CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

         Of the

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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                    November 23, 2015
                    Start: 1:04 p.m.
                    Recess: 1:13 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,
                14th Fl.

B E F O R E:
                JAMES VACCA
                Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
                Annabel Palma
                David G. Greenfield
                Steven Matteo
                Fernando Cabrera

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

Dominic Mauro
Staff Attorney
Reinvent Albany

2   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Good afternoon

3 everyone. My name is James Vacca and I'm the Chair

4 of the Committee on Technology and we're here today

5 to vote on a package of five bills that aim to

6 remarkably strengthen the Open Data Law. I've

7 sponsored one piece of legislation in this package,

8 Proposed Intro. 0915-A, which would require the

9 timely updating of certain public data sets on the

10 open data portal. Additionally, we will vote on four

11 other bills, Proposed Intro. 0890-A, sponsored by

12 Council Member Fernando Cabrera, to my left, in

13 relation to the retention of data on the open data

14 portal; Proposed Intro. 0898, sponsored by Council

15 Member Vincent Gentile, which would require the

16 creation of a data dictionary for every data set;

17 Proposed Intro. 0900-A, sponsored by Council Member

18 Ben Kallos, which aims to standardize and geo code

19 address data, and proposed Intro. 0914-A, sponsored

20 by Council Member Torres, which would create

21 responsible timelines for public request on the open

22 data portal.

23   I wanna thank my colleagues for working

24 on this important legislation with me and as I stated

25 in the first hearing, open data is a priority for

1

2   this committee and for the Council as a whole and to

3   the administration and I'm thrilled to be moving

4   forward with these bills, the first I am passing

5   through this committee today.

6   This legislation before us would remedy

7   issues that had been brought up time and time again

8   when we have discussed open data -- user

9   friendliness, data retention, public responsiveness

10 and the timeliness of updated data sets. Since the

11 first hearing in October there had been some changes

12 to each bill.

13   First, my legislation, Proposed Intro.

14 0915-A, which would require the timely updating of

15 certain public data sets on the open data portal,

16 originally stated that the data on the portal shall

17 not be more than three days behind what is available

18 on the agency's website. This timeline has been

19 moved up to one day for automated data, such as the

20 building information system data and ten days for

21 other types of data, such as reports required by

22 other New York City Council legislation.

23   Each bill has improved since our initial

24 hearing and I have many to thank; I wanna thank Brad

25 Reid, Counsel to this committee, my Deputy Chief of

2   Staff, Stacy Gardener and the representatives in the

3   Mayor's Office, DoITT and MODA, who took the time to

4   carefully craft each bill; we wouldn't be here

5   without you.

6   And with that I wanna to call on my

7   colleagues who'd wish to speak. I wanna introduce

8   the colleagues who are here; to my right, Annabel

9   Palma, Steve Matteo, and to my left is one of the

10   sponsors who I will now call upon, Council Member

11   Fernando Cabrera.

12   COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Good afternoon,

13   Chair Vacca and thank you so much for this vote that

14   we are about to have and to my fellow council members

15   and to the members of the public, thank you for this

16   hearing on important that we have today.

17   My bill, Intro. 0890-A, calls for the

18   creation and preservation or archives of public data

19   on permits, licenses and performance evaluations of

20   New York City's open data portal and our increasing

21   conflicts in a technological society, expanding

22   access to public data is a critical part of strength

23   in democracy. Opening data instruction and to

24   improve public access is allowing many government

25   agencies around the United States and the world to

2   improve efficiency and get solutions to longstanding

3   problems; it is also helping to create more trust and

4   transparency between citizens and government; in

5   fact, efforts to increase access to open data in the

6   United States have developed into a movement that has

7   resulted in increased information on everything from

8   education to housing to public safety.

9   Intro. 0890-A in particular seeks to

10   address a current problem with NYC's open data

11   portal; right now the portal has the data of

12   individuals and businesses who are current with

13   licenses, permits and all the documents, but we have

14   no way to know when individuals and businesses go off

15   that list. We cannot do longitudinal study because

16   the data from because the data from even a few years

17   back is getting lost, which makes it impossible to

18   track trends. The bill calls for the creation of

19   snapshots of data that allows us to track trends over

20   time. The second problem that this bill seeks to

21   address is that some of the data sets are so massive

22   that they take too long to download -- Yellow Taxi's

23   GPS data is the largest data set on the portal; there

24   are over 170 million entries in a single year; what's

25   the plan when there are 10 years' worth of data; we

2   want to make sure that there are protocols in place

3   to divide up this data into smaller data sets rather

4   than removing the data set, which is the current

5   practice; data getting lost is unacceptable.

6   Ensuring the creation of preservation of archives is

7   particularly important as we examine historical

8   trends and look back to determine how best to move

9   forward.

10   I am excited to be part of this movement

11   and I look forward to signing Intro. 0890-A into law.

12   Thank you for your time and your attention. Thank

13   you so much, Mr. Chair.

14   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, Councilman

15   Cabrera. We have one individual who has signed up to

16   speak; Dominic Mauro, Reinvent Albany. See, we're

17   not like Albany, we move very quickly.

18   [background comment]

19   DOMINIC MAURO: Yeah, okay. Alright.

20   Good afternoon Chairman Vacca and members

21   of the Technology Committee. I'm Dominic Mauro,

22   Staff Attorney of Reinvent Albany. My organization

23   helped draft the Open Data Law in 2012 as part of the

24   New York City Transparency Working Group.

25

2   We applaud the City Council and the

3 Mayor's Office for agreeing on this package of five

4 bills which strengthen and improve New York City's

5 landmark Open Data Law. We greatly appreciate

6 Technology Chair Jimmy Vacca and his colleagues for

7 listening to the public and taking pragmatic steps to

8 get City agencies to publish accurate, usable, timely

9 agency data.

10   Put simply, this is what opening up

11 government looks like; together, these bills give an

12 important boost to open data and help make city

13 government more transparent and effective.

14   In 21st century New York City, this

15 digital information helps all of us understand what

16 is happening in our city and what our city government

17 is doing for us. Detailed data about how long it

18 takes to get help at a traffic crash or where rats

19 are running around or how well buildings are

20 maintained helps; it helps us understand where

21 government is working and not work and which services

22 need to be improved.

23   In closing, we thank City Council,

24 Committee Chair Vacca and Mayor de Blasio for efforts

25 to continuously improve the Open Data Law. Looking

2   forward past this package of bills, we would like to

3   see Council amend the law to include a private right

4   of action, like the State's Freedom of Information

5   Law. When government ignores FOIL, the public can

6   ask a judge to enforce the law and the public needs

7   to be able to do the same with the Open Data Law.

8   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, thank you

9   for your testimony…

10   DOMINIC MAURO: Thank you.

11   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: we appreciate it.

12   Are there any additional speakers?

13   Without there being additional speakers, I will now

14   call the roll on all of the proposed bills.

15   COMMITTEE CLERK: Committee Clerk Matthew

16   Destefano [sp?], Committee on Technology, roll call

17   on Intro. Nos. 0890-A, 0898-A, 0900-A, 0914-A and

18   0915-A. Council Member Vacca.

19   CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I vote aye on all.

20   COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Palma.

21   COUNCIL MEMBER PALMA: Aye.

22   COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Matteo.

23   COUNCIL MEMBER MATTEO: Yes.

24

25

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 3 in the affirmative… [interpose background comment] 0 in the negative… I'm sorry, Council Member Greenfield.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Aye on all.

COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 4 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions, the items have been adopted.

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you. [background comments] Without further business, this hearing is now 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. 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 _____November 28, 2015_____