

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

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December 18, 2012
Start: 12:48 p.m.
Recess: 1:10 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: DOMENIC M. RECCHIA, JR.
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Lewis A. Fidler
Helen D. Foster
Robert Jackson
G. Oliver Koppell
Darlene Mealy
Diana Reyna
Joel Rivera
Albert Vann
Fernando Cabrera
Julissa Ferreras
Karen Koslowitz

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

James G. Van Bramer
Vincent M. Ignizio
James S. Oddo

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2 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Okay. Good
3 afternoon. Welcome to today's Finance Committee
4 Hearing. My name is Domenic Recchia, and I
5 welcome everybody to this hearing. I'd like to
6 introduce all my colleagues who have joined us
7 today. We have Council Member Al Vann, Council
8 Member Karen Koslowitz, Council Member Julissa
9 Ferreras, Council Member Leroy Comrie, our new
10 Council Member Mr. King—welcome. We have Joel
11 Rivera, Jimmy Van Bramer, Robert Jackson.
12 Everyone, it's his birthday. Let's wish him a
13 happy birthday. Rob Jackson. He is 24 years old.
14 We have Lew Fidler, and coming in with her lunch,
15 but she didn't bring enough for everybody is Diana
16 Reyna. Today we have a transparency reso, a Land
17 Use item, a BID item, a resolution relating to the
18 recent tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in
19 Newtown, Connecticut.

20 Let's start with the transparency
21 reso. This reflects technical corrections only.
22 There are no new designations in the transparency
23 reso. - - in the reso, they have not yet
24 completed the prequalification process conducted
25 by the mayor's office of contracts, the Council or

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2 another entity. There is an asterisk next to the
3 name additionally. As with all transparency
4 resos, council members who have a conflict must
5 state so before they vote and must put it on the
6 record. Please also disclose any conflicts you
7 may have with any subcontractors that are used by
8 the organizations they sponsor for discretionary
9 funding.

10 Next we have a Land Use item. The
11 item provides a 40 year or partial property tax
12 exemption for the new construction of Council
13 Towers [phonetic], a property that will provide 70
14 units of rental housing for the elderly, low
15 income residents in the Bronx. Council Towers is
16 in newly elected Council Member Andy King's
17 district, and he supports this item, and at this
18 time, I'll let him say a few words on this. Can
19 someone please give him a microphone? Sergeant at
20 Arms, someone please give him the microphone.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Thank you,
22 Chairman Recchia, and thank you everyone here this
23 afternoon. I want to say-

24 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: [interposing]
25 Hold on. Is the mic on?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: First of all
3 I want to say thank you for that warm introduction
4 welcoming me to the Council. Thank you again,
5 Chairman Recchia, and I want to give a special
6 thanks to the City Council and HUD for working
7 diligently on this resolution to make sure that
8 this tax credit moves forward and with that all
9 being said, thank you again, and I appreciate all
10 you have done to help the members in Council
11 District 12.

12 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you
13 very much, Mr. King. Our next item relates to
14 BIDs. Intro 972 authorized an increase in the
15 seven BIDs. These budget increases are being made
16 by the request of property owners within the BIDs.
17 The seven BIDs that requested are 5th Avenue, 47th
18 Street, Bryant Park, Flatiron, Downtown Alliance,
19 King's Highway BID and the North Flatbush BID.
20 The budget increases were made, and all the
21 council members support it. The budget increase
22 made is request of all seven BIDs to pay for
23 additional improvements and services in their
24 districts. All the council members - - previous
25 submitted [phonetic] Pursuant to the BID law in

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2 order for the BID increases to be passed by the
3 Council the increase must be in the interest of
4 the public, and the increase cannot exceed 20
5 percent of real property tax levy on the
6 properties located within the BID seeking
7 increases. We will hear from SBS shortly
8 regarding the tax limitations if anybody has any
9 questions.

