

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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October 15, 2018
Start: 1:03 p.m.
Recess: 1:25 p.m.

HELD AT: 250 Broadway -Committee Rm.
16th Fl.

B E F O R E: JOSEPH C. BORELLI

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Alicka Ampry-Samuel
Justin L. Branna
Fernando Cabrera
Alan N. Maisel

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

Calvin Drayton, First Deputy Commissioner
New York City Emergency Management Department

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2 [sound check] [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: [coughs] Good

4 afternoon. I am Council Member Joe Borelli, and I'm
5 Chair of the Committee on Fire and Emergency
6 Management. I am joined today by my colleague
7 Council Member Mark Treyger whose bill we are about
8 to hear. Although the Committee on Fire and
9 Management primarily oversees the New York City Fire
10 Department, and the city's Emergency Medical
11 Services, the Committee also oversees the Office of
12 Emergency Management, which is responsible for
13 coordinating New York City's emergency planning, and
14 response for all types of scales and emergencies. We
15 also have really sweet hats. Regarding the subject of
16 today's oversight hearing, we're here to discuss the
17 city's Emergency Management's Strategic Plan for 2017
18 to 2021. I'll ask the First Deputy Commissioner to
19 present the details of the Department's plan, but
20 generally speaking the plan is focused on four main
21 goals including promoting the coordination and
22 responsibility in strengthening agency identity,
23 reinforcing the city's capacity to manage emergencies
24 through its strategic engagement, developing
25 innovative solution to support OEM's expanding

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2 responsibilities, and advancing the professionalism
3 of emergency management. OEM is in a unique position
4 to positively impact the lives of New Yorkers and
5 those that visit by helping them enhance public
6 safety. I encourage that OEM has undertaken a
7 comprehensive review of its operations, and has
8 identified and addressed internal changes. The
9 Committee is particularly interested in the overall
10 nature of how the city's numerous agencies
11 communicate, plan and coordinate with each other
12 during large scale emergencies. The committee will
13 also hear testimony on Intro 563 sponsored by Council
14 Member Mark Treyger, which seeks to amend this New
15 York City Fire Code in relation to the posting of
16 hurricane evacuation zone and evacuation center
17 information in multiple dwelling buildings. I
18 believe Council Member Treyger has a prepared
19 statement, and I will ask him to say it now.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, Mr.
21 Chairman. Good afternoon. I'm Councilman Mark
22 Treyger and I'm pleased that today's committee on
23 Fire and Emergency Management, chaired by Council
24 Member Joe Borelli that we're hearing my bill,
25 Introduction 562, a Local Law to amend the New York

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2 City Fire Code in relation to the posting of
3 hurricane evacuation zone and evacuation center
4 information in multiple dwellings. This is actually
5 a bill I introduced in the last term in the Council,
6 and re-introduced in this—in this term. I want to
7 thank Chair Borelli for holding this important
8 oversight hearing on New York City's Emergency
9 Management Plan, and for hearing my bill. As many of
10 us know, it has been almost exactly six years since
11 Hurricane Sandy. Hurricane Sandy devastated so many
12 of our communities throughout the entire city. There
13 are families in my district who are still recovering
14 from the storm, and I'm sure that unfortunately this
15 rings true for a lot of people. Our city needs to do
16 everything possible to make sure that we are
17 sufficiently prepared for the next storm because it
18 is not a matter of if there's a next storm, but
19 rather when there's a next storm. People are still
20 struggling, and we need to make sure that everyone
21 has access to the information they need to know. My
22 bill would require the owners of multiple dwellings,
23 group R2 occupancy to post notice in a common area or
24 in additional areas as required by the Fire
25 Commissioner stating the hurricane evacuation zone

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3 number for that building and providing the addresses
4 of the three nearest evacuation centers. The form of
5 the notice would be determined by the Commissioner.
6 Our City should do whatever we can to make sure that
7 all New Yorkers are informed so they can be prepared,
8 and I'll make a quick addition. There are areas of
9 our city with a significant number of high-rise
10 buildings. That is unique to other parts of the
11 country, and during and after Sandy we had great
12 difficulty assisting families in those high-rise
13 buildings. So, I think that we need to double down
14 with the amount of support, information and
15 preparation for families who live in these multiple
16 dwellings in these high-rise buildings to give them
17 as much information as possible in advance as far as
18 possible. I-I still think we still have a lot more
19 work to do in addition to this bill, but I think
20 clearly during and after Sandy areas in my district
21 and high-rise buildings give us great difficulty, and
22 city acknowledged it. The Red Cross acknowledged it,
23 and others did. So, I think as much as we can do to
24 provide as much information as possible, and there
25 have been tweaks to New York City's Emergency
Management's plan since Sandy. We have to make sure

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2 that those tweaks filter down to the people who need
3 to know the most. So, this information I think is-is
4 just critical to pass along to families in the most
5 vulnerable parts of our city. Again, I thank the
6 chair for giving me the time today and for hearing
7 this bill. Thank you so much.

