

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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February 28, 2012
Start: 11:00 a.m.
Recess: 11:35 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: FERNANDO CABRERA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Gale A. Brewer
Letitia James
G. Oliver Koppell
Mark S. Weprin

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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Good morning,
3 everyone. Today we are going to be voting on Bill
4 29-A, but first let me acknowledge the Council
5 Members who are present: Council Member Tish
6 James, Council Member Brewer. We're going to hear
7 from her in a second, but first I want to
8 personally thank the staff: Jeffrey Baker,
9 Assistant Deputy Director; David Cyza [phonetic],
10 Law Clerk; Crystal Gold-Palm [phonetic], Policy
11 Analyst; and John Rigoso [phonetic], Financial
12 Analyst. So at this moment, I'm going to turn it
13 over to Council Member Brewer who is introducing
14 literally a historical bill that is going to
15 really change business as usual, and is going to
16 really set a standard from which others in the
17 nation are going to be able to now have a model of
18 what open data should be all about. Council
19 Member Brewer?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I want to
21 thank you, Chair Cabrera, because you share our
22 excitement in this endeavor and that means a lot,
23 and so I really appreciate your leadership and
24 understanding of the passion we all have for
25 government transparency, and this is Intro No.

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2 29-A. It is an open data bill, and it's been in
3 the works maybe four years much thanks to Jeff
4 Baker whom you kindly mentioned, was counsel to
5 the Technology Committee for a long time and is
6 now been promoted. I also want to thank people
7 who worked in my office who have now gone on to
8 law school to be in charge of technology for
9 treasury in Washington and gone on to work for a
10 huge tech firm, including - - , Sam Wang
11 [phonetic] and now Will Colgrove from my office.
12 We've been talking about open data for a very long
13 time, and there's been a great group of
14 individuals—sort of like a posse; I call it a tech
15 posse. And certainly the folks from open plan and
16 the people from NYPERG [phonetic], the people from
17 Common Cause, the people from Citizens Union,
18 Reinvent Albany—I think I mentioned NYPERG and
19 Andrew Richet [phonetic] who is head of personal
20 democracy. These are all people who for the last
21 four years have been part of this posse as well as
22 many others. I think that this bill as the chair
23 indicated will make sure that New York is in the
24 forefront of any government transparency and
25 technological revolution in terms of government

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2 openness. I really also want to thank Carol Post
3 [phonetic], who is the Commissioner of the
4 Department of Information, Technology and
5 Telecommunications. She and her staff,
6 particularly Nick Spordone [phonetic] have been
7 champions of this issue. It would not have passed
8 without their input. The very first time she
9 testified before this Committee and the new
10 commissioner, she said she would work with us on
11 this legislation. I think we all know that this
12 bill would require that city databases with some
13 exceptions for security and other concerns will be
14 published online via a single web portal in open
15 data format, and it could be manipulated in a good
16 positive way--usually in that - - --and analyzed
17 by anyone with Internet access. The good news is
18 that within six months, they'll be a technical
19 manual which will describe the ways in which the
20 portal is going to be built and talks to how the
21 agencies are going to conform, and the year after
22 that, the agency will have to list which databases
23 they are going to have on the portal, and if
24 they're not going to have one on the portal, why.
25 The date sounds far off--2018--but it goes quickly,

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2 and the fact of the matter is some of these
3 databases are legacy and will take more time to
4 get on the portal, but all during this time period
5 and this is a wonderful aspect to the bill,
6 there's an active feedback mechanism, so people
7 who are in the tech field, researchers,
8 journalists, people who care about this issue will
9 be able to say to the agency, "Why aren't you
10 putting x data set up?" or "x data set has
11 challenges. We'd like to work with you to fix
12 them." So there are just lots of unprecedented
13 ways that government transparency can be looked at
14 through this legislation. I also think that it
15 will curtail some of the FOIL [phonetic] requests
16 'cause FOIL causes money and time or staff to
17 implement and I think this will put the
18 information up there. Most of all, thank you, Mr.
19 Chair. Thank you, my colleagues. I look forward
20 to working with you to implement a good 29-A.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so
22 much. I would also like to recognize Council
23 Member Weprin, also, I see - - around. He's not
24 part of this Committee, but Council Member Nelson.
25 Let me turn it over to the clerk now for a vote.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
3 Committee Clerk, roll call vote in the Committee
4 on Technology, Introduction 29-A. Council Member
5 Cabrera?

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Aye. I
7 encourage all others to vote aye on the bill.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Brewer?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye.
10 Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: James?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Hopefully
13 Council Member Brewer, we will not have to wait
14 years for FOIL requests going forward in the
15 future. Congratulations to your leadership, to
16 Council Member Cabrera and to Jeff Baker. I vote
17 aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Weprin?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of four
21 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
22 abstention, item is adopted. Members, please sign
23 the Committee Report. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: We're going
25 to leave the vote open for the next half an hour.

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Thank you so much. This meeting is now over.

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[gavel]

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[pause]

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: This

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hearing is adjourned.

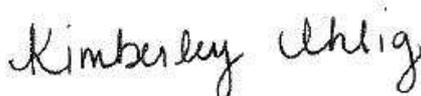
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[gavel]

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

Handwritten signature of Kimberley Uhlig in cursive script, written over a horizontal line.

Date 3/13/12