

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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December 18, 2013  
Start: 2:55 p.m.  
Recess: 3:13 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E: JAMES VACCA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer  
Daniel R. Garodnick  
David G. Greenfield  
G. Oliver Koppell  
Darlene Mealy  
Ydanis A. Rodriguez  
Deborah L. Rose  
James G. Van Bramer  
Vincent M. Ignizio  
Peter A. Koo

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

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good afternoon.

It's December 18th, 2013. My name is James Vacca. I'm Chair of the Committee on Transportation. And this is the final hearing of this Committee for this session. I want to thank and congratulate my staff and the committee members for all their hard work over the last four years. I want to thank the staff to my transportation committee, Lyle Frank, Jonathan Masarano [phonetic], Kafal Zoloff for their help. And I want to thank my staff in my district office; Stacey Gardner is my legislative policy person who is there and all my staff for doing a great job.

You know, if this bill passes the Transportation Committee will have passed 44 bills in four months. Oh, in four years not four months. Let me say that again. Upon passage of this bill the Transportation Committee will have passed 44 bills in four years. So I am proud of that record. It's been a labor of love and I've enjoyed it. And I may not be back here. I don't know what God's plans are for me, but whatever they are I look forward to serving.

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2 Today we're here to vote on Council  
3 Member Comrie's proposed introduction 10055A, a law  
4 that would require the NYPD to report more  
5 information regarding hit and run vehicle  
6 collisions. Over the past several months, this  
7 Committee has taken great strides to increase the  
8 safety of roadways, particularly in our oversight  
9 of the NYPD's protocols in relation to collision  
10 investigations.

11 This bill addresses a particular type  
12 of collision that has effected so many of our  
13 communities, hit and run incidents. These  
14 collisions, particularly those that result in  
15 serious injury or death or criminal incidents and  
16 must be thoroughly investigated by the police. It  
17 is in the interest of public safety for the NYPD to  
18 report statistics relating to such incidents and  
19 Intro 1055 would require the New York City Police  
20 Department to report the number of such hit and run  
21 accident desegregated by precinct quarterly.

22 In addition, the bill has been amended  
23 to also give the number of cases closed with or  
24 without an arrest to be presented to the Council  
25 and the public. This way we will be able to see

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2 what percentage of cases are successfully closed  
3 and it will give the Council in its oversight and  
4 budgetary role a better idea of whether increased  
5 resources are need to apprehend the perpetrators  
6 who commit these horrible acts. Also the bill  
7 would require the NYPD to give to the Council a  
8 brief description of the investigation of each  
9 case, again, helping the Council in its oversight  
10 and budgetary role.

11           At the first hearing for this bill,  
12 which the NYPD did not attend, we heard testimony  
13 from a family whose loved ones were victims of  
14 failed hit and runs. They felt like the progress  
15 of the investigation of these crimes was not  
16 properly communicated to them. There was no  
17 indication to the Committee as to what, if any,  
18 investigation occurred in this case. And this was  
19 not the first time the Council has heard testimony  
20 from families of individuals involved in fatal  
21 crashes who feel that they were not informed of  
22 what, if any, investigation took place.

23           This is unacceptable. Intro 1055 is  
24 designed to simply report more information about  
25 these investigations. Our role in the City Council

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2 is to exercise oversight over city agencies. And I  
3 believe we have illuminated a problem that effects  
4 too many of our constituents. So, therefore, on  
5 this piece of legislation introduced by Council  
6 Member Comrie, Intro 1055, the Chair recommends an  
7 aye vote.

8 I'd like to introduce the members of  
9 the Transportation Committee who are here. To my  
10 left Darlene Mealy, Peter Koo, myself, James Vacca,  
11 Jimmy Van Bramer, Ydanis Rodriguez, Debbie Rose,  
12 Gale Brewer, David Greenfield. Without further  
13 ado, I will now ask the Clerk to please call the  
14 roll. The Chair recommends an aye vote.

15 THE CLERK: William Martin, Committee  
16 Clerk. Roll call vote Committee on Transportation.  
17 Council Member Vacca.

18 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: The vote's aye.

19 THE CLERK: Brewer.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye. I  
21 just want to mention some years ago a florist who  
22 had a wonderful shop on Broadway in the West 80s --  
23 he was in his 80s. He and his brother had a shop  
24 and he was killed on a hit and run. And he always  
25 said why didn't somebody investigate, what are the

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facts? And so this is -- you know, thinking of him. I want to thank Jimmie Vacca for all of his leadership. I do want to let him know that God is not going to help in in the future on the City Council. I think there are other people who have more of an influence. I do want to say how much I appreciate the work that you do, how hard you work, and it's a pleasure being on this committee. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, Gale.

