

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

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February 9, 2015

Start: 10:10 a.m.

Recess: 10:30 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: MARK TREYGER
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Rosie Mendez
Margaret S. Chin
Donovan J. Richards
Carlos Menchaca
Eric A. Ulrich
Steven Matteo

2 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Good morning.

3 [gavel] We are convened today for a second hearing
4 and vote on two bills, Proposed Introduction 519-A
5 and Proposed Introduction 562-A. In the past year,
6 this committee has held hearings on many topics, and
7 we have identified many areas in both which our
8 recovery and general preparedness can be
9 strengthened. I am proud to say that these two bills
10 before us today for which I am the prime sponsor are
11 the product not only of the work this committee, but
12 also of the many advocates and members of the public
13 who have brought their stories and the ideas to us.
14 And we thank them all for that.

15 The first bill, Introduction 519-A will
16 require the Office of Emergency Management to create
17 local emergency preparedness materials for the city's
18 coastal communities. Currently, the City's materials
19 all have a citywide focus but in an emergency our
20 concerns are often very local. For instance, we want
21 to know if our home is in an evacuation zone, and
22 where the nearest evacuation centers. Intro 519 will
23 make it easier for people to find the information
24 they need during a coastal storm or emergency by
25 identifying the local emergency resources, and in

2 some cases the charitable organizations in those
3 areas that are able to help them during and after an
4 emergency as well. The bill also requires these
5 materials to be accessible to the public. They will
6 not only be distributed in person and online, but
7 they will also be translated, which is so important
8 into the ten most commonly spoke languages for the
9 relevant communities.

10 The second bill, Introduction 562-A will
11 require the creation of a Hurricane Sandy charitable
12 organization and house of worship recovery task force
13 to study the recovery and rebuilding of not-for-
14 profits and houses of worship in areas affected by
15 Sandy. The Membership of this task force will
16 include representation from every borough as well as
17 recovery experts from the Administration, and
18 representatives from the communities and
19 organizations this task force--this task force seeks
20 to assist. Within eight months of enactment, it will
21 submit a report of its findings and recommendations
22 both to the Mayor and to the City Council. That
23 report will contain an analysis of the damages and
24 losses suffered by these organizations, and to what
25 extent they have recovered, or as too often is the

2 case, have not recovered. Further, it will make
3 recommendations on how best to address that remaining
4 recovery need as well as how to better prepare and
5 utilize these organizations in planning for future
6 natural disasters. This bill puts a focus on
7 organizations that too often get overlooked when we
8 discuss recovery. But the simple fact is that every
9 part of our community must be made whole again before
10 our recovery can be complete.

11 I want to thank my fellow committee
12 members for their support, for this committee and its
13 work and thank the Administration for their testimony
14 on these bills in our prior hearings. And just to
15 make a very clear statement that where houses of
16 worship and many local groups in these impacted
17 communities they were in many cases the first
18 responders. And they did not ask anyone about their
19 religious denomination or what language they speak.
20 They helped everyone in need. So at minimum we have
21 an obligation to be there for those groups and those
22 houses of worship, those churches, those synagogues,
23 those mosques, all houses of worship that were there
24 for people during their time of crisis and need. And
25 if we do not have that representation of houses of

2 worship on this task force, this task force will not
3 serve its intent. So I want to be very clear in
4 making that statement.

5 And I will--now I just--just to say who
6 we've been joined by in the committee, we've been
7 joined by Council Members Steven Matteo, Council
8 Member Margaret Chin, Council Member Carlos Menchaca,
9 Council Member Rosie Mendez. And I will now ask the
10 clerk to call the roll.

11 CLERK: William Martin Committee Clerk
12 roll call vote Committee on Recovery and Resiliency.
13 Chair Treyger.

14 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: I vote aye on all.

15 CLERK: Mendez.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: I vote aye.

17 CLERK: Chin.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I vote aye.

19 CLERK: Menchaca.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: I vote aye.

21 CLERK: Matteo.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: May I be excused
23 to explain my vote?

24 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Absolutely. Sure.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: I just want to
3 reiterate and join Chair Treyger in his remarks about
4 having members of the house of worship on the task
5 force. On Staten Island, they were the first
6 responders. They were--they opened their doors to
7 everyone, and they need to be on this task force.
8 And I agree that the purpose of the task force the
9 intention doesn't work without them on it. So with
10 that said, I strongly support that the members of the
11 clergy house of worship be on this task force. And
12 with that, I vote aye on all.

