

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

----- X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

----- X

October 16, 2019
Start: 2:12 PM
Recess: 2:18 PM

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

B E F O R E: STEPHEN T. LEVIN
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Vanessa L. Gibson
Barry S. Grodenchik
Brad S. Lander
Antonio Reynoso
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Ritchie J. Torres
Mark Treyger

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

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

4 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay. Good afternoon
5 everybody. I'm Council Member Steve Levin, Chair of
6 the Council's Committee on General Welfare. Today,
7 we are here to vote on Proposed Intro 153-B aimed at
8 improving circumstances for those residing in three-
9 quarters houses. I'd like to thank the parties that
10 are here, Council Member Brad Lander, Council Member
11 Antonio Reynoso, Council Member Torres, Council
12 Member Treyger, Council Member Vanessa Gibson. So,
13 I'll keep this brief. Three-quarters houses are
14 typically one or two-family homes or larger apartment
15 buildings run by operation and rented as single
16 adults. These entities are run by operators who
17 present themselves as programs often as a place for
18 individuals exiting correctional facilities,
19 shelters, and residential substance abuse treatment
20 facilities. However, often these places provide no
21 services in-house, are unregulated and generally are
22 illegal. These facilities often have multiple
23 building code violations and are dangerously over-
24 crowded, and although there are many issues with
25 three-quarters houses, this is not the only

2 alternatives to—these are the only alternatives to
3 the street or shelter for many individuals. In a
4 survey conducted of residents in three-quarters
5 houses individuals reporting—reported that despite
6 the problems associated with three-quarters houses,
7 they are preferable to living in shelter or on the
8 street, and while the exact number is unknown, it has
9 been estimated that over 10,000 individuals reside in
10 three-quarters houses. Rents in three-quarters
11 houses are typically tied to a resident's public
12 assistance rent level, which for those who receive
13 the public assistance shelter allowance that's state
14 by the set—set by the state at just \$215 a month, and
15 that schedule has been unchanged since 1988. In
16 2015, an interagency task force was convened by the
17 Mayor to target known suspected three-quarters houses
18 to inspect and relocate tenants. In 2017, the
19 Council passed Local Law 13. I think it was—the
20 sponsor was Council Member Torres. Is that right?
21 It was. Requiring the Mayor's Office of Operations to
22 report on progress of the task force on a quarterly
23 basis. This legislation requiring the three-quarters
24 reporting sunset on January 1st of this year. Today
25 we are voting on a piece of legislation that I'm

2 sponsoring, Proposed Intro 153-B, which would codify
3 the Three-quarters housing Task Force and continue
4 the quarterly reports. We don't want to pull the rug
5 out from anybody, but we want to ensure that people
6 are housed, that also we cannot tolerate bad actors
7 who are taking advantage of vulnerable populations.
8 Finding housing is a difficult undertaking for most
9 New Yorkers. For people that are experiencing
10 homelessness, this is often a near impossible.
11 three-quarters houses thus becomes an option. So, we
12 in the Council worked with the Administration to
13 ensure that we build a fully legal and appropriate
14 infrastructure that will be an effective alternative-
15 alternative to unregulated and illegal systems that
16 are in place today. I'd like thank Council staff for
17 their work on this today, Senior Counsel Aminta
18 Kilawan, Senior Policy Analyst Crystal Pond, Senior
19 Policy Analyst Natalie Omery (sp?), Finance Analyst
20 Julia Harness (sp?) I'd also like to thank my
21 Legislative Director Elizabeth Adams and Chief of
22 Staff Jonathan Boucher, and obviously all of my
23 colleagues who have put work into this issue over the
24 years, in particular Council Member Torres. Is there
25 any members that wish to have any remarks? Okay,

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

6

2 seeing none, I will ask William Martin to please call
3 the roll

4 CLERK: William Martin, Committee Clerk,
5 roll call vote Committee on General Welfare,
6 Introduction 153-B, Chair Levin.

7 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Aye.

8 CLERK: Gibson.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER GIBSON: [off mic] Aye on
10 all.

11 CLERK: Lander.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Aye.

13 CLERK: Reynoso.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNOSO: Aye.

15 CLERK: Torres.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: Aye.

17 CLERK: Treyger.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER TREYGER: Aye.

19 CLERK: By a vote of 6 in the
20 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions,
21 the item has been adopted by the committee. [pause]

22 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, alright, I
23 think this hearing is adjourned. Thanks. [gavel]
24 [pause]

25

1 COMMITTEE ON GENERAL WELFARE

7

2 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Okay, we are
3 reopening the—I'm sorry. You can go.

4 CLERK: Continuation roll call Committee
5 on General Welfare. Council Member Grodenchik.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye on all.

7 CLERK: The final vote is now 7 in the
8 affirmative, 0 in the negative and no abstentions.
9 Council Member Levin.

10 CHAIRPERSON LEVIN: Alright, the hearing
11 is adjourned. Thank you. [gavel]

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

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 21. 2019