THE CLERK: Koppell.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: He's in the men's room I think someone said. Can you come back to him? Can you come back to Oliver Koppell?

THE CLERK: Mealy.

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I vote aye.

THE CLERK: Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye. I'd also like -- two years ago a young person who recently graduated from college, Mr. Rivera, he was crossing Machullo [phonetic] Parkway and he was killed in a hit and run. And still today his mother is looking for an explanation and information from the NYPD. Even though when you

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look at Fox 5, if you were to Google Fox 5, you can see how the person who committed the hit and run, he pulled his car in fire so he can get rid of the proof of that incident. And still there's so many questions and information has not been provided. So I hope that with this bill we will be able to get more information so there won't be this type of hit and run. Thank you.

THE CLERK: Koppell.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Aye.

THE CLERK: Garodnick.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

THE CLERK: Koo.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Mr. Chairman, can I explain my vote?

CHAIRMAN VACCA: Yes, Mr. Koo.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Well, today's piece of legislation will increase transparency and accountability in ensuring that the NYPD is using all the tools it has at its disposal to investigate hit and run accidents. I'm proud to have written this bill with Council Members Comrie and Mendez. Although we cannot reverse the emotional and physical pain caused by hit and run accidents, we



1  
2 hope to send a clear message to community members  
3 that the city government is taking this issue  
4 seriously. With that a vote yes.

5 And then I also want to commend our  
6 Chairman for doing a marvelous job during the last  
7 four years. Thank you for our Chairman's efforts.  
8 I hope you'll continue to do the same next four  
9 years.

10 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you,  
11 Councilman.

12 THE CLERK: Rose.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I also vote aye  
14 on this very important piece of legislation. This  
15 issue has been probably an issue that has touched  
16 every one of our districts. And I thank the  
17 sponsors, the prime sponsors of this bill. And I  
18 just want to say that it has really been a pleasure  
19 working with Chairman Vacca. He honestly knows  
20 where Staten Island is. He has taken the ferry.  
21 And of those 44 pieces of legislation in the past  
22 four years, Staten Island has benefited by leaps  
23 and bounds as a result of him having shepherd these  
24 44 bills through this committee. And I'm  
25 especially thankful, and I'm going to say it for

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Staten Islanders, for helping us get the half hour ferry bill passed and made a reality without us having to hurt someone.

Thank you, Chairman. You know, you've been an astounding Chair. Thank you so much. And we've benefited.

CHAIRMAN VACCA: Thank you, Council Member Rose, very much.

THE CLERK: Van Bramer.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: I vote aye.

THE CLERK: Greenfield.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: May I explain my vote? Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I -- first, of course, I want to say this is a very important piece of legislation. I'm very proud that we're voting for it and it's so important. I see it's being covered by Cablevision/Optimum/New York One, and I appreciate that as well. And I do want to just say that Chair Vacca truly is one of the outstanding Chairs here in the New York City Council. He is passionate about the issue that he chairs. He knows transportation inside out. He's done amazing work. I believe we've passed more bills than just about any other committee and all

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the bills have improved the safety and the quality of life of New Yorkers and this is that capstone.

And I very much am looking forward to serving with you in whatever capacity that may be. I adore Gale Brewer, but I will disagree and say that God has a plan for everyone. So thank you very much.

THE CLERK: Ignizio.

COUNCIL PERSON IGNIZIO: Aye.

THE CLERK: By a vote of 11 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no abstentions, item has been adopted.

MR. KOPPELL: Mr. Chairman, before you adjourn the meeting -- I just would like to compliment --

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Mr. Koppell. I'm sorry.

MR. KOPPELL: Yes, I would like to compliment you, my Bronx colleague, for doing an outstanding job. You know, I'm one of those that feels that John Lou was a wonderful chairman of this committee and I didn't expect the -- necessarily that the conduct of the committee would not only continue but perhaps even improve under

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the new chair, and I want to compliment you not only for the bills that we've passed but also for your constant concern and attention to whatever transportation problem afflicted the city after Sandy, after other problems and we all benefited from your leadership. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I thank you so much Councilmen Koppell. I thank everyone. This has been a wonderful experience for me. And to work with good people is always the nicest thing that happens, you know, and I work with wonderful people. Transportation affects everyone, whether it's a ferry, whether it's a bus, whether it's a subway line or whether it's walking or bicycling, it's just a way of life that New Yorkers live with every day. So whatever contribution I've been able to make, I've been blessed, and I want to continue doing something here and we'll see what that is.

But I thank you very much. As long as they give me a room with a window because I have claustrophobia, that is all I have to tell you. But I thank you all. And without further to do, this hearing is adjourned.

[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. 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.



Date 01/06/2014