

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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September 16, 2020
Start: 11:35 a.m.
Recess: 11:41 a.m.

HELD AT: Remote Hearing

B E F O R E: Robert E. Cornegy Jr.
CHAIRPERSON

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Margaret S. Chin
Carlina Rivera
Helen Rosenthal
Bill Perkins
Mark Gjonaj
Fernando Cabrera
Ritchie J. Torres
Barry Grodenchik
Farrah N. Louis

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

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: PC recording started.

3 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you.

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Cloud recording started.

5 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Thank you. And will

6 Sergeant Polite please start with his opening

7 statement? Thank you.

8 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You're welcome. Good

9 morning. Welcome to the remote hearing to the

10 Committee on Housing and Buildings. Will council

11 members and staff please turn on their videos at this

12 time? Again, will council members and staff please

13 turn on their videos at this time? To minimize

14 disruptions, please place all cell phones and

15 electronic devices on vibrate? Chair, we are ready

16 to begin.

17 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Thank you. Good

18 morning, everyone. Thank you for coming. I Council

19 member Robert Cornegy, Chair of the Councils

20 Committee on Housing and Buildings. We're here to

21 vote on a bill related to incorporating the use of

22 drones into the important process of conducting

23 building façade inspections. Required by law since

24 1980 and enforced by the Department of Buildings,

25 periodic building façade inspections are intended to

2 ensure that building facades are safe and secure,
3 mitigating the risks of bricks and debris falling
4 onto pedestrians below. However, despite these
5 inspection requirements, accidents still happen and
6 can have tragic consequences. The use of drones may
7 enable more thorough façade inspections and improve
8 pedestrian safety. Further, they may reduce the need
9 for sidewalk sheds which are often installed for the
10 purpose of conducting façade inspections and repairs.
11 However, there are many questions regarding the
12 safety and feasibility of allowing drones to conduct
13 façade inspections such as potential conflicts with
14 federal rules and issues related to privacy. To
15 answer these questions and to facilitate the
16 implementation of drone technology, proposed intro
17 number 1853A, which I sponsored, would require DOB to
18 conduct the study of the safety and feasibility of
19 allowing drones to conduct façade inspections. I am
20 joined today by committee members Louis, Perkins,
21 Rosenthal, Cabrera, and Yeger. Oh, and I see Council
22 member Gjonaj, also, has joined. Did I miss anybody?
23 We will now ask the committee clerk to call the role.
24 Oh. I see Barry Grodenchik. I'm sorry. Hey, Barry.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: And me, Robert.

2 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Oh, Margaret Chin--

3 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good morning.

4 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: way up in the right
5 hand corner. I'm sorry. Good morning, Margaret.

6 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chair, we're good?

7 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: Yes, sir.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Good to go? Thank you.

9 Good morning. William Martin committee clerk. A
10 roll call vote Committee on Housing and Buildings.

11 Introduction 1853a. Chair Cornegy?

12 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: I would like to
13 explain my vote, please. So, good afternoon. 1853A
14 takes a step forward in a longer process of updating
15 our laws to reflect technology we have available
16 today. Drones can play a positive role in building
17 management, from façade and roof inspections to
18 energy efficiency analysis. Drones can offer cost-
19 effective opportunities to detect problems early and
20 prevent tragic injuries and deaths. The current 22-
21 year-old and 72-year-old local laws that govern drone
22 use are due for a fresh look by all of us as
23 policymakers. As we pursue this first step studying
24 drone laws and regulations and offering
25 recommendations for changes, intro 1853A recognizes

2 the need to include safety and privacy protections in
3 our analysis. We want to pursue any changes with an
4 awareness of perspective from multiple stakeholders
5 and take their insight and expertise on board. I
6 want to thank my colleagues and I especially want to
7 thank all of the experts and advocates who have
8 already begun to share their expertise and experience
9 with us. This legislation and the report it requires
10 that the Department of Buildings to produce will help
11 us bring façade inspections and our broader drone
12 policies up to date. Ultimately, that means more
13 competence in the safety of our buildings and more
14 safety for every day New Yorkers. All New Yorkers
15 and the legacies of Grace Gold, Erica Tishman, Xang
16 Yi, and all those killed or injured due to building
17 façades deserve no less. And, with that, I vote aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Cabrera?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: Chin?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK: Rosenthal?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: With gratitude
24 to the Chair for this legislation, I vote aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK: Torres?

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER TORRES: I vote aye.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK: Grodenchik?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK: Perkins?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK: Gjonaj?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: With my complements

9 to the Chair on this important bill, an absolute aye.

10 COMMITTEE CLERK: Louis?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I vote aye.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK: Excuse me. By a vote of
13 nine in the affirmative, zero in the negative, and no
14 abstentions, introduction 1853A has been adopted by
15 the Committee. Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON CORNEGY: So, right before I
17 close, I would like to give a special thank you to
18 Cory Johnson, special thank you to the committee
19 staff and everybody who worked hard on this bill. I
20 am very happy to be partially responsible for making,
21 from housing and buildings perspective, the city of
22 New York is safer place for its pedestrians. So,
23 thank you and this hearing is commenced.

24 [gavel]

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2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: All right, everyone. I

3 have ended--

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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 12 2020