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you and I'll
9 note we're joined by Council Member Brannon. I will
10 now ask the members of the Administration, who I
11 think there's only one to please state your name for
12 the record and raise your right hand as the Committee
13 Counsel will administer the oath.

14 LEGAL COUNSEL: Do you affirm to tell the
15 whole truth and nothing in your testimony before this
16 committee, and to answer honestly Council Member
17 questions?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: I do. Good
19 afternoon Chairperson Borelli and members of the
20 Committee. I am Calvin Drayton, First Deputy
21 Commissioner of the New York City Emergency
22 Management Department. I am pleased to be here to
23 provide information on the agency's strategy put in
24 (sic) as well as to discuss Intro 562. The New York
25 City Emergency Management Strategic Plan in 2017

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3 through 2021 directs our growth and focus through
4 2021. It is designed to help align and ensure
5 coordination across divisions, guide decision making
6 in resource allocation, and communicate the roles and
7 responsibility of the agency. A Strategic Planning
8 Process Team was formed in August 2015 to design and
9 drive t he planning and implementation process that
10 engaged all staff in our strengths, weaknesses
11 opportunities and challenges to the agency. The
12 information was then distilled into goals and
13 objectives, and released in October 2016. All
14 members of our staff were actively engaged in
15 planning out the plan through various brown bags,
16 surveys, forum, focus groups, and other activities
17 including the many revisions and edits that the plan
18 went through before it was released. These are the
19 four goals in the strategic plan: Number 1: Promote
20 coordinator-coordination, responsibility and
21 strengthen agency identity. Here they enhance our-
22 our role with citywide coordination, litigation,
23 planning response and recovery. Goal Number 2:
24 Reinforce the city's capacity to manage emergencies
25 through strategic engagement. This goal continues to
build our relationships with the local, state and

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3 federal agencies as well as with elected officials,
4 non-profits and the private sector. This goal also
5 includes continued planning and prepared efforts for
6 the people with disabilities and others with access
7 and functional needs. Number 3: Develop innovative
8 solutions to support NYCEM's expanding
9 responsibilities. We are growing fast, and we are—in
10 here we focus on expanding our capabilities through
11 improvements in technology, infrastructure and
12 staffing. This will enhance our scalability to
13 respond to incidents while maintaining continuity of
14 daily operations. And finally, Number 4: Advance
15 the Profession of Emergency Management. We are the
16 premier emergency management agency in the country,
17 and we strive to maintain and grow this through our
18 cadre of professional staff who represent us at
19 nationwide conferences who are asked to speak to
20 international delegations who consistently promote a
21 culture of learning inside and outside of the agency.
22 Woven throughout all of the four goals is our
23 engagement with people we serve. Each year there are
24 thousands of interactions with our staff and those
25 living and working in the city. Our focus on
community engagement and community preparedness are

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2 one and the same. And informed constituency is a
3 prepared constituency. We continue to push this
4 message through our main programs such as: The Ready
5 New York and Know Your Zone Campaign, which
6 encourages New Yorkers to know which hurricane
7 evacuation zone they live in and what that means for
8 them. Notify NYC the city's free emergency
9 notification system, which has grown significantly
10 from 140,000 subscribers before Hurricane Sand to now
11 almost 745,000 subscribers with common notifications
12 available in 13 languages, American Sign Language and
13 audio formats and a multiple application—mobile
14 application that has seen more than 77,000
15 downgrades—downloads in one year. The Share Your
16 Space Program, which identifies spaces in communities
17 that could potentially support the city emergency
18 recovery operations or used for community outreach
19 events. The Community Emergency Planning in New York
20 City Tool Kit, an interactive workbook designed to
21 guide communities through developing their own
22 emergency planning. Not only does it provide the
23 hazards these communities may face, but they're out
24 kings (sic) to utility disruptions to steam pipe,
25 explosions. It also outlines the key—key response

