

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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December 18, 2017

Start: 3:36 p.m.

Recess: 3:46 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm.  
14<sup>th</sup> Fl.

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

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

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

2 [sound check, pause] [background  
3 comments] [gavel]

4 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Good afternoon,  
5 everyone. I'm Jumaane Williams Chair of the Committee  
6 on Housing and Buildings. This is our last hearing  
7 of the year. I'm joined by Council Members  
8 Grodenchik, Torres, Cornegy, Kallos, Ulrich,  
9 Rosenthal and Levine. We are hear to hold a volte on  
10 eight bills: Proposed Intro No. 385-C sponsored by  
11 Council Member Mendez would require owners of  
12 multiple dwellings to inspect units for indoor  
13 allergen hazards specifically mold and pests. A  
14 shout out to Council Member Mendez whose been working  
15 on this probably for 10 to 12 years, and I'm glad  
16 she's able to get it out now. Proposed Intro No.  
17 1009-A sponsored by the Public Advocate will require  
18 that HPD to create a website to report certain  
19 information about the owner. Proposed Intro No. 1015  
20 would require the Department of Housing, Preservation  
21 and Development, HPD, to establish a housing portal.  
22 The portal will allow tenants, prospective home  
23 buyers and members of the general public to view  
24 information about available apartments and apply for  
25 affordable housing. We will also be voting on

2 Proposed Intro No. 1036-A sponsored by Council Member  
3 Rodriguez and the Proposed Intro No. 1039-A sponsored  
4 by myself, which relates to vacant properties. There  
5 are two or three buildings, which are commonly called  
6 the housing that we're housing there. (sic) Proposed  
7 Intro No. 1036-A would require HPD to analyze vacant  
8 residential buildings and lots and areas zoned to  
9 permanent residential use. Proposed Intro 1039-A  
10 would require HPD to report on vacant buildings or  
11 lots under HPD's jurisdiction categorized by the  
12 potential to be developed into affordable housing.  
13 Just to correct those to--Oh, this one? Yes, those  
14 who are formerly called--formerly called housing and  
15 not really that. (sic) I do want to shout out to  
16 Public Advocate Tish James for all the amazing work  
17 that she did on getting these bills through and the  
18 advocates who worked very hard as well. Proposed  
19 Intro No. 1120-A sponsored by myself would require  
20 DEP to be notified whenever excavation or drilling  
21 to--drilling to a depth greater than 50 feet is  
22 proposed in the Bronx or north of 135<sup>th</sup> Street in  
23 Manhattan. This was introduced at the request of the  
24 Mayor. Proposed Intro No. 1269-A sponsored by  
25 Council Member Richards would require HPD to enter

2 into regulatory agreements with the CLTs, which means  
3 standard-standard terms and conditions for regulatory  
4 agreements and allows HPD to enter into agreements  
5 where a CLT is the recipient of city funding property  
6 or a tax exemption. The final bill we'll be voting  
7 on Proposed Intro No. 1419-A sponsored by the Speaker  
8 would allow the city to recover penalties of up to  
9 \$500,000 for companies and \$150,000 for individuals  
10 for a violation of the Site Safety Provisions of the  
11 Construction Code, where the violations are  
12 accompanied by death or severe physical injury. I'd  
13 like to thank my staff for the work they did to  
14 assemble this hearing including Mike Toomey, my  
15 Legislative Director and Megan Chin, Counsel to the  
16 Committee; Jose Conde, Policy Analyst to the  
17 committee, and Sarah Gastelum, the Committee's  
18 Finance Analyst. There's only one member I think  
19 here with a bill. Do you want to say anything about  
20 the bill?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Pretty please.

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Council Member  
23 Kallos to speak about his bill.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I just want to  
25 thank Chair Jumaane Williams. I think that he-though

2 my—I have limited experience, I think he is the best  
3 Housing and Buildings chair that there has ever been,  
4 and let me have enough—and it has nothing to do with  
5 the fact that all of my bills have been heard, but I  
6 think you put a lot of energy and effort into this to  
7 the exclusion of a lot of other things. We have to  
8 make choices, and I think you put—I think your  
9 choices have been clear in the fact that this  
10 committee meets so often and has covered such a broad  
11 range of topics and that you've led the construction  
12 safety fight. So, I just wanted to thank you, and I  
13 hope that you will continue this if you are not  
14 leading our, I guess (sic) body. Everyday residents  
15 reach out to my office asking for affordable housing.  
16 Often times we'll connect—we'll—we'll set them up  
17 with an account on Housing Connect. Anyone who has  
18 an account on Housing Connect knows that you get an  
19 email randomly. It has a PDF—a link to PDF in it.  
20 You can download the PDF and then decide whether or  
21 not you meet the requirements, and the entire system  
22 just really isn't working. Beyond that, if you're—do  
23 constituent service like many of us do, each of us  
24 has our own Crib sheet of not for profits that offer  
25 affordable housing in our own districts. You all

