity for them to clean it themselves,  
5 clean the sidewalk, clean the bus stops and so  
6 bill the city. If the city can't do the job, we  
7 can. In any case, I thank you again very much.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. If  
9 you have specific streets, if you could provide it  
10 to Iggy, that would be great.

11 VICHNU MAHADEO: I would be more  
12 than happy. In fact, all my testimony is on New  
13 York One. I brought them into Richmond Hill.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
15 Thank you very much. Thomas Diama. Diama, I'm  
16 sorry. I apologize. He will be followed by  
17 Marvin Holland, representing the Transport Workers  
18 Union.

19 THOMAS DIAMA: Hi.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Hi.

21 THOMAS DIAMA: Good evening. While  
22 the simple answer is to harp on the Sanitation  
23 Department for the failed cleanup, the fault also  
24 lies with many other groups. The City Council  
25 itself has failed to provide the leadership and

1 political will to prevent these situations from  
2 repeating. The residents really need the Mayor to  
3 declare an emergency to take action when the  
4 predications are already for over a foot of snow.

5  
6 Hundreds of thousands of  
7 businesses, drivers, business improvement  
8 districts and homeowners mindlessly plowed snow  
9 high out into the middle of the street and into  
10 bus stops and the crosswalk. Even days after the  
11 streets were plowed thousands of drivers simply  
12 left their cars abandoned in the streets. No  
13 excuse for that. It should be a matter of hours.  
14 They plow the street, you go back and you check  
15 your car and you move it.

16 The bus tops were filled with  
17 selfish drivers stopping off to get morning  
18 coffee. Thousands more simply double parked on  
19 the main thoroughfare. The bus stop directly in  
20 front of one of my Council Member's office was  
21 piled high with snow while the children's dance  
22 studio down the block had a nice path cut for the  
23 commuters. I guess those women were pretty tough.

24 My own Councilman rejected my  
25 earlier suggestions that the commercial businesses

1  
2 be required to clear part of the bus stop and  
3 their crosswalks as part of their snow removal  
4 responsibility. Instead of Traffic Enforcement  
5 giving out mindless tickets for meters, which was  
6 a total waste of time, they should have been on  
7 extended days giving tickets to the arrogant  
8 drivers parking in the bus stops and the  
9 crosswalks.

10                   You actually lack the courage to  
11 tell constituents that many did deserve tickets  
12 for their selfish actions. When you are driving  
13 an off-road SUV, you can park on a few inches of  
14 snow instead of double parking in a lane of  
15 traffic. Many residents stopped their large self-  
16 propelled snow blowers right at the exact property  
17 line without giving any consideration to clearing  
18 the crosswalks, or God forbid, a neighbor's  
19 sidewalk.

20                   Residents dumped garbage in dozens  
21 of little bags out on the street without even the  
22 thought of maybe put it in a 30-gallon garbage  
23 bag. Just piled up little bags, little grocery  
24 bags of garbage, little bags of dog poo. I mean  
25 it was ridiculous the amount of garbage that was

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That's not to say that we could not have done more, which is what you're pointing out. It's not to say that we could not have had a comprehensive plan, a local comprehensive plan which I'm working on and I'm sure some of my

colleagues are working on. But it's also just good to remember that this show what New Yorkers are like also, where many of us got out there and did some amazing things during this snowstorm.

THOMAS DIAMA: Mr. Sanders, I'd agree with you, but I think the people who really put themselves out were limited to 10 percent of the people out there. Honestly, I mean I can see a senior citizen with a shovel. There was a guy in the deli on Little Neck, plenty of gray hair, out there with his little shovel, clearing the snow. But loads of other people were just too lazy. Maintenance guys, they came down the street and down the sidewalk, they got to the crosswalk, they made a right-hand turn and went down. Big 24-inch plows, and there's no excuse for that.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

THOMAS DIAMA: We should have some courage and ticket a few of those people also.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. We should definitely ticket those people who parked in the bus stop. I agree with you on that.

Michelle Orenstein?

MALE VOICE: [off mic] Excuse me,

1  
2 who?

3 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I'll give you  
4 that information offline. Next is Marvin Holland,  
5 and after Mr. Holland, Michelle Orenstein.

6 MARVIN HOLLAND: Good afternoon. I  
7 want to thank the Council and Borough President  
8 for holding these hearings. My name is Marvin  
9 Holland. I'm with the Transport Workers Union  
10 Local 100, so I'm speaking on behalf of the  
11 President John Samuelson and 38,000 members.

12 Every New Yorkers knows what  
13 happened on December 27th at this point. Mass  
14 transit collapsed. But this wasn't due to the  
15 storm or the emergency. The collapse did not  
16 happen because there was a blizzard in New York.  
17 We've done this many times before. Earlier this  
18 year, in February we had a storm and we were able  
19 to remove the snow and you didn't talk about it  
20 because there were no incidences in the Transit  
21 Authority.

22 This disaster, at least on the MTA  
23 end, was manmade. What happened was they made a  
24 clear decision not to deploy the highest level of  
25 readiness, which is a level 4. This had to be

1 done at the highest levels. The managers that  
2 work in the Transit Authority, although I battle  
3 them all the time and I met with senior managers  
4 since then and I told them point blank we  
5 understand that whatever happened had to come from  
6 the top for us not to go to a level 4.  
7

8 So within days, we prepared a paper  
9 that explains exactly what happened at the MTA and  
10 we'll leave these here for the Council and anybody  
11 else that wants to know what happened at the  
12 storm.

13 The last thing I would like to say  
14 is that since this happened at the top, and the  
15 MTA is not attending these hearings, my suggestion  
16 to the Council and to the riders in Queens and the  
17 rest of the city is come to the MTA board meeting  
18 this coming Wednesday, January 26th at 9:00 a.m.  
19 and you can all testify there. It's open to the  
20 public.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Repeat that and  
22 give the address.

23 MARVIN HOLLAND: This Wednesday  
24 coming up, January 26th, 347 Madison Avenue. Ask  
25 the top MTA leadership what happened, who gave the

1 orders not to go to a level 4, who gave the orders  
2 not to go to a code red on the bus side of the  
3 house?  
4

5 Like I said, we've done this many  
6 times before and senior managers know what to do.  
7 The personnel know what to do. They can say they  
8 made precautions and did things like it was a  
9 level 4, but the key part of a level 4 is that you  
10 have to bring the staffing, and that means  
11 thousands of Transit workers have to come to work.  
12 If that doesn't happen, you're not at level 4, and  
13 this is where the problems are.

14 This caused us problems. Because  
15 when our members couldn't get to work, we now have  
16 to file thousands of grievances why we didn't come  
17 to work during the snow emergency. I had station  
18 agents who were stuck in the booth because they  
19 couldn't get out of the booth and get relief for  
20 four tours. Their families wanted to know what  
21 happened to them. Because once you're in that  
22 booth, there's no way to contact your family.

23 So this impacted our members, but  
24 more importantly, the Transport Workers Union  
25 wants the riders of New York City to know that we

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1 He got very indignant and said he's a good worker,  
2 blah, blah. And I said I'm sure he is, perhaps he  
3 should not be in the position he's in having to  
4 make emergency decisions like this. So we did  
5 have that discussion. They were completely, as I  
6 said, unprepared. They gave us no testimony, no  
7 written testimony and we intend to follow up with  
8 them.

10 MARVIN HOLLAND: If that's  
11 reversed, if that's a worker who does poor  
12 performance, we're fired. We don't get moved to  
13 another job or promoted or something.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER: I just want to  
16 point out, I want to specifically say it's amazing  
17 that you were able to put together that synopsis  
18 with recommendations right here. But as was  
19 mentioned, my colleagues said, they came with  
20 nothing. That was their job. So I just want to  
21 say thank you.

22 HELEN M. MARSHALL: I just want to  
23 say the MTA garages and so on are right off  
24 Astoria Boulevard between 23rd Avenue. They sat  
25 there. Now, when it was the old Triboro Bus

1  
2 Company, they would coordinate with the garages to  
3 make sure that the bus routes were clear. Here  
4 you have the MTA, big buses and everything; I mean  
5 they don't talk with the community. I had a big  
6 problem with that, because I don't know if you  
7 heard me earlier, Queens depends upon its buses  
8 because we have just a few rail links and we've  
9 got to get people to those. I mean the avenues  
10 were never plowed. The bus routes were never  
11 plowed, and it took about three days for that to  
12 happen. There's these great big beautiful buses  
13 sitting in the garage and the people are  
14 struggling.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

16 Michelle Orenstein?

17 MICHELLE ORENSTEIN: Hi.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Hi.

19 MICHELLE ORENSTEIN: On Monday the  
20 27th, I couldn't get in touch with my mother via  
21 phone. There was a mother/daughter thing. We had  
22 had a fight two days prior. She's mad at me.  
23 Until my aunt, her sister, and two of my mother's  
24 friends called me and said they couldn't get in  
25 touch with her. I couldn't get out of my home on

Monday. Not because of the snow, but in addition because there was a DOT plow stuck in front of my house for five hours waiting for a tow truck.

Tuesday morning at 6:00, I left my home to go to my mother's. My mother was deceased on her kitchen floor.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Oh my God.

MICHELLE ORENSTEIN: She had just turned 63. I have a 12-year-old son and he has no more grandmother. I'm getting married in April. She was supposed to walk me down the aisle. The problem is I waited over 16 hours for a medical examiner. Five shifts of Police Department. In addition, they wouldn't even let me cover her body. Since she was on the kitchen floor, I had to step to go to the bathroom, to go to another room or to use the restroom. Because she had passed, most likely, the day before, she was already starting to decompose.

The police said somebody had to be there when the ME came, otherwise they would barricade the door and I'd need a court order to get in. I had to fib to my son to tell him that grandma probably went to bed that night and never

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1 and compassionate and sensitive to the needs of  
2 the bereaved. Over the years we have achieved our  
3 goal routinely. Snow or no snow, Queens ME should  
4 have more than two vehicles running at any give  
5 time.  
6

7 PD, FDNY and EMS arrived within a  
8 reasonable hour. Due to snow conditions, the  
9 first police officers on the scene even got stuck  
10 in the snow and left his vehicle there, even after  
11 five shifts the vehicles were still stuck in the  
12 snow up the block in College Point. I live in  
13 Whitestone and my mother lives in College Point.  
14 College Point is like Staten Island, it's the  
15 forgotten little area.