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2 roles communities can play to protect their residents
3 and organizations. Our continued for strong
4 community outreach and engagement activities grows as
5 you have likely seen in your neighborhood and out-in
6 your neighborhood at meetings, town halls, fairs,
7 mobile office hours and other community events. In
8 addition, work closely with elected officials on
9 outreach and engagement activities that have just
10 hosted a training for City Council Members and their
11 staff in cooperation with the Speaker's Office and
12 Chairman Borelli. New York City Emergency Management
13 is still a young agency by New York standards. Yet,
14 the critical role we play for those living and
15 working in the city has never been more apparent.
16 From coastal storms to building collapses to power
17 outages, the complexity of our city combined with our
18 diverse population creates a need for a strong, smart
19 Emergency Management agency. To continue our
20 success, we must plan accordingly. We're working
21 diligently towards implementing the components of our
22 four goals into our existing resources and planning
23 procedures with the assistance of the entire agency
24 fostering, including and ensuring every voice is
25 heard. Now, let me speak to you regarding Intro 562,

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2 which requires owners of specific occupancies located
3 within a hurricane evacuation zone to post a notice
4 in their building providing the hurricane evacuation
5 zone number and the three closest hurricane
6 evacuation centers. As you know, New York City
7 Emergency Management is not an oversight agency, but
8 we are all-always supportive of more information
9 being provided to the public in any capacity. It is
10 important to note that our prevailing guidance for
11 those living in evacuation zones is to prepare ahead
12 of time to stay with family or friends living outside
13 of the zones. Evacuation centers are open for those
14 without this option, but we strong push people for
15 more a comfortable and sustainable option for family,
16 friends or familiarity. Also, we note that this
17 legislation is similar to Local Law 98 of 2013, which
18 requires the city to provide homeowners and building
19 owners with the information on how to prepare
20 buildings for weather emergencies, natural disasters
21 and power outages. In compliance with Local Law 98
22 of 2013, the information has been on our website as
23 well as HPD's website since 2013, updated as needed,
24 and has been an excellent guide for building owners
25 to use. We welcome the opportunity to meet with

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2 Council and other relevant city agencies involved to
3 discuss how to best move forward to meet the goals
4 of this legislation. Thank you for joining us in our
5 mission to support the preparedness for all New
6 Yorkers, and for your time today, and I am happy to
7 answer any questions.

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you very
9 much, and I just want to note we're joined by Council
10 Member Cabrera and Maisel. Just a quick question
11 about staffing. As part of the five-year plan, what
12 is the staffing changes you envision over that time?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: We really
14 don't envision any staffing changes. I think the
15 biggest challenge for us is that we would like to see
16 the—the agency, the staff and the agency begin—become
17 more involved and more engaged in moving forward
18 especially with us having identified where we want to
19 be in five years. I don't anticipate any staffing
20 changes.

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Is there still a
22 plan to—is there still there a thought that you're
23 going to outgrow your—your kind of space within this
24 time?

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Well, yes.
3 We have outgrown our current space. We are working
4 very closely with OMB to figure out ways to-to make
5 some changes there.

6 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Have there been
7 sites identified? Will you—are you going to stay
8 with Cadman Plaza?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: We will
10 stay at Cadman Plaza for the (sic) large expand.

11 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Okay, do you guys
12 envision any new funding sources over the next five
13 years or will it be typically the same federal
14 grants?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Typically
16 the same federal grants. Yes.

17 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Are there any new
18 opportunities for different types of grants?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: With this
20 plan?

21 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Uh-hm.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: No, we—we—
23 the plan that we have right now, the resources that
24 we require to implement the plan, we have the
25 resources to do that.

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2 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Things sound great.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Oh, yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: [laughs] Well,
5 it's day-by-day. I don't want to be there on a bad
6 day, by the way.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: [laughs]

8 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: It will be a tough
9 one. Do any of my colleagues have any questions?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: [off mic] Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Council Member
12 Treyger.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Thank you, Chair
14 Borelli and I thank—thank you for your—for your
15 testimony. In your testimony you mentioned that New
16 York City Emergency Management is not an oversight
17 agency, but you are supportive of more information.
18 The bill deals with amending the Fire Code. So, that—
19 can you explain to me why Emergency Management would
20 be concerned with that?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Well, we—
22 we—we support the intention of the legislation. We
23 want to further—we want to have further discussions
24 with the Council and with our partner agencies about
25 what the right information to include would be and

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2 what the right distribution of the enforcement
3 mechanism would be.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Right, right.

