

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.
14th 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 135th 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