16 My problem is that I had to stay  
17 there for 16 hours; I had to step over her body.  
18 They wouldn't let me cover her. Then the coroner  
19 and asks my fiancé who stayed with me if he wanted  
20 to remove my mother's jewelry, and he threw his  
21 arms, like excuse me, isn't that your job. He  
22 removed what he could. The next day I still had  
23 to go to the ME's office and spend an hour and a  
24 half there just to identify my mother's body and  
25 fill out one little form, which you know what was

1 included on the form: your mother's name, date of  
2 birth, her parent's name, where she was born and  
3 then who am I. I'm her daughter.

4  
5 The ME's office told me that they  
6 didn't find a reason through autopsy. I'll have  
7 an answer for toxicology and tissue reports  
8 hopefully by February. Three days ago I spoke to  
9 the Queens ME who did the autopsy. I was crying  
10 to him saying I'm getting married April 9th, I'd  
11 please like to know why my mother passed so  
12 suddenly and now she's not walking me down the  
13 aisle. His response was: I'll try to get it to  
14 you before your wedding. My mother passed in  
15 December.

16 My first mission, my mother left  
17 behind three cats. This was my first mission, via  
18 the Daily News, how to help people when someone  
19 they love dies and leaves behind animals and  
20 they're not instructed what to do. Well this is  
21 my second mission. If the ME only has two trucks  
22 and they can't get there on time, snow or no snow,  
23 why can't EMS take them, if it's no foul play?  
24 Take pictures of the deceased. Transport them to  
25 the nearest morgue.

I have no mother and my son has no grandmother to go on the weekends now and nobody is walking me down the aisle. My son is going to walk me down the aisle.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Our thoughts and our prayers are with you. Council Member Halloran?

MICHELLE ORENSTEIN: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Thank you. I appreciate, Ms. Orenstein, you coming here to share this with us, this series of events. College Point is actually the home of CB7's trucks. The garage is right there in College Point. The Sanitation vehicles come down College Point Boulevard to go wherever they go in the Borough of Queens. This woman, who was located, literally 150 feet off of College Point Boulevard, had her street completely blocked day three after the storm, day three.

MICHELLE ORENSTEIN: I went there Tuesday morning. I got there approximately 6:15, 6:20. She was on a one-way street and I just left my car in the middle of the street. I just had that feeling, you know. Then when I looked up at

1  
2 6:15, 6:20 in the morning, I saw my mother's  
3 lights on, I knew something was wrong, and I had  
4 the keys.

5 But to be told that I'm sorry,  
6 ma'am, we're still picking up bodies from last  
7 night or having to step over her or sit in the  
8 home while she's starting to decompose and the  
9 ME's office only having two trucks, something has  
10 got to be done. More than two trucks they need,  
11 I'm sorry.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Our  
13 condolences for your loss.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. We  
15 at least should have a full accounting of all of  
16 the deaths. In each and every borough, except  
17 Manhattan, we have had horrific stories. This is  
18 the third story that we have heard as a result of  
19 these hearings where individuals, their relatives  
20 died and they were left in the homes for days on  
21 end. It's totally unacceptable.

22 There should be a full and complete  
23 accounting of the number of deaths during this  
24 blizzard period by the Administration. If we do  
25 not get that, then we will demand it and we will

enact some legislation to require it.

The next speaker is Naomi Altman. Council Member Halloran, hold her tight and make sure she gets the services she needs. Naomi Altman, Queens Community House? She will be followed by Walter.

WALTER KOWSH: Kowsh.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Kowsh. Thank you. Mr. Kowsh, from Cedar Grove Civic, will be followed by Richie Lipkowitz, from Kew Gardens.

NAOMI B. ALTMAN: I want to thank Borough President Marshall. Councilwoman James, you are brilliant to listen to on every occasion.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

NAOMI B. ALTMAN: My own Council Members, I thank you all and all of you who are doing the work of the people. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very much.

NAOMI B. ALTMAN: I'm here for myself because I live on yet another street in Queens in Forest Hills where the plows only came

1  
2 on the wee hours of Wednesday morning. There were  
3 three plows, one trying to push the other. So I'm  
4 hearing that this was not unusual. But that's my  
5 little story.

6 My real story is about the unsung  
7 heroes of the blizzard of 2010.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

9 NAOMI B. ALTMAN: Given the facts  
10 that we saw before us a real blizzard, management  
11 in my organization decided we would need to close  
12 on the 27th. All departments were immediately  
13 notified. The established emergency plans were  
14 put into place which meant that every director in  
15 our agency was contacted to know that they needed  
16 to put their plan in action.

17 The evening on Sunday evening, this  
18 was not Monday morning after we saw what the  
19 snowfall looked like, our Social Adult Day  
20 Services program contacted all 24 members who were  
21 due to attend the following day to make certain--  
22 now these are the frail elderly that we bring out  
23 in our vans, were informed that we wouldn't be  
24 open if there was any need for any special plan.

25 Our transportation coordinator made

1 the trek on Sunday night to her office to call her  
2 transportation clients. This is before there was  
3 any action anywhere else. Our case managers were  
4 well prepared for an emergency as their standard  
5 practice is to maintain a list of their clients in  
6 their home just for such an event. They placed  
7 calls to all and were assured first and foremost  
8 of the individual's safety.

10 On Tuesday the 28th, the case  
11 managers spent the entire day speaking with  
12 clients and assessing their needs. They remained  
13 in contact with the home delivered meals provider  
14 who sent them a list of 78 clients who could not  
15 have meals delivered because the streets were not  
16 plowed. All 78 clients were contacted before they  
17 left, which is 6:00, 7:00 at night. These are  
18 people, it's important to know, who a number of  
19 them would have been without employment as of  
20 January 1st because of the cuts that the city had  
21 indicated for case management. I want to thank  
22 the Council in all of your efforts to have  
23 restored those funds. Thank you again for that.

24 But even though they worked these  
25 extra hours, there is no overtime pay for these

folks. They don't ask for special acknowledgements nor do they get any. But the real heroes are the old people. I made some of those calls myself. When you spoke to them and you said to them are you okay without a meal today, what they said first and foremost was thank you for thinking of me. Thanks for the time.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We need to hear that. Walter Kowsh? How do you pronounce it? I'm sorry. Thank you.

WALTER KOWSH: Don't start it yet.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, we won't start the clock until you get--

WALTER KOWSH: [interposing] We're still on the first one.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: He has a prop.

WALTER KOWSH: My name is Walter Kowsh. I'm president of the Cedar Grove Civic Homeowners Association.

My area of civic concern is in the Queens Community District number 7, located to the south of the LIE and west of Main Street. We are

in City Council District 24, surrounded on three sides by the Mount Hebron Cedar Grove Cemetery.

We have always been the last on the list to be plowed out unless we complain loudly.

Once in the middle of the 1990s we had a blizzard that lasted for a number of days and we only received a plow out by a single pay loader that sped down two major north/south streets and never did the connecting east/west streets. The snow continued on for a number of days thereafter and calls to Sanitation District 7, Community Board 7 and our then local Council Member went unanswered.

We documented these events on videotape and then went to the green book and began calling everyone from Deputy Commissioner on down at Sanitation headquarters, leaving a message on their voicemail about our plight. The streets were plowed out the next day and have been fairly well maintained until the December 2010 snowstorm.

Clearly, salt spreading was not done during the early hours of the storm. Follow up occurred only after I contacted Thomas at Councilman Gennaro's office and sent an email to

the Sanitation commissioner on nyc.gov.

I make the followed recommended proposals or recommendations. One: the medium duty dump trucks operated by both the Department of Transportation and the Department of Environmental Protection should be fitted with plows and salt spreaders just like the suburban counties, towns and villages that border New York City. They should be deployed early to handle side streets such as our area.

As an aside, I'd like to point out that if you leave here today and you go down over here to Union Turnpike and Park Drive East, you'll be able to see those dump trucks lying idle in the snow at their yard.

All snowstorms should be supervised by the Department of Emergency Management which will monitor the deployment and operation of all city and MTA snow removal equipment. Local civic associations who hold title to their streets, such as Douglas Manor have their own snow plow from the DMA club and city resources as well.

Community improvement districts should be constituted to allow local areas such as

mine, to purchase similar services from local contractors. Both the construction company and the Cedar Grove Cemetery have snow removal equipment that we could rent for snow removal provided a fund was created from local property taxes to pay for these emergency services. This would lessen the burden on city resources during these particular periods of crisis.

All city vehicles should be equipped with tire chains or studded snow tires. The Ford F-350 super duty chassis cab which is used on city ambulances, as a matter of fact, has as standard equipment a limited slip differential which means that none of them should have been stuck in the snow because with limited slip, the wheel that gets caught transfers all power to the wheel that has grip.

A home room message should be sent to Albany requesting that New York State VTL be amended to remove the ban on studded snow tires and allow the use on all vehicles during winter seasons as had occurred prior to the 1980s.

The only other thing that I'd like to say is that I think that the Mayor, the Public

1 Advocate and the City Council President should be  
2 equipped with satellite cell phones so that they  
3 could be reached by OEM, just like the president  
4 of the United States has the football for nuclear  
5 deterrence. If one is not reached, then it must  
6 pass down to the next one to handle the crisis.  
7

8 So if Mayor Bloomberg is not  
9 around, it doesn't go to the deputy mayor, it goes  
10 directly to the Public Advocate and then it goes  
11 directly to the City Council President because  
12 they are the people that are elected by people in  
13 the United States. Just like in Washington, it  
14 goes from President to Vice President to Speaker  
15 of the House.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: May we have a  
17 copy of your testimony?

18 WALTER KOWSH: Yes, I have it  
19 there. Finally, one last thing, I see the Queens  
20 Borough flag is here and I'm proud to see that it  
21 flies. Unfortunately, it doesn't fly outside.  
22 I'd like to recommend to all City Council members  
23 that you appropriate funds for two additional flag  
24 poles in front of Borough Hall and for the course  
25 of the flag so that both the New York City flag

and the Queens Borough flag may fly alongside the flag of the United States and the MIA/POW flag.

