

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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January 6, 2016
Start: 10:15 a.m.
Recess: 10:57 a.m.

HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E:
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Rosie Mendez
Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Robert E. Cornegy, Jr.
Rafael L. Espinal, Jr.
Mark Levine
Antonio Reynoso
Helen K. Rosenthal
Ritchie J. Torres
Barry S. Grodenchik
Eric A. Ulrich

2 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Good morning
3 everyone and Happy New Year. [background cheers,
4 comments] My name is Council Member Jumaane
5 Williams, Chair of the Council's Committee on Housing
6 and Buildings; I'm joined today by the Public
7 Advocate Tish James, Council Members Rosenthal,
8 Rodriguez, Torres, Levine, Grodenchik and Reynoso.

9 We're here today to vote on proposed Res
10 No. 0504-A, which calls upon the State of New York to
11 match the City of New York's commitment to create
12 15,000 units of supportive housing over 15 years and
13 the State of New York and City of New York to approve
14 a fourth New York/New York Agreement to create
15 permanent supportive housing.

16 Intro... do we have any... [background
17 comment] Well this actually Steve Levin's bill; I
18 know he's not here today.

19 Supportive housing is widely considered
20 to be the most effective existing model for ending
21 homelessness among vulnerable populations. Tenants
22 in supportive housing pay a portion of their income
23 towards rent and utilities and receive services,
24 including mental health services, case management,
25

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2 employment assistance and/or substance abuse
3 treatment.

4 New York City and New York State have
5 signed a series of three accords to develop
6 supportive housing jointly funded by the City of New
7 York and the New York State Office of Mental Health.
8 The New York/New York agreement was signed in 1990
9 and provided for the creation of over 3500 supportive
10 housing units. New York/New York II was signed in
11 1999 and resulted in the creation of 1500 units.
12 While both of these agreements took longer to
13 complete than originally anticipated, research has
14 found that individuals living in the units experience
15 reduced shelter stays, fewer and shorter hospital
16 stays and reductions in length of jail stays.

17 In November 2005, then Governor George
18 Pataki and Mayor Michael Bloomberg signed the New
19 York/New York III Agreement to provide 9,000
20 supportive units by 2016.

21 It is now time to move forward with a new
22 New York/New York Agreement; as such, Mayor de Blasio
23 has recently committed the City of New York to
24 funding, including 15,000 units of supportive housing
25 over the next 15 years. Now with Res 0504 we are

1 calling on the State to match this commitment. I
2 believe that the creation of additional housing is a
3 necessary step towards meeting the homelessness
4 crisis in New York City and I would like to encourage
5 all of my colleagues to vote in favor of this
6 resolution, and if the governor is paying attention
7 instead of some of the recent educes [sic] put out,
8 it would be better if he put some money where his
9 mouth is and at least match what New York City's
10 doing; that would probably be the best and quickest
11 thing he can do to help deal with the homelessness
12 crisis.
13

14 I'd like to thank my staff for the work
15 they did to assemble this hearing, including Nick
16 Smith, my Deputy Chief of Staff, and Legislative
17 Director, Jen Wilcox and Malaika Jabali, Counsel to
18 the Committee; Guillermo Patino and Jose Conde,
19 Policy Analysts to the Committee, and Sarah Gastelum,
20 the Committee's Finance Analyst. And I'd like to
21 announce Galanna Mayer [sp?], my new Communications
22 Director; this is her first hearing, congratulations.
23 [cheers, applause]

24 Before we call the roll, I know that...
25 [background comments] okay, [laughter] our

1 illustrious Pub... she's really good... I'm being told by
2 Helen Rosenthal that you're really good, so...
3 [background comments] [laughter] why don't you hire
4 her? [laughter]

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: She doesn't have
7 the big bucks like you.

8 [laughter]

9 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Our illustrious
10 Public Advocate I know would like to make a statement
11 [background comments], so I'll give some time to do
12 that and then I'd like to ask the clerk to call the
13 roll.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I wanna thank the
15 Committee Chair, Jumaane Williams and all of my
16 colleagues here in the City Council for holding this
17 important hearing and I wanna thank the council
18 member, the chair for granting me or allowing me,
19 after begging you [laugh] to say a few words.

