

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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February 10, 2021
Start: 3:07 P.M.
Recess: 3:15 P.M.

HELD AT: REMOTE HEARING (VIRTUAL ROOM 4)

B E F O R E: ROBERT CORNEGY, JR.

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

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

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TECHNICIAN 1: Just give us a second. We're just having a few difficulties engaging the screen. We're going to give it a second shot now. I want to be right in this thing. Can you look into it again? (Pause) Alright folks, here we go. Good afternoon. Welcome to New York City Council's remote committee hearing on Housing and Buildings. Everyone one, please turn on your video at this time, silence all electronic devices, Chairperson, we're ready to begin.

COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you so much. (gavel) Good afternoon and thank you for coming. I'm Council Member Robert Cornegy Chair of the Committee on Housing and Buildings. We're here forming a bill that would extend assistance related to accessory signs. In 2018, a significant increase in DOB violations related to accessory signs impacted many small businesses across the city. To prevent additional businesses from being affected Local Law 28 of 2019 established a two-year moratorium on the issuance of accessory sign violations. But certain businesses that have already received violations the law also established a temporary DOB assistance program to

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2 facilitate the installation of compliant accessory
3 signs, which included a 75% waiver on related
4 permit fees. The Temporary DOB Assistance program
5 established by Local Law 28 of 2019 expired six
6 months after its enactment, and a moratorium of
7 violations expired in 2021. However, due to COVID
8 19 crisis the installation of compliance signs has
9 been delayed. Further, impacted small businesses
10 are increasingly unable to pay for the installation
11 of compliance signs or withstand the financial
12 burden of a new violation. To address these
13 concerns Proposed Intro Number 2044-A sponsored by
14 Council Member Holden would extend the moratorium
15 and the temporary DOB Assistance Program
16 established by Local Law 2018 of 2019 for another
17 two years. To reduce costs it would also increase
18 the 75% waiver of the permit fees related to
19 installing an accessory sign to 100% waiver. I'm
20 joined today... Austin if you could just see the
21 um, the um roll. I can't see everybody. I'm sorry.

22 AUSTIN: Sure. I can see them. So, currently
23 we have Council Members Rivera, Chin, Rosenthal,
24 Grodenchik, Louis Gjonaj, Perkins and Cabrera, and
25 Council Member Holden. Glad to know him as well.

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COUNCIL MEMBER CORNEGY: Thank you. Council Member Holden if you'd like to give us your opening statement now is the time so yes.

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COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Thank you, Chair, thank you Council Member Cornegy for being a strong advocate for small businesses and helping move Intro 2044-A across the finish line. As you and my colleagues are aware small businesses are the life blood of our communities and we need to alleviate their burdens whenever possible. Even before the pandemic regulations and fines on small businesses were often burdensome and punitive. COVID 19 has made the matter all the more urgent. As you will recall, prior to Local Law 28 our small businesses were being hit with fines of up to \$20,000 over a sign or owning violation. In my district commercial strips along Jamaica Avenue, Fish Pond Road, Grand Avenue and others were hit particularly hard. With Intro 2044-A we are extending the expired two-year moratorium on sign fee violations for additional, two additional years. We are also extending the temporary Department of Buildings Assistance Program for two years. We, of course, assist business owners in legalizing their signs,

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2 and equally important this bill would waive like
3 the Chair said 100% of the fees. This the type of
4 support our small businesses need. I want to thank
5 all of the co-sponsors of Intro 2044-A and other
6 members who are supporting this bill. I also want
7 to thank Speaker Corey Johnson, Jason Goldman and
8 the staff of the Speaker's Office for their
9 assistance. Also a big thank you to Chair Cornegy
10 Housing and Buildings Committee staff especially
11 Counsel Austin Bradford, and Chris Lappe of the
12 Legislative Division for their hard work on this
13 bill. Last, but certainly not least my staff, Chief
14 of Staff Daniel Kurzyna, Communications Director
15 Kevin Ryan, and Legislative Director Craig
16 Kalwanis. Together we're going to provide
17 immediate relief to businesses across the city. I
18 strongly encourage all my colleagues to vote aye on
19 Intro 2044-A, and again I want to thank Chair
20 Cornegy. Back to you.

21 CHAIR CORNEGY: Thank you Council Member
22 Holden for this bill. We will now ask Clerk William
23 Martin to please call the roll.

24 CLERK: good afternoon (coughs). Excuse me.
25 William Martin Committee Clerk roll call vote

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Committee on Housing and Buildings, Introduction
2044-A. Chair Cornegy.

CHAIR CORNEGY: I proudly vote aye.

CLERK: Rivera.

COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I strongly vote aye.

CLERK: You got it. Thank you. Cabrera.

COUNCIL MEMBER CABRERA: Aye.

CLERK: Chin.

COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I vote aye.

CLERK: Rosenthal.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I vote aye.

CLERK: Grodendhik.

COUNCIL MEMBER GRODENCHIK: Aye.

CLERK: Perkins.

COUNCIL MEMBER PERKINS: Aye.

CLERK: Gjonaj.

COUNCIL MEMBER GJONAJ: I vote aye.

CLERK: Thank you. Louis.

COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: I vote aye.

CLERK: by a vote of 9 in the affirmative,
zero in the negative and no abstentions Proposed
Introduction 2044-A has been adopted by the
committee. Thank you.

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CHAIR CORNEGY: Thank you. The hearing on Housing and buildings is now commenced. Thank you all.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Let's, wait a second.

CHAIR CORNEGY: That can be used for beginning and/or end for all the English teachers here.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Alright on second.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Thank you for that. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Thank you for the education lesson. Bye. (laughter)

COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND BUILDINGS

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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 March 3, 2020