Thank you very much. God bless you all.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That last recommendation, I'll refer to the Queens delegation, and don't forget your prop. Thank you, sir. Richie Lipkowitz is next, followed by Cynthia Zalisky.

RICHIE LIPKOWITZ: I put on my prop to greet our sister and brother from our neighboring second best fans but we enjoy your support. I know you're only here because we have the most gracious Borough President of all.

Our problem is the simple word. I have a tendency to speak the words that are uncomfortable to be spoken. Forgive me, but just carry back this message: accountability. Who's in charge? Two-word answer: Ed Skyler. Oh do I miss him.

You understand this is a 24-hour 7-day a week city. This is a special obligation. This is not a principality to be controlled by

blackberry. My sympathies to your people. What a wonderful reputation for decades, because I'm sure someone was told let's not disturb him on the different back nine in Bermuda. So we understand.

Ed Skyler would leap out of his car. He understood what it is to be a real New Yorkers. Goldsmith, I believe he was getting bids on his townhouse with his wife in Washington at the time, so he didn't see the snow.

The next one in line, is that Patty Harris? Did she ever get to the foundation where she could buy off the squeaky wheels? Who was in charge?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Queens is rough.

RICHIE LIPKOWITZ: I listened to the Public Advocate de Blasio the other night; he suggested this, because you're getting the same disdain as the snowfall. Bill suggested this; the only thing that will work is shame for legacy or possibly a third party move. If we shame him, we don't have to reinvent the wheel. I would love to ask Liz Crowley. I'm sure that she'll make sure that the fire houses and hospitals are shoveled.

Unnecessary. Maybe Jimmy will be pushing the ambulances again. Maybe we'll put together snow shovels. This is 2011. These guys have been doing it for decades.

So perhaps our probably really is this: we have the emperor who has too many clothes. When his lordship suggested I have hot chocolate and I have none, couldn't get out to go to the supermarket, couldn't get out to go to Broadway because more people were concerned during the economy to get a day's pay. So while he tells us to sort of go with it, they're not eating that night.

I'd like to reserve my time for what is probably your upcoming hearing on the chancellor of education in the near future. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Are you sure you're not from Brooklyn?

HELEN M. MARSHALL: Nobody beats Queens.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Lipkowitz, I hope the Jets win because, you know.

1  
2 RICHIE LIPKOWITZ: You're invited.

3 [Crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Zalisky  
5 will be followed by Derick Echevarria with the  
6 Transport Workers Union. I apologize. Ms.  
7 Zalisky?

8 CYNTHIA ZALISKY: Yeah. My luck, I  
9 had to follow Richie. Anyway, thank you Madame  
10 Borough President, Distinguished Chairperson and  
11 members of the best delegation, of course, in City  
12 Council, the Queens delegation.

13 I actually come here asking your  
14 help in something. Maybe because I'm spiritual, I  
15 see what happened to us in December as a test, a  
16 wakeup call. I'm talking about the fact that I  
17 represent the Queens Jewish Community Council, 144  
18 faith-based organizations throughout the Borough.

19 Queens has the largest Jewish  
20 population as far as seniors are concerned. The  
21 borough president mentioned to me the other day  
22 that Queens and Brooklyn tie in terms of seniors  
23 in general.

24 So what I ask of you distinguished  
25 elected officials is when you go back and make

1  
2 your recommendations, one of the most important  
3 recommendations has to be that Queens should not  
4 be one of the last boroughs that's taken care of  
5 but one of the first boroughs because we have the  
6 most seniors.

7 Now Queens Jewish Community Council  
8 had 128 people that we give meals on wheels to.  
9 We're the overflow for the Department of the  
10 Aging. In other words, these poor people are  
11 already behind the eight ball. They were waiting  
12 to be on the waiting list. And of course,  
13 somebody has to die in order to get on the waiting  
14 list. That's how we got involved.

15 We have 128 people. God was good,  
16 I have to say, because I worried two days we  
17 couldn't even get in to the office. Of the 128  
18 people that we called saying do you have food,  
19 don't lie to me, and I'm a Jewish mother, don't  
20 you dare tell me you have food. Only five really  
21 were in trouble. Those five I actually went by  
22 bus and delivered.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Wow.

24 CYNTHIA ZALISKY: It took me three  
25 days to deliver the five people because one was in

1  
2 Regal Park, two in Flushing and one was in  
3 Briarwood. Briarwood was the North Pole in terms  
4 of where it was. We would not go there at night,  
5 so I went like today on a Friday when I go early  
6 so I could see where I was going, so I could  
7 deliver on Hoover Avenue.

8                   So what I ask of you please is go  
9 back and tell whoever has to be told, and we don't  
10 know who it is anymore, right? We don't know  
11 who's running the place. That Queens must be  
12 first, not last, when it comes to snow. Our  
13 seniors need it.

14                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: God bless you.  
15 Thank you very much.

16                   [Applause]

17                   FEMALE VOICE: And for another  
18 reason because we have such a poor transportation  
19 network.

20                   CYNTHIA ZALISKY: That too. That  
21 too.

22                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Derick? I  
23 apologize if I butchered your name. I really  
24 butchered it. I'm sorry.

25                   DERICK ECHEVARRIA: My name is

Derick Echevarria.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Echevarria.

I'm sorry.

DERICK ECHEVARRIA: I represent the  
Transport Workers Union, Local 100.

FEMALE VOICE: Yay.

DERICK ECHEVARRIA: I'm the second  
one, but a different perspective. I'm the  
division chairman of stations department which  
represents the cleaners that were cleaning the  
stations.

Basically there is a responsibility  
and availability problem at the Authority.  
Everything flows from the top. Chairman Walder,  
you got seven different departments with seven  
different snow policies. So that's one of the  
basic problems.

It goes back to when they laid the  
station agents off. A few of you councilmen came  
out and supported that. What happened there at  
the public hearings were you have a board member  
saying he's been on the board 16 years and it's  
time that they get it right.

If I was on my job one year, I'd be

1 fired. Sixteen years and now it's time to get it  
2 right. Just like Mr. Goldsmith, they have a job  
3 to do and their job is not snow removal or snow  
4 planning. Their job is reducing the workforce,  
5 eliminating the middle class. That's what it's  
6 all about. So you have someone who does nothing,  
7 knows nothing about snow removal. The Metrodome  
8 is indoors. They don't remove snow.

10 You have Mr. Walder. They have  
11 their own plows in the bus depot, their own snow,  
12 their own salt removal. But they were not called  
13 to a code 4, so they depended on Sanitation and  
14 that's another issue that overlaps the issues.

15 Recommendation is hindsight.  
16 Hindsight is employee availability. They're  
17 bringing back 200 people. We're short 346  
18 cleaners. So how does snow removal happen? They  
19 want you to do more with less. They create the  
20 overtime. It's not the workers. There'd be no  
21 overtime if there were more workers.

22 But it's because of the reduction  
23 in the workforce the last two years, trying to  
24 eliminate a title. We have the agents coming back  
25 now, but it's slowly at a creep. When we have

1 these emergencies, we have people one side of the  
2 stations and there's no one there. So how would  
3 they know if the train is coming? If the train is  
4 coming over there, who can let them in? What do  
5 we have to do, pay three times, four times?  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Seven different  
8 policies because there's seven different agencies?

9 DERICK ECHEVARRIA: Seven different  
10 departments. You have three departments of buses:  
11 MTA bus, private bus, RTO division.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

13 DERICK ECHEVARRIA: Stations. So  
14 you have seven different chiefs on top of chiefs.  
15 Too many managers.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You said  
18 seven different departments and they each have  
19 different snow policies?

20 DERICK ECHEVARRIA: Correct.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: But if they  
22 had called a code 4?

23 DERICK ECHEVARRIA: A code 4  
24 everybody would roll in.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Code 4

everybody would have been--

DERICK ECHEVARRIA: [interposing]

Everybody rolls in.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. It says Rockaway Tiger Paul Schubert. Mr. Tiger, you've got three minutes.

PAUL SCHUBERT: I've been to City Hall many times. I've been at NYC TV as well.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

PAUL SCHUBERT: I want to reach out to MTA Assistant Chief Sheila Hudson. By use of my cell phone camera and sending her pictures, I started with Thomas Prendergast's office. His office transferred me to Sheila. I was at the Beach 60th train station over in Far Rockaway where there is within about 50 feet a food stamp office, WIC, Medicaid, Medicare et cetera. I would like to put a bid in for an elevator there because it is a major center for government.

Now, also, in the Rockaways, we have more nursing homes than anyplace in Queens. I reached out to Passaic Orcena [phonetic] CERT using my cell phone camera, which is an excellent

1 tool to get things done. He was able to get a  
2 snowplow down on 114 as soon as he could.

3 Rock salt does not work under 30  
4 degrees. We had 350,000 tons of rock salt. What  
5 does it do? It destroys the subway electronics.  
6 It destroys the roads. Ms. James, it destroys  
7 your boots as well and your carpets.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Exactly, I know  
9 that.

10 PAUL SCHUBERT: Sand works. Sand  
11 placed on a surface creates traction. Sand placed  
12 on a road, you cannot have ice on the road. It  
13 cannot form a surface. Fact. Modern models,  
14 highways, okay.

15 Criminal liability laws, New York  
16 State Article IX clearly states that if a member  
17 decides not to call a code 4, and somebody dies,  
18 he is fully liable and culpable. That is the law.  
19 I've reached to Ms. Grace Meng and David Weprin.  
20 I gave them a copy of Article IX penal law. I  
21 want the penalty increased from one year to ten.  
22 Handcuffs work.

23 I would also like a law passed,  
24 City Council, that if a homeowner refuses to plow  
25

his sidewalks, he can do a couple of days of community service, starting with the same day and then the following Saturday. I want to ruin his weekend. Screw the fines. Hold him responsible.

I have a picture and Ms. Hudson was able to very quickly get the bus stop shoveled out.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Can you summarize your testimony? You're doing very good.

PAUL SCHUBERT: This is by Jackson Heights, Roosevelt, I called this morning about this. Why is half the block--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]  
What's the exact street?

PAUL SCHUBERT: This is 74th and Broadway, Roosevelt Jackson Heights train station.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: How are the conditions this morning?