10 Our last item is a reso sponsored
11 by the Speaker that relates to the recent tragedy
12 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown,
13 Connecticut. The resolution expresses grief and
14 sorrow for the victims and their families who are
15 affected by the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary
16 School. The reso also calls upon the president of
17 the United States and the United States Congress
18 to state and local legislators and all Americans
19 to work together in making improvements that would
20 ensure that we are all kept safe from gun
21 violence. My thoughts and prayers are with all
22 the families of the victims as well as the entire
23 Newtown community. I want to thank Speaker Quinn
24 for sponsoring this resolution.

25 These are all our items on today.

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HPD and SBS is also here to answer any questions. Does anybody have any questions? Without seeing any questions--no one has any questions? We have also been joined by Vincent Ignizio. Okay. Please call the roll.

COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin, committee clerk. Roll call vote, Committee on Finance. Council Member Recchia?

CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: I vote aye on all, and encourage all my colleagues to vote aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Rivera?

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Aye.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Reyna?

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Comrie?

COUNCIL MEMBER COMRIE: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK: Fidler?

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: [off mic]

Thanks. First I'd like counsel to add my name as a sponsor of the pre-considered reso. On the BIDs I have to say this, I am going to vote yes primarily because each of these BIDs asked for an increase, but I think it's probably time for us to

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2 take a look and see whether or not BIDs aren't
3 really being taxed to provide services that the
4 city ought to be rendering, and I see from Mr.
5 Schwartz's testimony, his written statement, that
6 the BID supplements city sanitation and public
7 safety services, but why do they do that? They do
8 that because they are inadequate, and I just—I
9 question the entire way that BIDs have morphed
10 from something that was supposed to bring
11 businesses together in a district, have them
12 coordinate their marketing and sales efforts,
13 create jobs that way and to something that is
14 basically an excuse for taking over where the city
15 services have fallen short, and I think we really
16 need to take a look at that long term as to
17 whether or not this is the right thing to do
18 before—I mean, they have become institutionalized.
19 I mean we are never going to get rid of BIDs now.
20 The question is are they doing what they should be
21 doing or are they doing things that the rest of
22 government should be doing? So having said that,
23 I've expressed my reservations. I vote aye on
24 all.

25 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: Thank you,

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2 Council Member Fidler. We have also been joined
3 by Council Member Gale Brewer, Council Member
4 Fernando Cabrera, and Council Member Helen Diane
5 Foster. Call the roll. Continue the roll, Billy.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Jackson?

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Aye on
8 all.

9 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vann?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ferreras?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FERRERAS: Aye.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Cabrera?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK: Koslowitz?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Van Bramer?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: Aye.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Ignizio?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Aye.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK: Brewer?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Aye.

23 COMMITTEE CLERK: Foster?

24 [pause]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER FOSTER: Aye.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 14
3 in the affirmative, zero in the negative, no
4 abstentions, all items have been adopted.
5 Members, please sign the committee reports.

6 CHAIRPERSON RECCHIA: I want to
7 thank everyone. We are going to keep the vote
8 open for 15 minutes.

9 [gavel]

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member
11 Oddo?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Yes. Yes.

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: The current vote
14 now stands at 15 in the affirmative.

15 [pause]

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member
17 Koppell?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Yes.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: The current vote
20 on Finance now stands at 16 in the affirmative.

21 [pause]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Ready?
23 Today's-

24 [background conversation]

25 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: You

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2 guesstimated. You guesstimated by the skin of
3 your teeth.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member

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Mealy?

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COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote in the

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Committee on Finance is now 17 in the affirmative,
9 zero in the negative and no abstentions.

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COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: This meeting

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is now adjourned.

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COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Well, there

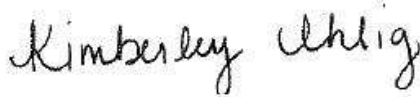
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you go.

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 _____

Date _____1/1/13_____