13 CLERK: By a vote of 5 in the
14 affirmative, 0 in the negative, and no abstentions,
15 the items have been adopted.

16 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Sure, and Council
17 Member Menchaca would like to also explain his vote.
18 Council Member Menchaca.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you,
20 Chair and in the spirit of explaining votes, I'll do
21 the same. There was a time very recently where we
22 all experienced as a city the preparations for a
23 blizzard. Now, whether it came or not is not the
24 question. What we saw in Red Hook I just want to say
25 that what the spirit of pieces of legislation that

2 this committee has continued to look at really call
3 to community members being supportive at every level.
4 And that the religious organizations are just one
5 component of many that come together. We're really
6 proud to report that in Red Hook we designed over an
7 eight-month period a readiness plan that was
8 activated in preparation, which is what the plan
9 allows us to do 72 hours an event. We're very proud
10 that we're the only community to have done that thus
11 far and hope that other communities come together to
12 design those pieces. But every piece has to be
13 strong and this is why the religious organization
14 infrastructure has to get our support. Not just in
15 words and signals, but in actual process and
16 resources. And so, we're happy that this Council is
17 sending a strong message to those. Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you Council
19 Member, and I will certainly add that you have done
20 incredible work in your district. And really have
21 given great ideas and best practices that can be
22 shared across the city in terms of recovery and
23 preparation for the next storm. So I really
24 appreciate your work. And we've been joined now as

2 well by Council Member Donovan Richards. And the
3 Clerk will call the vote.

4 CLERK: Council Member Richards.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: Permission to
6 explain my vote.

7 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Absolutely.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: All right, I
9 just want to thank the Chairman for certainly
10 shepherding this bill, this task force through the
11 Council and every representative of the Rockaways in
12 particular. I can tell you our churches were on the
13 front line, and I know we get caught in this. You
14 know, there's a, you know, obviously a line between
15 church and state. But we must not forget who we call
16 in our biggest time of need and that is the church of
17 the people, can really reach people on the ground as
18 they did during Hurricane Sandy. And I just want to
19 give a shout out to a few particular churches in my
20 district, the Church of the Nazarene, the First
21 Church of God, the Macedonia Baptist Church, and now
22 Carmel Baptist Church. These were churches who
23 opened their doors who literally lost their basements
24 and were still out there servicing people in our
25 communities. So this is an important, a very

2 important step, and I look forward to working with
3 the Chair and others on this particular task force.
4 Thank you Chairman.

5 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Thank you, Donovan.
6 Thank you, Council Member Richards. I just want to
7 just say that basically every member of this
8 committee here represents areas that were severely
9 impacted by the storm. And every member of this
10 committee has done outstanding work to this day.
11 This is an issue that runs much deeper than politics,
12 much deeper than anything that we've really seen
13 before. This was an unprecedented storm that
14 requires an unprecedented amount of cooperation with
15 local, state, federal officials and agencies. And I
16 just commend every single member of this committee
17 for their sacrifice, their diligence, and their hard
18 work. To this day, over two years past the storm, we
19 are still on this. So, I'm very proud of every
20 member of this committee, and I thank you all for
21 your incredible support, for your communities and for
22 the entire City of New York.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RICHARDS: I vote aye.

3 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: Right. [laughter]

4 CLERK: Okay. The vote now currently
5 stands at 6 in the affirmative.

6 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: [off mic] Are we
7 leaving the vote open?

8 [background comments]

9 [pause]

10 CHAIRPERSON TREYGER: We'll leave the--
11 the vote open for the time being, and we'll be going to
12 prepare for the next hearing coming up here shortly.

13 [pause]

14 CLERK: Roll call continuation
15 Introductions 519-A and 562-A. Council Member
16 Ulrich.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I vote aye.

18 CLERK: The final vote on these two is
19 now 7 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no
20 abstentions. Thank you.

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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 that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date February 9, 2015