PAUL SCHUBERT: Well, about half of the block was plowed, but by 75th Street they continue to refuse it even though it's on MTA property. I wonder why.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And the other picture that you showed what's that address?

PAUL SCHUBERT: This is Beach 116th Street, it's the B53 bus.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And the condition this morning?

PAUL SCHUBERT: Yes, yes. I also want to put a hoorah out to Barry Kessler [phonetic], MTA bus office. I sent Barry some cell phone photos and she sends a crew out there.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you for that shout out, Mr. Schubert. You did very well. Thank you very much.

PAUL SCHUBERT: Thank you, Ms. James.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: James Jagiellu. After Mr. Jagiellu, Mr. Roland from Springfield Boulevard, you're next.

JAMES JAGIELLU: One more thing I should tell you that during the days after the storm, the areas of our main street around 69th Avenue and 70th Avenue went unplowed for several days. And as a result--first of all I had an abandoned car right around the corner from my house up on 69th. I called 911. They said they only assist emergency vehicles. Then I called 311

1 and I got a recording saying that they would not  
2 take any more complaints about abandoned vehicles.  
3 This is bad. Then I had to call the 112 Precinct  
4 and they said they would try to send somebody out  
5 as soon as they could. Then I called Councilwoman  
6 Koslowitz's office and finally I think that they  
7 got some action taken.  
8

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's right.

10 [Applause]

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We call her the  
12 big--

13 JAMES JAGIELLU: [interposing] This  
14 is just an example of how bad this storm was. Not  
15 only that, but the 223 bus had to suffer a major  
16 detour throughout its entire route. Not just on  
17 69th Avenue, they had to send the bus up by  
18 Yellowstone Boulevard but also on the other end of  
19 the route, on 103rd near the 7 train and Rosewood  
20 Avenue, buses couldn't run there, so they had to  
21 send all the buses up 108th Street, which means  
22 that people who are coming off the 7 train had to  
23 make an extra long walk of one very long block to  
24 get to the 223 bus. This is not acceptable  
25 either.

I understand it was because some 223 buses got stuck in the snow and then there also some other vehicles stuck in that area as well.

So hopefully, and as I said on Wednesday night, we hopefully will not see a repeat of this. We hopefully will not see a repeat of the attitude that this city has taken and the attitude of hoorah for Manhattan and screw the rest of the city. Hopefully we'll never see that again.

Not only that, I would hope that whomever, the department heads or whomever was responsible for the non-performance during this storm, I just have two words for them, and to quote the great Donald Trump, those two words are: you're fired.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

JAMES JAGIELLU: That's what I would do.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
Thank you very much.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Roland?

1  
2 BUHLER ROLAND: Yes, good afternoon  
3 ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for giving us the  
4 opportunity.

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

6 BUHLER ROLAND: I live 30 years in  
7 New York City and Queens. For 30 years, minus  
8 this one, the snow was removed, the drivers were  
9 not blind. They used the side streets to be  
10 plowed. Why didn't it work now? This is the job  
11 for you people to find out, not me.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's right.

13 BUHLER ROLAND: Scratching each  
14 other on the back is fine in certain times. This  
15 is not one of these times. I've been watching  
16 them go up and down Springfield Boulevard with  
17 their trucks.

18 As soon as we're cleaned up, I put  
19 my snow all the way to the back yard, all the way.  
20 I tell my neighbors don't put it in the street,  
21 why do you put it there. Plow it to the back,  
22 even if you have only ten foot by five foot. Some  
23 of these attached row houses don't have that much  
24 without the garage. But put some of that there.

25 I've seen drivers, we clean the

1  
2 sidewalks, I turn my back, go in and get a cup of  
3 coffee to relax my back pain. I come back out, I  
4 see the guy with the truck and buries all the snow  
5 that I piled up back on my sidewalk, and then you  
6 want to fine me. I was this close. He was  
7 watching, he was already gone because I would  
8 taken a break and thrown it at him. Then I would  
9 have taken his head and cleaned the sidewalk with  
10 it.

11 [Laughter]

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I'm glad you  
13 had your coffee.

14 BUHLER ROLAND: I do not  
15 understand. I do not understand what happened.  
16 Number two, like somebody said here, you need an  
17 inventory about the equipment. Buses, they are  
18 back heavy. They can put the plow on there. The  
19 MTA drives around the routes. The plows, what are  
20 they doing? The intersection on Springfield  
21 Boulevard and Jamaica Avenue, the people have to  
22 stand in the street. If there is a car come  
23 around that corner and loses control, you're going  
24 to mow down 20 or 30 people.

25 Please, I don't know what the

1 situation is now on 179, but this morning at 10:00  
2 a.m. it was all slush. My wife gone to work and  
3 she has spinal cord problems and neck problems  
4 with the nerves. She's so scared, I've got to  
5 stop and put her onto the sidewalk. Why it is not  
6 all cleaned? You have snow piles like this high  
7 on 179 Street, not for one day.

8  
9 One gentleman said early on, plow  
10 the snow to the medians. Hillside Avenue, Jamaica  
11 Avenue, they are full of medians. Push it to the  
12 middle and then bring it slowly back once the  
13 things are gone. Municipal parking on Jamaica  
14 Avenue, LIR, nobody used it. Why? Because they  
15 couldn't get in, and the street parking, they  
16 couldn't get out anymore. With their supped up  
17 cars and this kind of a tire on the car, they go  
18 and plow in, you never get out again. Well, I  
19 helped, but I told that guy, hey you're dumb  
20 enough to drive like this, take yourself out.

21 But this situation with plowing,  
22 and I'm saying the Sanitation Department they've  
23 always done an excellent job, why not know?

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.  
25 Roland.

|    |   |     |
|----|---|-----|
| 1  | COMMITTEE ON SANITATION                           | 171 |
| 2  | BUHLER ROLAND: Thank you.                         |     |
| 3  | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very                 |     |
| 4  | much. I really appreciate it.                     |     |
| 5  | BUHLER ROLAND: Please, do                         |     |
| 6  | something about the machineries.                  |     |
| 7  | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.                     |     |
| 8  | BUHLER ROLAND: I would like to say                |     |
| 9  | this, why is the Parks Department riding around   |     |
| 10 | opening up. You need to combine the workforce.    |     |
| 11 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We need                        |     |
| 12 | coordination.                                     |     |
| 13 | BUHLER ROLAND: Coordination.                      |     |
| 14 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.                |     |
| 15 | BUHLER ROLAND: Thank you.                         |     |
| 16 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Feiner,                    |     |
| 17 | representing the Bayside Hills Civic Association, |     |
| 18 | followed by Martin Bromson, followed by Robert    |     |
| 19 | Valdes Clausell. I'm certain I said that wrong.   |     |
| 20 | Mr. Feiner?                                       |     |
| 21 | MICHAEL FEINER: Hello everybody.                  |     |
| 22 | Thanks for doing this. It was a schlep to get     |     |
| 23 | here, I'll tell you that much. To see the size of |     |
| 24 | the audience, it's very, very impressive.         |     |
| 25 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: It's very                      |     |

impressive.

MICHAEL FEINER: It shows you the severity of what did occur. I tell you, the Department of Sanitation, Council Member Weprin and Dan Halloran know me for a while, we've always had a great relationship in Bayside Hills. We knew who to call when there were difficulties. Iggy Terranova has been to a couple of my civic meetings if I'm not mistaken. I know the gentleman where the headquarters is on Winchester Boulevard. For years and years it was a great relationship; no hassles, no complaints and everything went fine.

Now this storm, no matter what, it was a tough storm. I shoveled. It was a tough shoveling. I had to get my son and then in the middle I had to call my wife, which I rarely do. We shoveled and we shoveled and we shoveled. But still, the Department of Sanitation should know how to push a storm like this.

What I think is that something fishy happened. How did this happen citywide? How did something like this happen? We spoke about this before, people testified. Perhaps it

1  
2 was because of the shortage of manpower. Perhaps  
3 there was something that we do not know within the  
4 structure of the Department of Sanitation that was  
5 maybe getting them a little off kilter. Why would  
6 this happen? Was it due to the budget cuts?  
7 Something was amiss.

8 Now on the way to the bathroom, I  
9 saw this policeman, and I said to the officer: if  
10 some police office did something wrong, would you  
11 snitch on him? He said no, by no means, I  
12 wouldn't snitch. It's the same thing with the  
13 Department of Sanitation. Whoever caused this  
14 entire scenario, we're never going to find that  
15 out. What we have to do is make sure it never  
16 happens again. This is what I'm pleading. We saw  
17 the results of people not surviving and it was a  
18 horrible thing.

19 As a matter of fact, I'm worried  
20 because nobody likes to be treated like everybody  
21 is after them and this is what's happening in the  
22 Department of Sanitation. They were a proud  
23 organization and now they're getting hammered left  
24 and right. I read some of the articles, what they  
25 were saying about Mr. Terranova. I mean, it's

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2 though, I think we do know what happened. It's  
3 just a matter of the Mayor holding the people  
4 accountable that made it happen and also holding  
5 the people in the MTA.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Martin Bromsom.  
7 How are you, sir? Did I pronounce your name  
8 wrong? Good.

9 MARTIN BROMSON: Good afternoon  
10 everyone.

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good afternoon.

12 MARTIN BROMSON: I live on Queens  
13 Boulevard at 65th Avenue.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could you put  
15 the microphone just a little closer to you? There  
16 you go.

17 MARTIN BROMSON: I'm always accused  
18 of whispering. I live on Queens Boulevard at 65th  
19 Avenue in Regal Park. I look out the window every  
20 once in a while. So every time it snows, I kind  
21 of keep track of what's going on.

22 What bothers me the most is that  
23 because the crosswalks are not cleared on the  
24 malls, Queens Boulevard, people are walking  
25 amongst the cars to cross the street. Of course,

1  
2 after a big storm, people should be staying home  
3 for a day or two. But when people become mobile  
4 again, this is what happens. Now I'm already an  
5 old guy, but I seem to walk okay for the moment.  
6 But I worry about the future and I worry about the  
7 present for other people that cannot walk too  
8 well.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

10 MARTIN BROMSON: The crosswalks are  
11 for everyone. Today we seem to be addressing  
12 clearing the streets. I heard the word crosswalk  
13 but I don't think it was about clearing the  
14 crosswalks.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Do you know if  
16 the crosswalks on Queens Boulevard were clear  
17 today?

