

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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July 27, 2011  
Start: 10:30am  
Recess: 12:40pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

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

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Inez E. Dickens  
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Good morning.

My name is Gale Brewer. I am the Chair of the Governmental Operations Committee, and we're here with Peter Vallone, Jr. Council Member from Queens and Council Member Inez Dickens from the borough of Manhattan. We're here to talk about a couple of pieces of legislation, which I will discuss. One is Intro 615-A, a food metrics reporting bill by Council Member Inez Dickens and Intro 248-A, which is a city land reporting bill by Council Member Lew Fidler.

Today the Committee on Governmental Operations is meeting to vote on two pieces of legislation relating to Speaker Quinn's Food Works initiative. The first bill is proposed Intro No. 615-A; it would amend the administrative code in relation to establishing reporting requirements regarding the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food in and for the city and to repeal a section of the administrative code of the city of New York relating to reports on green cards. This bill, which is sponsored by Council Member Inez Dickens, requires the Mayor's Office of Long Term Planning and Sustainability—which by

1  
2 the way, I cannot find on the Mayor's NYC site—to  
3 issue an annual city food system metrics report  
4 containing information to provide a baseline  
5 understanding of our food systems performance and  
6 how city programs and decisions effect the food  
7 system. I want to say that that is a great bill.  
8 I think it complements the work that we've been  
9 doing on local sourcing and will give us the  
10 information to help promote local sourcing of food  
11 for our city agencies and all New Yorkers.

12 The second bill is proposed Intro  
13 No. 248-A; it would amend the administrative code  
14 in relation to establishing reporting requirements  
15 through the Department of City-Wide Administrative  
16 Services, known as DCAS, on the status of city-  
17 owned real property. This bill, which is  
18 sponsored by Council Member Lew Fidler, requires  
19 DCAS to create and maintain a searchable database  
20 of all city-owned and leased real property,  
21 including information regarding location and  
22 current use of the listed property. This database  
23 will help members of the public identify unused or  
24 underused city-owned property that could be used  
25 for other purposes, such as community gardening,

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2 urban agriculture, open spaces, affordable housing  
3 or economic development. That's a good bill too,  
4 I can tell you that many people call me looking  
5 for urban gardening locations, and this would give  
6 them a start. They actually have no place to go  
7 without this kind of list.

8           The Committee held a hearing on  
9 prior versions of these bills on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011.  
10 At this hearing, we received testimony from many  
11 community groups and members of the public,  
12 including parents of local schoolchildren, who  
13 spoke passionately in support of both pieces of  
14 legislation. These bills are important components  
15 of the Food Works initiative—the Council's  
16 comprehensive blueprint for improving New York  
17 City's food system, along with several other  
18 pieces of legislation including the bill that I  
19 introduced, which was approved yesterday by the  
20 Contracts Committee that encourages city agencies  
21 to purchase New York State and regional food. The  
22 Food Works legislation promotes a food system that  
23 improves health, economic and environmental  
24 outcomes for all New Yorkers. I know that we will  
25 hear from one of the sponsors in a minute.

1  
2 I just want to add that this is  
3 such an important issue that I organized a tour of  
4 upstate farmland. A couple of Council Members'  
5 staff came, but more importantly the Head of  
6 Procurement at DCAS joined us, and we toured three  
7 or four farms in Orange County and Ulster County,  
8 and also went to packing houses in upstate, trying  
9 to figure out how much capacity there is to  
10 produce food for our city residents and agencies  
11 and how they could be packaged appropriately. We  
12 found out there is tons of capacity. The farmers  
13 can handle huge amounts of growth and they could  
14 in fact support the citizens of New York and  
15 residents and the agencies, people using our  
16 facilities, but we do need more packing. We  
17 involved the Empire State Development and we also  
18 had representation from Economic Development  
19 Corporation of the City of New York. There's lots  
20 of proposals out there. These two bills would  
21 help move them along. Council Member Dickens, did  
22 you want to make a statement?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you  
24 so much, Madam Chair. First, I want to apologize  
25 to you and my colleagues and the council staff,

1  
2 sergeant at arms and those who came today to  
3 testify or to hear for my lateness. Thank you for  
4 the opportunity to state my reasons as to why  
5 Intro 615-A should receive votes in the  
6 affirmative this afternoon.

7           This Intro seeks to regulate  
8 reporting of most aspects of the food cycle in New  
9 York City, which includes the production,  
10 processing, distribution and consumption of foods  
11 in and to the city of New York. It establishes a  
12 reporting guideline that consists of 19 metrics  
13 that shall be included in a report, such as the  
14 number, size of acres, county and type of  
15 production of, and the annual dollar amount of  
16 city financial support received by farms  
17 participating in the Watershed Agricultural  
18 Program, the total dollar amount of expenditures  
19 by the Department of Education on milk and other  
20 food products that are subject to the United  
21 States Department of Agriculture, country of  
22 origin labeling requirements - - assorted by the  
23 product and country of origin in which the  
24 essential components of such food products were  
25 grown, agriculturally produced and harvest to the

1  
2 extent such information is such reported to the  
3 Department of Ed.

4           Since the first version of this  
5 Intro was drafted, we have made numerous edits, so  
6 that it would be convenient for the organizations  
7 and individuals that would have to submit and  
8 compile such data for this report. For example,  
9 the initial deadline to submit the report was  
10 December 1, 2011, but the deadline now for the  
11 report has been extended to September 1, 2012.  
12 Food allergies and other ailments related to food  
13 have become more prevalent over time. We need to  
14 distinguish the source of foods we consume and the  
15 ingredients contained within. Also, considering  
16 the dire economic climate, we need to see if our  
17 local farms—such as what my Chair had a tour for  
18 the City Council—vendors and manufacturers are  
19 being utilized to their fullest capacity instead  
20 of importing our foods from other countries and  
21 other regions of our nation. We must concentrate  
22 on consuming foods produced, processed and  
23 distributed by our fellow residents of this great  
24 city and state of New York, so that the local  
25 economy begins to blossom in that aspect. Once

1  
2 again I want to thank my Chair and I would also  
3 like to thank Seth Grossman for his tremendous  
4 assistance in the drafting of this legislation. I  
5 ask for all of you, my colleagues, to vote in  
6 favor of this Intro. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you very  
8 much. I know that the New York League of  
9 Conservation voted - - memorandum of support. I  
10 too want to thank Seth Grossman and Tym Matusov  
11 Tym is the legislative policy analyst and Seth  
12 Grossman is counsel to the Committee. I urge the  
13 clerk to call the roll and I thank Council Member  
14 Vallone for being on time.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
16 Committee Clerk, roll call vote in the Committee  
17 on Governmental Operations Introduction 248-A and  
18 Introduction 615-A. Items are coupled. Council  
19 Member Brewer?

20 CHAIRPERSON BREWER: With pleasure,  
21 I vote aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vallone?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: It's nice  
24 to be noticed for my geekiness, but I vote aye.  
25 Thank you, Madam Chair.



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COMMITTEE CLERK: Dickens?

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye on  
all. Thank you.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of  
three in the affirmative, zero in the negative,  
and no abstentions, both items are adopted.  
Members, please sign the Committee report. Thank  
you.

CHAIRPERSON BREWER: Thank you.

This hearing is finished.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature Kimberley Uhlig

Date July 30, 2011