

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER
AFFAIRS

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December 18, 2013
Start: 11:05 a.m.
Recess: 11:12 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: Daniel R. Garodnick
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Charles Barron
Leroy Comrie, Jr.
Karen Koslowitz
G. Oliver Koppell
Michael C. Nelson
Julissa Ferreras

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

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COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: How about now? I will start it again. I want to welcome everybody to the Consumer Affairs Committee of the City Council. Today is Wednesday, December 18. My name is Dan Garodnick. I have the privilege of chairing this committee and I'm joined today by Council Members Oliver Koppell, Karen Koslowitz, and Charles Barron. Today is our last meeting of the year and we are closing out what has been a productive legislative session by voting on three bills, two of them. Intros 876A and 1039A are meant to improve regulations for sidewalk cafes. Council Member Diana Reyna is the sponsor of 1039A and I am the sponsor of 876A. In order to operate a sidewalk café, a restaurant needs to obtain both a revocable consent and a sidewalk café license, and while the procedure to renew a license is relatively simple, renewing the consent is a frequently drawn out process. We've heard many frustrations from restaurants about this problem, including from business owners who receive fines for operating an unlicensed café while they were waiting on

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2 their renewals to come through. Intro 876A
3 addresses this problem in two ways. First, it
4 mandates that a sidewalk café is not deemed
5 unlicensed as long as the business submitted a
6 timely renewal application and held a valid
7 license at the time that it did so. And while
8 first time applicants will still receive a
9 consent term of only two years, the bill
10 lengthens the term for renewals for four years.
11 This will lighten the load on both businesses
12 and on the Department of Consumer Affairs while
13 maintaining the ability of communities to
14 ensure that new cafes are good neighbors. Intro
15 1039A by Council Member Reyna also addresses
16 the application process for revocable consents.
17 It streamlines the process by allowing DCA, the
18 Department of Consumer Affairs, to waive its
19 public hearing and eliminates the need for
20 approval by the mayor's office of contract
21 services. Both of these bills were heard in
22 this committee back in May and I know that we
23 are glad to be--to have been able to resolve
24 outstanding issues, the satisfaction of both
25 business and our Community Boards before the

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2 end of the term. The last bill on today's
3 agenda is Intro 1177A, which is designed to
4 update regulations for collateral loan brokers,
5 also known as pawnbrokers and dealers in
6 secondhand goods. I sponsored this bill at the
7 request of the mayor. We held our initial
8 hearing on it in November, and since then we've
9 made a number of amendments to reflect the
10 concerns raised at that hearing. Intro 1177A
11 requires pawnbrokers and secondhand dealers to
12 make some of their records available
13 electronically to the NYPD. These businesses
14 are already subject to record keeping
15 requirements under both state and local law,
16 but making these records available online will
17 make them--make accessing them vastly simpler.
18 Detectives will no longer have to go door to
19 door and struggle over hand-written logs, a
20 search that took hours before now can take mere
21 seconds. In deference to the testimony at our
22 hearing, we made a number of amendments.
23 First, we limited the information to be
24 uploaded online to only details about the item,
25 not about the customer. We also imposed a time

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2 limit for that information so that it is not
3 retained online indefinitely. Finally, we
4 removed scrap processors from this bill
5 altogether. Taken together these amendments
6 result in a tighter, more focused bill with
7 increased sensitivity to privacy concerns.
8 This bill strikes the right balance between
9 protecting customer information and allowing
10 the NYPD to conduct investigations in a timely
11 and efficient manner. It has been a privilege
12 to serve as the Chair of this Committee, and I
13 am glad we are able to end the year on a
14 productive note. I'd now like to ask the Clerk
15 to call the roll, and I certainly will
16 recommend an aye vote on all three bills.

17 CLERK MARTIN: William Martin,
18 Committee Clerk. Roll call on vote Committee on
19 Consumer Affairs. Council Member Garodnick?

20 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: I vote aye.

21 CLERK MARTIN: Barron.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I'd like to
23 say I want to--I'd like to say I'd like to
24 commend the committee for the work we've done
25 over the year, commend the Chair for having

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2 timely and very important hearing. It's been a
3 pleasure to serve with you on this committee,
4 and with that I vote aye on all.

5 CLERK MARTIN: Koppell?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: [off mic]

7 Before I vote I want to thank the Chair for his
8 capable chairmanship and I've enjoyed serving
9 on the committee for many years, and I'm
10 delighted to vote aye on the last two measures.

11 CLERK MARTIN: Koslowtitz?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: I too
13 would like to thank Dan for his leadership. I
14 served0--I was the Chair of Consumer Affairs,
15 and I know the work that has to go into it, so
16 I want to thank you, Dan, for everything, and I
17 vote aye. I would have like to seen the
18 Commissioner a little more often, you know.

19 CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: I know, me
20 too.

21 CLERK MARTIN: By a vote of four in
22 the affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
23 abstentions. Items have been adopted.

24 Members, please sign the Committee Reports.

25 Thank you.

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COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER AFFAIRS

CHAIRPERSON GARODNICK: Thank you very much, and with that this Committee is adjourned, and I thank everybody for their participation.

[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is no interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date 01/02/2014