18 MARTIN BROMSON: They're just  
19 patted down.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: They're patted  
21 down.

22 MARTIN BROMSON: As a result of  
23 people walking. The plows, when they come by,  
24 which they have to do, this snow just gets piled  
25 up this high in the crosswalks, so people just

walk on the street. That's a real safety issue.  
I don't know what can be done, but maybe some  
thought can be given to it.

HELEN M. MARSHALL: Can I suggest?  
They already know how to do that, all right?

MARTIN BROMSON: Okay.

HELEN M. MARSHALL: My office when  
I was in the Council and the Assembly was on  
Astoria Boulevard. What they did when you have a  
major storm like this, they have special trucks  
that go in and gather up the snow and then they  
would make big piles on Astoria Boulevard and a  
truck would come along and they'd put it into  
Flushing Bay.

They also hired people and many  
people were very glad to get that extra few  
dollars. Instead of just piling it up on the side  
of the sidewalk, what they would do is they would  
shovel it into the catch basins.

But right now, all of us have snow  
from the first snowstorm underneath those big  
piles.

MARTIN BROMSON: That's right,  
yeah.

1  
2 HELEN M. MARSHALL: Every time it  
3 happens, I mean they've always been excellent.  
4 They know what to do. They know exactly what to  
5 do. As far as the bus shelters are concerned, I  
6 watched, because people couldn't get into the bus  
7 shelters. The snow was piled up all along the  
8 sidewalk and the people would have to either try  
9 to get into the bus shelter from the corner or  
10 else forget about it, all right.

11 And so here I see the bus shelters,  
12 the guy to come and clean it out. I was so happy  
13 to see him. What he did is he cleaned out the  
14 inside of the bus shelter and never did anything  
15 to let the people from the sidewalk get into the  
16 bus shelter. So I stopped him. He said that's  
17 all we're required to do. You know what I did?  
18 Council Members, I went when they had that  
19 contract with that company, I went there and  
20 killed his contract.

21 [Applause]

22 MARTIN BROMSON: I understand the  
23 severity of this recent storm, but what I see out  
24 my window, I've been seeing for many years.  
25 Hopefully there will be some way to think of the

pedestrians along with the drivers.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

MARTIN BROMSON: That is important.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Robert Valdes Clausell, followed by Adele Bender, followed by Chan Jamoona, followed by GOPAL.

ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: Good afternoon, distinguished Madame Chair and distinguished members of the City Council. I come to you in two capacities, both as the property manager of a 154-unit building in Elmhurst Queens, New York. And I also come to you as an executive member of the Newtown Civic Association that governs most of Elmhurst.

I want to make you aware that this was not a unique storm. We've had many storms that have been very similar to this. But I want to point out two very important areas that I think you need to understand.

I have a lot of friends in Manhattan. They were in contact with me throughout the storm. Do you know what their main complaint was in Manhattan? They were kept up all

1 night because there were snowplows going over  
2 asphalt. There was no more snow to plow, but they  
3 have to make sure that for our beloved Mayor,  
4 there was not even an ounce of snow available or  
5 visible. Snow melters and snowplows and heavy  
6 equipment were diverted, almost like in an  
7 emergency capacity to Manhattan.  
8

9 It's interesting, before we joined  
10 the City of New York in 1898, there was a massive  
11 storm, an historic storm in 1888 in Manhattan. If  
12 you recall, all of Manhattan, like the rest of the  
13 outer boroughs, Staten Island, Brooklyn, et  
14 cetera, all have a big problem, which was very  
15 evident, Madame Borough President, during the  
16 hurricane. That is that we still have obsolete,  
17 in the 21st century, we still have obsolete  
18 communications and power lines still outdoors and  
19 not a single one in Manhattan. Everything is  
20 buried underneath.

21 So what happened? Because we had  
22 the snowstorm, because we had the hurricanes,  
23 tornadoes that affected us in August, large  
24 sections of the largest land mass of the City of  
25 New York that should have the most resources

1 because of the fact that it has the greatest area  
2 to cover, ended up not having the resources  
3 necessary to deal with the issue. I must implore  
4 you, all the remaining boroughs, if we're not  
5 going to be treated like second class citizens in  
6 our own city, need to have the infrastructure  
7 dedicated and delivered below ground. If we don't  
8 do that, we're going to continue to have what we  
9 had.  
10

11 Let me tell you what we had. I had  
12 to open my office 24 hours--I have an onsite  
13 property management office at our building--to  
14 assist the elderly and others to get communication  
15 because Time Warner Cable on their triple digital  
16 phone system, well obviously, large sections of  
17 Elmhurst were without phones. Years ago, you had  
18 Verizon or whatever. But the reality is for four  
19 days we had no Time Warner cable. Not the cable,  
20 not the digital phone. There were many people  
21 that couldn't even call 311. So they relied on us  
22 to be able to get emergency ambulances and other  
23 things to them.

24 Another issue, many buildings  
25 throughout the five boroughs in fact, but

1  
2 certainly in the outer boroughs, rely on oil  
3 deliveries, such as ours.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

5 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: And the  
6 reality is that because of that we had a problem  
7 with getting oil. I had to divert the crews and  
8 the personnel from our building, even though we  
9 tried to get through to 311, to actually plow the  
10 street ourselves with our equipment, the city  
11 street, to allow our oil trucks to make it.  
12 Otherwise, the next step would have been no heat  
13 or hot water. And 154 families, you can imagine,  
14 people would have had to have been evacuated.

15 So the reality is that we have a  
16 big problem. We have to divert resources to  
17 underground. We cannot continue to be looking  
18 like as if we're out in Peoria, Illinois. We need  
19 to start making sure that like Manhattan, the  
20 infrastructure is buried. We need to make sure  
21 that we are prioritized because we are the largest  
22 land mass.

23 We must have some snow melters and  
24 bulldozers and all the equipment. By the way, two  
25 days later I went into Manhattan and I couldn't

1 find snow in Manhattan, but everywhere else it  
2 was. So I think that these are the major issues  
3 that all of us have to understand and address  
4 because it is an issue. Otherwise, Madame Borough  
5 President, I call of you to understand. We joined  
6 the City of New York in 1898. It may be time for  
7 us to consider secession.  
8

9 [Laughter]

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

11 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: Sir?

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: This is Council  
13 Member Halloran.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER HALLORAN: Two quick  
15 points and I do appreciate your sense of history.  
16 Five generations ago, my great-great-grandfather  
17 made the mistake of being one of the aldermen to  
18 vote to move and incorporate in the City of New  
19 York. So I apologize to the residents of Queens  
20 for that.

21 You did point out correctly that  
22 this was a category 3 storm, not a category 4, not  
23 a category 5, which we've had in the past. Anyone  
24 who wants to talk about the weather was like that  
25 day; the storm was measured by wind, the speed of

1  
2 the wind, the tenacity of it, the amount of  
3 snowfall and how rapidly it was falling and we  
4 were a category 3. Not a 4, not a 5, and we've  
5 had those before. In fact, we've had 17 other  
6 storms above it in stature.

7 The other thing that you point out  
8 about the power, I'd just like you to know that  
9 it's not just your community. In fact, in my  
10 district in Bayside, there were over 200 homes  
11 without power. Not cable, not phone but power.  
12 They didn't have oil burners. Their electric  
13 igniters on their gas were not functional. For  
14 two days they had to sit because the streets were  
15 plowed and Con Edison couldn't get to them. They  
16 wanted to.

17 They called my office, desperate to  
18 get into those locations. We had to relay the  
19 messages through three different channels before  
20 it go to the Mayor's office to get those streets  
21 plowed so that those, ultimately 200 homes in  
22 Bayside, who were without power could actually get  
23 heat during the snowstorm. Thanks.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

25 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL:

1 Absolutely. I do want to say that our  
2 Councilperson, the Honorable Daniel Dromm--

3 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]  
4 He would like to say something. Council Member  
5 Dromm?  
6

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Go ahead.

8 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: I just  
9 wanted to congratulate. Throughout this entire  
10 emergency, I must tell you the only agency, the  
11 only entity that actually had a full staff working  
12 for our community was Danny Dromm's office,  
13 because he kept on fielding questions. We tried  
14 to call everyone else and we couldn't get anybody  
15 else. So I just wanted you to know that if it  
16 wasn't for Danny Dromm, we would think the City of  
17 New York didn't exist.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member  
19 Dromm?

20 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: One last  
21 thing relating to what you just said, sir. I went  
22 out because my aunt lives a couple of blocks from  
23 me and her phone is digital and it was out. So as  
24 a function of that, I went out in the snow while  
25 it was falling with my massive Traveler's

1 umbrella, which is gigantic and I walked because  
2 obviously I couldn't drive. By the way, I called  
3 in all of our four-wheel drive vehicles to assist  
4 the police. We helped the police. We helped the  
5 community. We did all the things we had to do,  
6 even though we're not CERT members, but we did it.  
7 In the case of an emergency, you have to rise to  
8 the occasion.

9  
10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

11 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: The bottom  
12 line is that's how I know that what you're saying  
13 is absolutely true. Normally when you have a  
14 snowfall, even a smaller one than what we got, you  
15 see the Sanitation Department, and I believe the  
16 gentleman here from Sanitation probably would  
17 realize and knows this, that they're very  
18 effective. They literally are on every corner  
19 waiting to put snow and salt and sand and  
20 everything else.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER DROMM: Robert,  
23 thank you. I just want to say it was a pleasure  
24 to help you during the storm. When we did call  
25 Time Warner on a number of occasions to try to get

1 the situation rectified, the response was that  
2 this is happening all over the borough. I don't  
3 think that's an adequate response. I think that  
4 you're absolutely right because as more and more  
5 people rely on cable to bring them the phone  
6 service, especially our elderly who may need to  
7 call an ambulance or whatever, this is a life-  
8 saving thing. I think we really need to look  
9 very, very closely at that.

10  
11 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: We need to  
12 make it a utility.

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: One last  
14 Council Member, Council Member Crowley?

15 CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: I'd like to  
16 thank you for your testimony. Actually, Queens  
17 gets it fair share as it relates to Sanitation  
18 vehicles, due to our land size and our population.  
19 However, you did point out a point as it relates  
20 to power lines. Council Member Halloran also had  
21 this experience as well as Dromm in the district.