20 We've made great strides in the city to
21 ensure that the ladder of opportunity is open to all,
22 but we must still do more to make certain that those
23 in greatest need have the tools to get back on their
24 feet. In New York City, homelessness has reached its
25 highest levels since the Great Depression, with

1 almost 60,000 homeless men and women and almost a
2 third of them are children; 23,000 homeless children,
3 to be exact. In fact, one in every seven people in
4 the United States unfortunately are homeless and they
5 live in New York City and for far too long much of
6 New York City's homeless population cycle through the
7 revolving doors of hospitals, mental facilities and
8 our jails and my office has seen the problem
9 firsthand, receiving visits and phones [sic] from
10 literally hundreds of New Yorkers each month who have
11 nowhere to turn for the most basic of human services,
12 and fortunately the solution is clear, we all know
13 the answer, it's permanent supportive housing; right,
14 which pairs affordable housing with on-site
15 supportive housing, which is the most effective way
16 for addressing chronic homelessness, particularly
17 amongst people with mental illness or severe health
18 services. And so permanent supportive housing has
19 been shown to reduce incarceration rates, diminish
20 incidents of drug relapses and cut mental health
21 stays in half. And traditionally, four out of every
22 five people found eligible for supportive housing in
23 New York City have had to stay in shelters or on the

1 street simply because there are not enough affordable
2 units to meet the demand.

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4 New York has stepped up three times in
5 the past 25 years and created the city's statewide
6 New York/New York partnerships to provide for this
7 critical need. With New York/New York III just
8 expired, it is imperative that we come together and
9 create a new New York/New York and make it strongest
10 yet. In the past, as a former counsel in Albany,
11 I've worked on New York/New York and I know that this
12 is really critical to addressing the homelessness
13 issue that we have in our city. And so I firmly
14 believe that the will exists on both the city and the
15 state to do what we must to do to address this
16 crisis, but we must not let up until we have secured
17 an ironclad commitment from both sides.

18 Again I thank the Chair, I thank my
19 colleagues and I thank all of you and I urge all of
20 you to vote in support of this resolution.

21 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you, Public
22 Advocate James. And again, while it sounds good to
23 say that we have to put all homeless in shelters if
24 it gets cold; in practicality it is difficult if they
25 don't wanna go and of course, New York City's not

1 without its problems dealing with this issue;
2 however, the mayor has stepped up and said that he is
3 supporting 15,000 new units. I think it would
4 behoove, again, the governor to step up as well or
5 else as many are already saying, is just empty [sic].
6 So I recommend that my colleagues vote yes on this as
7 well and I wanna thank Steve Levin for his leadership
8 and ask the clerk to call the roll.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,
11 Committee Clerk, roll call vote Committee on Housing
12 and Buildings, Res 0504-A. Chair Williams.

13 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I vote aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rodriguez.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: Aye.

16 COMMITTEE CLERK: Levine.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Reynoso.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rosenthal.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Torres.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Aye.

24 COMMITTEE CLERK: Grodenchik.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

2 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of 7 in the
3 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions;
4 item has been adopted.

5 [background comments]

6 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Do you wanna give
7 it another shot? [laugh] [background comments]

8 Thank you; with that, this hearing is now
9 closed. [background comments] Say it again. Oh,
10 Espinal.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: Aye.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: But I can't call
13 it; hold on, the clerk.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK: Council Member Espinal,
15 Res. 0504-A.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ESPINAL: I vote aye.

17 COMMITTEE CLERK: Vote now 8 in the
18 affirmative.

19 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: We'll hold the
20 vote open for 15 minutes and I guess that's it.

21 [pause]

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Continuation roll call
23 Committee on Housing and Buildings, Res. 0504-A,
24 Council Member Ulrich.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I vote aye.

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COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS 10

COMMITTEE CLERK: Final vote now

Committee on Housing and Buildings stands at 9 in the affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions.

Thank you.

[pause]

[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 January 7, 2016