2 know it's true and so we get folks on the individual  
3 lists for every single building, and that is  
4 incredibly inefficient. And so, that being said, we  
5 hear folks going around saying they're building all  
6 this affordable housing and yet nobody seems to be  
7 getting it. So, we wanted to change three things.  
8 First, we wanted every single landlord who's  
9 receiving taxpayer dollars to register their units  
10 with the city, and if they don't, they get fined.  
11 That starts with a warning and escalate up to \$2,000  
12 per unit per month of not filing. In addition, they  
13 would actually have to make the units available.  
14 You'd be able to set a profile. It would be  
15 modernizing Housing Connect. It would be like the  
16 private sector like Street Easy or Zillo where you  
17 can actually just set an alert and not have to read  
18 through PDFs but actually get the units that you  
19 actually qualify for. It would end the whole  
20 situation of 100,000 people applying for the same  
21 unit and none of them being qualified for it, at  
22 least three-quarters being disqualified.  
23 Additionally, right now there's only about half a  
24 dozen new projects on the affordable housing on  
25 Housing Connect, and most of the affordable housing

2 actually already exists. So, this would allow you to  
3 apply for existing affordable housing. How big is  
4 this problem? This problem was identified by Sazari  
5 Putpool (sp?) and a whistleblower HPD's Steven Warner  
6 in Propublica and they estimated about 50,000 units  
7 and \$100 million in taxpayer dollars. They mayor  
8 leader updated that number to \$304 million. So that  
9 is the scope of the project. Last but not least,  
10 residents will be able to complain that when they're  
11 paying more than they should and will have an open  
12 data set to review to make sure that the city is  
13 actually getting its money's worry. Sorry for taking  
14 so long. I urge my colleagues to please vote in  
15 favor of this legislation.

16 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you so much,  
17 and actually a very important piece of legislation as  
18 we move forward in finding the affordable housing and  
19 homelessness crisis. With that, I'd like to as the  
20 Clerk to please call the roll

21 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,  
22 roll call vote in Committee on Housing and Buildings.  
23 All items are coupled. Chair Williams.

24 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I vote aye.

25 CLERK: Cornegy.



1 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Aye.

3 CLERK: Levine.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVINE: Aye.

5 CLERK: Rosenthal.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Aye. Thank  
7 you.

8 CLERK: Torres.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

10 CLERK: Grodenchik.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

12 CLERK: Ulrich.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I'm voting aye on  
14 all with the exception of 385-C. I vote no on 385-C.  
15 Thank you.

16 CLERK: By a vote of 7 in the  
17 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,  
18 all items have been adopted by the Committee on  
19 Housing and Buildings with the exception of  
20 Introduction 385-C, being adopted by a vote of 6 in  
21 the affirmative, 1 in the negative and no  
22 abstentions.

23 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: So, it was brought  
24 to my attention my first hearing was actually on  
25 vacant property. So it's fitting the last hearing is

2 voting out some bills from it. I want to say thank  
3 you to the advocates who are here. As I mentioned in  
4 the last hearing, I think—I'm very proud of the work  
5 that we've done in this committee. I think we've  
6 really moved forward the conversations around  
7 affordability in housing and particularly  
8 construction site safety and construction in general  
9 and DOB issues that I wasn't the most familiar with  
10 before I got here. I'm very proud of that and want  
11 to thank all of my colleagues for taking the journey  
12 and the ride with me through the housing and  
13 buildings. As I mentioned, I do have some big  
14 dreams. Let's see if that comes true, and we'll see  
15 what happens if it doesn't, but this has been an  
16 exciting time. I just want to say thank you again to  
17 the—the committee staff: Sarah Gastelum, Ed Adkin,  
18 Jim Wilcox, Megan Chin, Jose Conde. My staff Michael  
19 Toomey, and everyone who has helped make this happen.  
20 A big shout out to the sergeant-at-arms and all the  
21 sergeants who helped make this move smoothly. It's  
22 been a fun ride coming from community organizer,  
23 tenant organizer to be Chair of Housing and  
24 Buildings. It's just an amazing thing and I'm very

2 proud. So, thank you all and with that, historically  
3 the vote and the hearing is now closed. [gavel]

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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 January 10, 2018