22 Not only were our constituents  
23 prisoners in their home, but many of them didn't  
24 have power. It's about time Queens gets its power  
25 lines put underground because when there are major

1 storms, our community falls victim and they  
2 shouldn't. So let Con Edison move forward with  
3 that and put our wires underground. Nowhere in  
4 Manhattan do they have overhead power lines.  
5

6 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: They  
7 haven't had it since 1888; 130 years ago they got  
8 rid of them.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Let me just say  
10 that as a co-chair of the Infrastructure Committee  
11 of the City Council, with Council Member  
12 Garodnick, that's something that we are looking  
13 at. I believe it will be incorporated in our  
14 report to the City Council and to the public.

15 ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: Thank you,  
16 Madame Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
18 Adele Bender. Let me just also defend Manhattan.  
19 I was in Manhattan last night. Residents above  
20 96th Street said that their streets were not  
21 plowed. Lower East Side residents said that their  
22 streets were not plowed. And we had a couple of  
23 individuals from Lincoln Center who said their  
24 streets were not plowed. In defense of Manhattan,  
25 in all fairness.

ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: One of the people that called me from Manhattan said he was on 96th Street. So they didn't go further north. They just kept going o 96th Street all night long.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
Adele Bender.

ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: And he couldn't sleep.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

ROBERT VALDES CLAUSELL: Bye-bye.

ADELE BENDER: Good morning or good afternoon, whichever the case may be. My name is Adele Bender. I am on the board of the Queens Interagency Council on Aging and I've been a resident of Forest Hills for many, many years. I live pretty near Queens Boulevard. I have to tell you with all the snow that's piled up against the curb it's like a Hollywood production to try to get across the boulevard.

If you're elderly or especially if you're disabled, forget about it. I'm elderly, but I'm one of the lucky ones. I'm in good shape. I decided, there was a bus, usually I take the train. There happened to be a bus there, so I go

1  
2 to use the bus and there was so much snow and  
3 there was so much slush, I took a flop. I could  
4 deal with a flop, but I'm saying the bus had to  
5 practically park in the middle of the street.  
6 There is so much slush and so much snow and so  
7 much ice. I mean you name it, it's there.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Even today,  
9 ma'am?

10 ADELE BENDER: Yes, it was today,  
11 this morning. I went to use the bus. Usually I  
12 take the train but the bus was there. As I said,  
13 as I went to go on that bus, I fell because there  
14 was so much--again, I'm repeating myself--snow,  
15 slush, ice, you name it, it was there.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So, Ms. Bender,  
17 if you can give those locations.

18 ADELE BENDER: I'll tell you, it's  
19 67th Avenue, there is a bus stop there. It's  
20 between 67th Avenue and 67th Road. That's where I  
21 got the bus. There's a bus stop there. As I say,  
22 I took the bus. Usually I take the train, but it  
23 was there and so I took it and I survived it.

24 I think of people that are elderly  
25 and that are frail and that are disabled. They

1  
2 shouldn't have to go through so much to just try  
3 to get across any boulevard. I'm talking about  
4 Queens Boulevard because I live there. But I'm  
5 hearing testimony on Merrick Boulevard or any  
6 broad street that there is. The disabled and  
7 elderly people, some of who are frail, should be  
8 able to go across the street without having to  
9 worry.

10 I mean this snowstorm was over  
11 several days ago. I know they had the plows,  
12 which were fine, but what happens to all of the  
13 snow that's put up against the curb? There is a  
14 couple of feet into where the main drag is.  
15 Something should be done. I don't know if they  
16 want to pay some young people to do this. Or  
17 maybe there are some young strong men that would  
18 like to earn some money and maybe they could do  
19 that.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Out in Staten  
21 Island, there was an organization of young  
22 individuals who were organizing and trying to help  
23 senior citizens and people who were frail. So  
24 perhaps something like that can be developed here.

25 ADELE BENDER: I'm sure there are a

1 lot of young people that would like to do  
2 something like that to help the community. Maybe  
3 all that has to be done is perhaps to give them  
4 direction.  
5

6 HELEN M. MARSHALL: Actually,  
7 though, the Sanitation Department, we've had very  
8 bad snowstorms. We've had them over the years.  
9 I was born and raised in New York and certainly  
10 I've seen them. What happens is the Sanitation  
11 Department, as I described earlier, so I'm not  
12 going to spend too much time. They would gather  
13 up the snow, bring it to a certain location, which  
14 is not inhabited too much by people and then they  
15 would have these big trucks that would come and  
16 get it and either put it into the water. They  
17 also used to hire people when they weren't so  
18 high. Most of us are living with the first  
19 snowstorm, the snow from the first snowstorm. The  
20 only thing that happens when it snows it looks  
21 nice and pretty because it's white again. But in  
22 no time you've got black ice.

23 ADELE BENDER: That's right.

24 HELEN M. MARSHALL: But it's a  
25 mess. The curbs are very important. Now, many

1 times, you know, my husband would shovel and get  
2 everything cleared up and here comes the snowplow  
3 and just pushes it right into our driveway. It's  
4 a constant battle.

5 ADELE BENDER: Talk about a comedy  
6 of errors, you know. That's about it.

7 HELEN M. MARSHALL: There are a lot  
8 of people who are not working today who would have  
9 appreciated getting some money. They would be  
10 glad to do it.

11 ADELE BENDER: Exactly. Thank you  
12 very much.

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

14 ADELE BENDER: On behalf of the  
15 citizens and the seniors and the disabled,  
16 whatever you can do would be greatly, greatly  
17 appreciated.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: On behalf of--

19 ADELE BENDER: [interposing] As I  
20 say, Queens is not chopped liver and it should not  
21 be treated as such.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I just want to  
23 thank you for representing that constituency, a  
24 vital constituency. We greatly appreciate you.  
25

Again, we need more angels like you. Thank you very much.

ADELE BENDER: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Chan Jamoona, followed by GOPAL.

CHAN JAMOONA: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

CHAN JAMOONA: Borough President and Letitia and everybody else who is here. You all have made a special trip to visit us and listen to our problems, which is very nice.

My name is Chan Jamoona and I live in Richmond Hill. I have been a nurse at Queens Hospital with Health and Hospital Corporation for over 25 years as an administrator. I'm the founder of the United Hindu Senior Center.

We have had a number of problems. As you have heard before, only Lefferts Boulevard and Liberty Avenue were cleaned. Until Thursday morning, we did not have the side streets cleaned. Buses were still getting stuck and coming over and asking for a shovel to clean the streets, on Linden Boulevard actually this happened.

The side streets, until I left

1 today, they were still not cleaned. I tried  
2 calling 311 on Thursday when I saw that nothing  
3 had happened on my street and a few others. I  
4 just called 311 and they kept me on the phone for  
5 over four hours.  
6

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: As of today?

8 CHAN JAMOONA: On Thursday.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: On Thursday.

10 CHAN JAMOONA: I had them on the  
11 speaker and I continued doing everything I had to  
12 do. I use the other phone as we were going our  
13 way.

14 Now, the seniors had great  
15 difficulty. We had to call those who we knew  
16 were living with family, with children and  
17 grandchildren, we sort of put them for last.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

19 CHAN JAMOONA: But those who we  
20 knew were living alone, we tried calling them to  
21 see whether we could make sure that they had food  
22 and they had water and we tried to reach their  
23 family members to make sure that somebody visited  
24 them if possible at all.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Any deaths?

CHAN JAMOONA: I don't know of any.

We have not sort of done a count as yet to see what's happening. Our seniors seem to have been, you know they were taken care of. By Tuesday we sort of went around and visited and dropped off some packages here and there where we saw there was a great need.

But some of my major concerns too were a lot of people who we knew had to have dialysis on Monday and Tuesday could not have it. That pushes them back, way back, like they lose at least a high percentage of their health. I would say at least about 30 percent. As a nurse, once the toxicity goes up in the blood, the general condition deteriorates terribly and very fast. That has been a great worry to us during that time.

We do not know of any deaths as yet, but it has been terrible. We have not even had time to really do everything that we had to do during that time.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Did any seniors go without food during that period?

CHAN JAMOONA: We made sure that

1 something happened. Either the neighbor next door  
2 or somebody got something for them.

3 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

4 CHAN JAMOONA: It's a sort of  
5 tightly knit community where people help one  
6 another. Once you give them a call, somebody goes  
7 out, you know, who may be living three houses away  
8 or a block away, they send the children over to  
9 check on them and things like that.

10 We had quite a few young people, my  
11 nephews and some of the kids from the nearby  
12 blocks. My husband took some of them and went  
13 around from place to place and they did some of  
14 that stuff.

15 One of the things that I'm very  
16 concerned about though is the last time they cut  
17 the 50 senior centers, one of the criteria that  
18 they used was the inability of certain centers to  
19 have that high volume of senior participants.  
20 With this snowstorm, it has affected the  
21 participation of the seniors in the senior  
22 centers.

23 Our commissioner is definitely  
24 very, very gracious and I know that she has been  
25

1  
2 extraordinarily understanding. I forgot to tell  
3 her about it yesterday when I saw her, but I hope  
4 it will go through the Council that senior centers  
5 should not be penalized if their membership has  
6 not been up to par, because these two weeks--

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]  
8 That's an excellent point.

9 CHAN JAMOONA: These two weeks have  
10 been terrible for senior participation. As a  
11 result, I know that they'll fall below.

12 Being a minority group, we are  
13 pressured night and day every day by everybody.  
14 As a result, what I do is when our numbers drop,  
15 we open an extra day or an extra evening to make  
16 up our numbers.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

18 CHAN JAMOONA: Because we do not  
19 want to have any reason for closure. We are the  
20 only vegetarian senior center in New York City  
21 that is government supported. So we try to be  
22 proactive and we try to be on top of everything to  
23 make sure that we comply with everything that is  
24 required. So that's another thing.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: If you can

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summarize and close now, that would be greatly appreciated.

CHAN JAMOONA: I would like to see some usable number that we can all instead of 311 or whatever. The city should come up with something better than that. If we had an emergency day for those two bad days of the snow days that would have been useful.