5 So, again, just to be clear that this is amending the
6 Fire Code. We're not—I'm not sure if there's an
7 Emergency Management Code. So, I—I do appreciate
8 that distinction. With regards to—yes, I—I've—as
9 Chair of the former Hurricane Sandy Recovery
10 Committee, I'm—I'm well aware about Emergency
11 Management's plans to prepare people far in advance,
12 but I would say that we still have a long way to go
13 in dealing with high-rise buildings, and preparation
14 and evacuation plans. I know for a fact that New
15 York City Emergency Management has made tweaks to the
16 plan since Sandy. There might be additional
17 evacuation centers, backup centers. This
18 information—my concern it's just not filtering down
19 to local communities particularly the most
20 vulnerable. In high-rise buildings they're required
21 to post certain other critical information, elevator
22 inspections, certain fire inspections. I think we're
23 now in an age particularly with the rising impact of
24 climate change and the frequency of powerful storms
25 that we now have an obligation to post about

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2 evacuation centers and high-rise buildings. That's
3 the era that we're in today. So, I—just to be clear
4 is the Administration supportive of this bill?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Absolutely.
6 We support giving more information to the public
7 about evacuation preparedness and we look forward to
8 working with you and your staff and other city
9 agencies.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: I appreciate
11 that. Thank you very much. Thank you, Chair.

12 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you. Council
13 Member Cabrera.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Thank you so
15 much to the Chair, and welcome.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Thank you.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: I first want to
18 thank OEM for your work that you lend in Puerto Rico
19 for all your efforts that were expended and invested
20 in Puerto Rico. Having been there three times, we
21 needed definitely all the help we could get. A quick
22 question: Are we helping out in other states right
23 now? I'm just curious.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Yes, yes we
25 are. We—the—the Fire Department, the City Fire

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2 Department deployed yesterday or Saturday a member-
3 generally what we call an incident management team,
4 IMT, and they're going to be responsible for managing
5 the different base camps that are being stood up in
6 Florida. In addition to that, early-late last week
7 the NYPD and one member from my officer were deployed
8 to attach to-with the New Jersey Task Force sending
9 out a couple of canine dogs to K9 dogs to help in
10 that recovery effort.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: What are we
12 learning from all the states that we can implement in
13 New York City?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: What are we
15 learning?

16 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Yes.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: That and
18 the Council Member mentioned current climate changes
19 is-is going to impact and make the storms that we're
20 seeing coming out of the-the Coast of Africa much,
21 much stronger. We're going to do a much-we have to
22 do a much better job in-in-in getting the public to-
23 to heed to it when the Mayor says to evacuate. The
24 biggest challenge for any emergency manager is
25 complacency. When we're asking people to evacuate t

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2 he sun is shining, and if they're hard to convince,
3 someone that a hurricane is on the way when they're
4 looking at 85 degrees and a beautiful day.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: What category
6 level are we talking about that we would ask people
7 to evacuate--and I'm going to be more specific--the
8 city?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: We have--
10 there's four or there's five because it was a Cat--it
11 went all the way to a Category 5, and depending on
12 the storm's strength, and the direction of the storm
13 that would depend on the evacuation zones that we're
14 asking people to remove--to leave.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: So, even a Cat
16 1--

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON:
18 [interposing] Absolutely.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: --you will ask
20 people?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Absolutely.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: For example, if
23 I'm in the Bronx, and we were least affected by
24 Hurricane Sandy particularly in my district we're at
25 the highest level. Welcome everyone to come to my

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2 district if you're struggling to go over to the
3 Promised Land, but at what point even a 1--

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON:

5 [interposing] Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: --you will ask
7 people in the Bronx to leave the city?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Well, well,
9 again, it depends on--on the direction of the storm
10 where the--the biggest problem for a hurricane and
11 people on the coast is surge as we saw what took
12 place in--in Puerto Rico, and what took place recently
13 in the Florida Panhandle area. So, if--if you--if the
14 Mayor sets his time to evacuate where there's a
15 Category 1 and/or Category 5, you need to move. You
16 need to move, and you need to either move to family
17 and friends, or you need to move to a little closer
18 evacuation center, and then you will be transported
19 to a shelter.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: How many days
21 would it take to evacuate New York City in case of a--
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23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON:

24 [interposing] A Category--?
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: [interposing]
3 the worst case scenario?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Well, in
5 the worst case scenario for us, now we use it again
6 to only trigger for hospitals and nursing homes, 78
7 hours and then shortly after that, then we'll pull
8 the trigger for evacuating the City and evacuating
9 the zones I should say.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Okay. Thank you
11 so much--

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON:
13 [interposing] Thank you.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: --and again,
15 thank you for your fantastic work.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Thank you.
17 I appreciate it.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: You guys do
19 premier work by site work. Thank you to the Chair.

20 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you. Any
21 other questions? No. Thank you very much.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DRAYTON: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BORELLI: Thank you. Okay,
24 thank you very much. This concludes today's hearing.

25 [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 October 28, 2018