I hope that in the future it will be much better, like it was in February of 2010.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. We'll take it into consideration in the future. As you know, the City Council restored the funds for the senior centers. We kept them open.

CHAN JAMOONA: Thank you all very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We will take into consideration if in fact they use usage numbers to close you. We will, again, remind them of the blizzard. Thank you very much.

CHAN JAMOONA: Thank you all very, very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

CHAN JAMOONA: That was a great

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COMMITTEE ON SANITATION 200

accomplishment.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, it was.

Thank you. G-O-P-A-L. Do you have one name?

GOPAL: Gopal.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Gopal. Okay,

thank you, sir.

GOPAL: Thank you very much. I'm

Gopal - - for a couple of years. I'm waiting for

five hours just to get one ticket for \$25. I

could have gone outside in the church or want to

clean the thing. If we have clean all those state

roads, we have a problem with the parking. I feel

that thing is not done and our garbage is there.

There should be a law. But I want you to pass the

law until the garbage thing is not clean.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Are you

complaining about a ticket related to the

blizzard?

GOPAL: Blizzard, yes. It was

given on the 5th.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay.

GOPAL: So my question is to all of

you, can you pass a law that no ticket should be

given until you clear--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing] I believe Council Member Williams has put in a bill to address that issue.

GOPAL: Thank you very much. The second question is we are sitting here. What about 911? This is a big city, which is more than so many states. And I'm hearing Marshall, she's talking about bus stops which are saying that they should be cleaning the bus stops. She's talking a very small thing. We're talking about the garages.

Is it possible the big city where you talk about certain things, not even small things, but no one is replying? Is it possible that we can have a data of my local things with nonprofits, with city boards and some other ones? What can we have, if she can manage all this, this whole emergency into the five different boroughs in place of one.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I believe your borough president will be convening a meeting as she mentioned earlier.

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

1  
2                   GOPAL: But the second thing is as  
3 she mentioned about the telephone things, MCI used  
4 to do other things. If we are relocating there's  
5 one OEM have 300 centers with the community board,  
6 with the nonprofit raising the money, with the  
7 City Council and other things as they can handle  
8 the accounting and they can do appropriately.

9                   The last thing, if possible, in  
10 that data, if I know the ones next door and an  
11 attorney, I want to know. If we're responsible  
12 that data would save a lot of lives if I know my  
13 next door neighbor is a doctor who can save a  
14 life.

15                   And it's very important if one time  
16 to do the one thing if there were 300 times, it  
17 would save the city. Thank you.

18                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.  
19 Thank you very much. Next is Robert Raspo,  
20 followed by Randy Solomon. Mr. Rappo, I  
21 apologize.

22                   ROBERT RAPPO: It works, Council  
23 Member James.

24                   CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Come on, Mr.  
25 Rappo.

ROBERT RAPPO: Thank you so much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You're welcome.

ROBERT RAPPO: Good afternoon,  
Madame President, Council people. I appreciate  
it. I'm really eager to come also to see Council  
Member Vallone and whatnot. I'm an individual  
with a permanent disability. I was hurt several  
years back, but I'd rather just go into the storm.

It was really, really an unjust  
thing that happened. I wasn't given my fair thing  
in the justice, that's why I wanted you to hear  
that, Council Member.

As far as the snow, I don't have so  
much problem with this because I live in a car and  
they cleared it out.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay.

ROBERT RAPPO: However, my problem  
is, as you had mentioned, Madame President, I'm  
tired of seeing the curb cuts un-cleared. I'm  
tired of it, sir. I'm tired of it. There are  
people in this community who are elderly.  
Although I have a disability myself, I help  
others. I live in Beach Hills. I have to help a  
neighbor because they don't want to clean the

1  
2 garages over there. All full of ice. I can get  
3 all the salt that I want, President Marshall.  
4 That's not an issue because from a neighboring co-  
5 op where my family lives. We're stuck but we  
6 won't go necessarily to that. My mom and I, from  
7 being out in the storm, and my wife kind of said  
8 that we're both crazy, but it was for a very, very  
9 special need.

10 But two years ago, if I could just  
11 graciously say, I put in a complaint and your  
12 department responded right away and they made a  
13 joke out of it, although Beach Hills has been  
14 doing a little better. I have many, many serious  
15 safety issues that unfortunately I'm not going to  
16 have the time to say.

17 As an individual with a disability,  
18 and the elderly, we need to be accommodating. As  
19 the gentlemen when I came in, I was sitting back  
20 there, God bless him, from one of the Community  
21 Boards, he says put me up there. One thing I  
22 forgot to say, which I probably am, I hate being  
23 on camera because that's not my purpose. My  
24 purpose is the needs for the individuals with  
25 disabilities.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Rappo, my understanding is that you're serving on the Borough President's disability task force and we thank you for that. We should continue that discussion but right now we want to limit our comments to the blizzard. Okay?

ROBERT RAPPO: Okay, I've got 25 seconds. Parking was the issue with that, Madame President. I was given a ticket.

HELEN M. MARSHALL: I want you on my task for people with disabilities. We have a regular task force--

ROBERT RAPPO: [interposing] I learned about it today and which a lot of people got. It's going to be five seconds. It's a shame that people that are victims of crimes and whatnot, Council Member Vallone, Council Member Crowley, okay, that they're not given a fair trial. They're not given a fair hearing.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr. Rappo.

ROBERT RAPPO: I learned a lot from you today. I notice that both of you ladies sat the whole time.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr. Rappo.

ROBERT RAPPO: I thank you for holding this today.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

ROBERT RAPPO: I just hope that the city would do a better job.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We're going to put you to work. Thank you, Mr. Rappo.

ROBERT RAPPO: Thank you. Not a problem.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Randy Solomon, followed by, is Mr. Thomas Phelan still here? Okay, followed by William Johnert, 86th Avenue.

WILLIAM JOHNERT: Johnert.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Johnert, I apologize. He will be followed by Charles Norris, Sr. And the last witness is Marilyn Mays.

RANDY SOLOMON: Good afternoon everybody and thank you for holding these hearings. It's really appreciated. My name is Randy Solomon and I'm currently the board president of my co-op, the Claridge. I represent two other co-ops. We're trying to get all the

1  
2 persons of the co-ops together to make a uniformed  
3 group that we could bring our stuff in a  
4 consolidated and concise manner hopefully to get  
5 some work done.

6 We represent over 500 families.  
7 The storm has its effects on us. I must say we  
8 have a very good super in the building who cleaned  
9 all around and those other buildings that I  
10 mentioned did as well. But according to the  
11 testimony I was hearing where streets and  
12 sidewalks weren't cleaned properly; we got our  
13 super with our equipment to go out into the  
14 gutters and to help other people get out of their  
15 spots. That was at our expense. The fact that we  
16 pay taxes and we still have to do that is  
17 something of a pain for that.

18 I'd like to comment also on some  
19 other testimony about the elderly and the  
20 handicapped. I don't know if there's a central  
21 registry of handicapped people or people who are  
22 elderly and you might want to look, in cases of  
23 emergency, and I don't know if this is OEM, might  
24 look to do. We had this at work.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's a good

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idea.

RANDY SOLOMON: You know, when there were fire drills and everything, certain people had passes and they were allowed to take the elevator if they were handicapped or elderly. Somebody was either assigned to them or to make sure they got out.

The same thing with the fellow who was talking about having a doctor; we have several doctors in our building and nurses. Somebody did get injured. Thank God there were no deaths or anything like we've been hearing. But they knew who to go to. What we do is we distribute those names, you know who has CPR training and things like that. So as a board, we do get together and we have that safety.

Something else I might want to tell you, because we do have a safety committee, there was somebody from Homeland Security I believe, who was there and she said that she can get people to come into co-op buildings and maybe even to city apartment buildings: how to escape in case of an emergency. Even the last snowstorm was considered an emergency. What to take with you. They were

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handing out packets.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Go bags?

RANDY SOLOMON: Yeah, go bags and things like that. I think that's something that should be emphasized. There was a fellow who was there. He says he works for a private school. They never told him and he's in charge of 60 kids, never told him how to get out of there, where to go, where to meet. He said the city schools probably do that but not the private schools. So he was distressed about that.

To finish up, I do want to emphasize corners, cross walks. As clean as they do the streets, you get to that mound and there is no way to get through. I wanted to say I applaud you for firing the contractors who didn't have enough common sense to make an inlet where they could go. I find that the city is depending too much on technical and not enough on common sense.

As they say, common sense is not so common. If you have the buses that are too low, who is the contractor who sold this bill of goods to us that a bus can't go through a couple of inches of snow? We do get snow. Who's the one

1 who spent millions of dollars on trains that are  
2 all computerized state of the art, but too  
3 temperamental. A PC error came up because it was  
4 too cold, or the snow got into the computer. This  
5 is where our money is going. I think more due  
6 diligence for common sense and for people who know  
7 what it's like to live in the city and what they  
8 should be doing.

9 I do have a list here of the  
10 streets which are not--

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]  
12 Could you please provide that to Mr. Terranova?

13 RANDY SOLOMON: Yes, I will. I  
14 don't come here in anger. I'd like to save my  
15 anger for something else.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You came with  
17 some concrete recommendations. May we have a copy  
18 of your testimony, Ms. Solomon?

19 RANDY SOLOMON: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. William  
21 Johnert? Did I butcher your name again?

22 WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: Yes, you did.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I'm sorry.

24 WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: You're not the  
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first. Most people call me John and it's not John.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, John.

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: Bill. Anyway, I can beat the three minutes I'm sure.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: I'm not here to complain about the snow removal. We've heard it all. So thank you. I think you got a dose of that today. Basically, I have a good story. My wife is leukemic and she's treated at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Maryland. We have an appointment every two weeks to go get medication. We were due to be there, drive on Monday of the storm and the doctor's appointment on Tuesday. Thank goodness that Johns Hopkins has an emergency plan. They gave us two days extra medicine, so we didn't have to get out.

So it's Wednesday and it's 3:00 in the morning, and like the Manhattan people, the plow woke me up. I said wow; it's a good way to get woken up. I went down and the plow gets stuck. I'm just going to tell you a practical

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thing that you can walk away with here.

He's sitting there spinning. So I got up. I go out to the truck and I tap on the truck and I said this truck is empty. I said, you know, you need traction; you need weight over the wheels to do that. I said there's probably some management genius that said if you run them empty you'd use less gas. But you don't get the traction.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: I said it's winter, can't they leave some sanitation stuff in the truck to weight the wheels down and you wouldn't get stuck. He said, they send us out empty. That's what they said. So, if you want to walk away with something to write on your page, tell them to put some weight in the truck over the wheels and the trucks won't get stuck.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: There was an article read that they should put some garbage in it, leave some garbage in it.

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: I said to him, it's winter, it doesn't go bad, you know. Leave some sanitation material in the truck, get the

rear wheels with traction and you won't get stuck.

Meanwhile, two supervisors come and they watched the wheels spin. Then they put salt under them and then they spun even better, which is ridiculous really. Anyway, we did help ourselves in Woodhaven. My neighbor's car actually ran out of gas. I don't give him any brains for that, but we did go and get gasoline for him and get him going, because if he didn't get out, the plow couldn't come down. If the plow didn't come down, I can't get my car out and drive my wife to Baltimore.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Is she okay?  
Is your wife all right?

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: She's being treated and she's coming along. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: So weight in the truck is one thing you can walk away with. GPS, the Mayor put GPS in the plows.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, he did.

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: You know what he should do next? Put that on a website. I want to know where the trucks are. I want to go click,

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|----|---|-----|
| 1  | COMMITTEE ON SANITATION                         | 214 |
| 2  | click and say there's nothing here. So you can  |     |
| 3  | put that down.                                  |     |
| 4  | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's a good                |     |
| 5  | one.  |     |
| 6  | WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: You can tell                |     |
| 7  | I'm an engineer, right? I have practical--      |     |
| 8  | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]                |     |
| 9  | We'll attribute that to you.                    |     |
| 10 | WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: I have                      |     |
| 11 | practical solutions.                            |     |
| 12 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We'll name that              |     |
| 13 | legislation after you.                          |     |
| 14 | WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: As long as it               |     |
| 15 | gets done, I guess it's okay. I'm retired; I've |     |
| 16 | got time to come here.                          |     |
| 17 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.              |     |
| 18 | WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: Basically                   |     |
| 19 | that's it.                                      |     |
| 20 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.              |     |
| 21 | WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: Thank you for               |     |
| 22 | your time.                                      |     |
| 23 | CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you for                |     |
| 24 | coming out. Thank you for your time. Ms. Mays,  |     |
| 25 | can you come and Reverend Norris, would you be  |     |

last so we can end with maybe a benediction?

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: Is there anybody here that owns this?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sergeant-at-arms, someone left their--

WILLIAM F. JOHNERT: [interposing]  
You might want to return this to whoever.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

MARILYN MAYS: Hi, good evening. I came out because I had two real big issues.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Can we have some quiet, so I can hear from Ms. Mays?

MARILYN MAYS: I came out because I had two real big issues. My daughter lives in Far Rockaway, which was a disaster during this storm. She has two small children and she couldn't get in or out. That was a real problem for me as a parent. To have to travel to Far Rockaway, and I live in St. Albans, it was a nightmare.

Another issue for me, my godchild was stuck on the Long Island Railroad, overnight. She had to sleep there. That was amazing to me in a city this size. She couldn't get home because there were no buses. The Mayor said take public

transportation. She took public transportation and it didn't work.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Where did she  
sleep?

MARILYN MAYES: In the train station. It was the safest place. I mean what else was she going to do? She couldn't get home. She couldn't get a cab. There was nothing that could go up or down. That bothered me. I've lived in New York all my life. This was not a storm that--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]

Was unique.

MARILYN MAYES: It wasn't unique.  
It wasn't unique. What happened after the storm  
was totally unique.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

MARILYN MAYS: I just hope not to see it happen again. But I'd also like to say to this panel, I mean I understand that we're here for Sanitation but I hope to see panels like this for the Buildings Department because that's an agency that really needs some oversight and looking into. I have a lot of issues with

2 Sanitation but I think they do a pretty decent job  
3 the majority of the time.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.  
5 Mays. Our last witness is Reverend Charles Norris  
6 Sr. Would anyone else like to testify? If not,  
7 we are going to end with a sermon and a  
8 benediction from Reverend Norris.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: No clock.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No clock. He's  
11 got his bible. I knew it was coming.

12 REV. CHARLES L. NORRIS SR.: You've  
13 got to give me more than three minutes.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We took the  
15 clock off. No clock. You have all the time. But  
16 I do have to go to the lady's room.

17 REV. CHARLES L. NORRIS SR.: Let me  
18 say this first. I'm so happy that this panel did  
19 and you're doing what you're doing because it  
20 needs to be done to remind maybe the one who  
21 thinks that he's really in charge that he ain't in  
22 charge at all. It's really the people who should  
23 be in charge.

24 But let me say, about the  
25 snowstorm, what really bothered me tremendously

1 was of course we can't do anything but talk about  
2 the weather. I think Samuel Clemens says that.  
3 But the Sanitation Department should be able to  
4 remove it when it should be moved. But what  
5 really bothered me tremendously was the arrogant  
6 manner in which the Mayor responded to the people  
7 and what they should do since we have the  
8 snowstorm.  
9

10 Go see a theater play. He didn't  
11 offer to give us the \$120 that a ticket may cost  
12 but he told us to go see a theater play. How  
13 would we get there? Should we walk or should we  
14 run because the subway was not running and I know  
15 the Long Island Railroad was not running. That  
16 really bothered me.

17 I think that if it were possible,  
18 if that would be one of the items that could be  
19 put on the list of things that this man has been  
20 done wrong to recall him, I would think somebody  
21 should think in terms of recalling this man  
22 because of the way he has treated the people of  
23 this city and his arrogant manner and the method  
24 in which he talks to us.

25 I didn't elect him. I didn't vote

1  
2 for him. It's just a shame that he is the mayor  
3 of the city and he treats us like we are nothing,  
4 absolutely nothing. If I could withhold the one  
5 dollar a year that we give to him, I would do  
6 that. I would do that.

7 Let me say, because my street  
8 wasn't plowed maybe two or three days after the  
9 snowstorm, that didn't bother me. At 84, I don't  
10 shovel snow. I don't push cars stuck in the snow.  
11 I do have enough food in my house to last me a  
12 week or two, along with my medication to take care  
13 of my high blood pressure and my diabetes. So I  
14 could have stayed in the house for two weeks and  
15 not be bothered.

16 But for the people who could not  
17 get to a bus stop, could not get to their jobs and  
18 if I was still their pastor, I would have been  
19 concerned because if you don't get to your job,  
20 you don't get paid. If you don't get paid, you  
21 can't pay. If you can't pay, I couldn't get my  
22 salary. But I'm not pasturing now so it doesn't  
23 matter.

24 The thing that's important is that  
25 we have to really think seriously about what this

1  
2 man has said. That remark about going to the  
3 theater was just as bad as the remark made by his  
4 appointed new chancellor about maybe we should  
5 have some birth control. But birds of a feather  
6 flock together. I would think that that's why he  
7 could make that statement and really think that he  
8 was getting away with it.

9 I usually say finally five times,  
10 but I won't burden you with that today. The last  
11 time Mr. Lindsey was known to be in Queens when we  
12 had a snowstorm, he was running around the  
13 northern part of Whitestone doing [blowing noise]  
14 and trying to keep the snow from coming down. I  
15 would think that if the Mayor would try to do  
16 anything for Queens, he may need to consider that  
17 the next time it snows to keep the snow from  
18 coming down. If he does the job on that day  
19 before Christmas to take care of the people who he  
20 claims he's serving in this city and is trying to  
21 show how much he is caring about us, he has done a  
22 lousy job. If there is any way for me to recall  
23 him individually, I would fire him and all of the  
24 people around him.

25 Finally, that's number two I

1  
2 believe. Finally, for him not to let us know  
3 where he is and to say that's his own private  
4 life, the one thing he must understand is that  
5 when you all elected him, his life became ours and  
6 it's not private anymore. It's public. As long  
7 as he's serving the public, he should be able to  
8 let us know or be on the scene when an emergency  
9 comes up. That 20-inch snowstorm was an emergency  
10 and he was--Bermuda is a beautiful island. I've  
11 been there a couple of times myself. And was in  
12 the beautiful hotel where you can walk out of the  
13 back and just jump right into the bay and swim.

14 But anyway, the Mayor really must  
15 let you all know where he is. It doesn't matter  
16 where he is as far as I'm concerned. But if an  
17 emergency happens, we need to know where he is and  
18 he needs to come back to take care of the emergency  
19 and not say it's my private life and you don't  
20 need to know where I am.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And the house  
22 says?

23 ALL: Amen.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.  
25 Closing words from our chairs? Council Member

Vallone, any closing remarks?

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank everybody for staying this late. We really are going to make sure we take back everything you said to the Administration.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member Crowley?

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Same here. Thank you everybody for coming here today and we'll make sure this goes back.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member Williams?

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you for allowing me in Queens. Thank you for coming out and let's get our dollar back from the Mayor.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member Comrie?

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: We gave him a temporary pass. I just want to thank everybody and all of the folks that have testified today and especially the folks that came to observe. I hope that anyone else that has additional testimony that couldn't be here, please forward it to our offices, especially if you have any ideas or

1 suggestions. We want to make sure this never  
2 happens again. Thank you all very much.

3  
4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member  
5 Koslowitz?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I want  
7 to thank everybody for coming here today. I also  
8 want to welcome to you. You're in Borough Hall  
9 and thank the Borough President.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The great  
11 Borough President Marshall?

12 HELEN M. MARSHALL: You pay the  
13 rent. You pay our salaries. This is your  
14 building, okay. I say that everybody. You don't  
15 have to thank me but I appreciate that.

16 [Crosstalk]

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

18 HELEN M. MARSHALL: If you call my  
19 office and they will let you in.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Monday's  
21 hearing is in the Bronx. 6:00 in the Bronx at  
22 Hostos Community College. Then following, next  
23 Wednesday, there is another hearing in South  
24 Brooklyn. I thank all of you for coming. We will  
25 be making a report. The report will be online

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COMMITTEE ON SANITATION

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with some recommendations. At this time, this

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hearing is recessed. Thank you, Queens.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Donna Hintze 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 Donna Hintze

Date February 9, 2011