

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION

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October 5, 2023
Start: 10:09 a.m.
Recess: 10:15 a.m.

HELD AT: COMMITTEE ROOM - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Shekar Krishnan, Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

David M. Carr
Eric Dinowitz
Robert F. Holden
Linda Lee
Christopher Marte
Julie Menin
Lincoln Restler
Sandra Ung
Marjorie Velazquez

OTHER COUNCIL MEMBERS ATTENDING:

Rita C. Joseph
Althea V. Stevens

2 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: This is a microphone
3 check for the Committee on Parks and Recreation
4 located in the Committee Room, recorded by Nazly
5 Paytuvuvi on October 5, 2023.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and
7 welcome to today's New York City Council hearing for
8 the Committee on Parks and Recreation.

9 At this time, we ask that you silence all
10 cell phones and electronic devices to minimize
11 disruptions throughout the hearing. We thank you for
12 your cooperation.

13 Chair, we are ready to begin.

14 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: [GAVEL] Thank you
15 so much, Sergeant. Good morning, everyone. I am
16 Shekar Krishnan, Chair of the Committee on Parks and
17 Recreation.

18 Today, the Committee will vote on two
19 pieces of legislation, and we've been joined by
20 Council Members Ung, Carr, Holden, Lee, Joseph,
21 Restler, Marte, Menin, Dinowitz, Stevens, and Council
22 Member Velazquez on Zoom.

23 As I mentioned, today, the Committee will
24 vote on two pieces of legislation, both which I am
25 very excited about. The first one, in this Committee

2 for Parks bathrooms are a very, very serious matter
3 as we know. Proposed Intro. 576-A sponsored by
4 Council Member Joseph would require the Parks
5 Department to inspect every public restroom under its
6 jurisdiction and to maintain a website that would
7 include information about the location of each
8 restroom and the condition and functionality of each
9 of them such as the cleanliness and the conditions of
10 fixtures like sinks and toilets. We first considered
11 this bill at a Parks Committee hearing on March 1,
12 2023, and I'm glad and urge all my Colleagues to
13 ensure it passes today.

14 Second is another exciting piece of
15 legislation which, as we know, has been a theme for
16 our Parks Committee always but especially after the
17 recent flooding and the climate discussions that
18 we've been having and climate emergencies that we've
19 been facing is about our tree canopy and the
20 importance of ensuring that we are making sure every
21 New Yorker has access to shade, have the climate
22 protections that trees offer, ensuring that our
23 communities are cooled and have adequate shade from
24 our tree canopy. Proposed Intro. number 1065-A
25 sponsored by Council Member Bottcher would require

2 the Parks Department in consultation with other
3 appropriate government agencies to create an urban
4 forest plan. This plan would be aimed at protecting
5 and increasing the City's urban forest as well as
6 increasing tree and vegetation across the City. It
7 would also establish goals to expand and protect the
8 urban forest and would have to be updated every five
9 years. If we are to get to a 30 percent tree canopy
10 cover by 2035, then it is crucial that we have an
11 urban forest masterplan as designed by this bill. I
12 want to give a big shoutout and thank you to the
13 Forests for All Coalition that is here today for
14 their incredible advocacy to ensure that we reach
15 this moment and to ensure that our City prioritizes
16 our tree canopy as part of our work to protect and
17 expand parks and green space across our city. Our
18 trees give us life, they sustain us, and they are
19 crucial in the fight to make sure that we are a
20 resilient city given the climate crisis that we
21 clearly face. We first considered this bill, Intro.
22 number 1065, at a Parks Committee hearing on June 13,
23 2023.

24 I'd like to thank all of my Colleagues
25 for sponsoring these important bills, and I urge all

2 of my Colleagues to vote in favor of the legislation
3 before us.

4 Now, with regards to Intro. number 576-A,
5 I'll turn it over to our Colleague, Council Member
6 Joseph, to say a few words.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you and good
8 morning, Chair Shekar. Honorable Council Colleagues
9 of the Committee on Parks and Recreation, today, I am
10 pleased to stand before you requesting that you vote
11 favorably for my bill, Intro. 576-A, Local Law that
12 would require the City and the New York Parks
13 Department to report on the features and conditions
14 of public restrooms. This law was introduced in
15 collaboration with Mark Levine, Manhattan Borough
16 President. This bill that BP Mark Levine and I
17 introduced as part of a package of bills we created
18 in response for longstanding lack of public restrooms
19 in the city. When voting aye for this Intro. 576-A to
20 get it passed today, we are showing New Yorkers that
21 we have listened to their requests on this issue and
22 we are demonstrating our commitment to their well-
23 being. Too often, they would go to a park alone, with
24 family members or friends, and they were not able to
25 use a public restroom, either because it's unclean,

2 inaccessible, or closed. Furthermore, we are showing
3 our visitors and tourists that hygienic needs are
4 among our top priorities too.

5 Again, thank you for allowing me to say
6 those few words. I'm looking forward to having your
7 unanimous support today. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Thank you so much,
9 Council Member Joseph, and congratulations on this
10 important piece of legislation. I'd also like to say
11 congratulations to Council Member Bottcher for Intro.
12 1065-A on our tree canopy.

13 Now, I thank you all and ask the Clerk to
14 call the roll.

15 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Good
16 morning. William Martin, Committee Clerk. Roll call
17 vote Committee on Parks and Recreation, items are
18 coupled. Chair Krishnan.

19 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Aye on all.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Holden.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HOLDEN: Aye.

22 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Moya.

23 Dinowitz.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DINOWITZ: Aye.

25 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Lee.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEE: Aye on all.

3 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Marte.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Aye.

5 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Menin.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENIN: Aye.

7 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Narcisse.

8 Restler.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Congrats to
10 Council Member Joseph and Council Member Bottcher.

11 Aye.

12 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Ung.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER UNG: Aye.

14 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN:

15 Velazquez.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER VELAZQUEZ: Aye. Congrats
17 to all.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: Thank
19 you. Carr.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CARR: Aye on all.

21 COMMITTEE CLERK WILLIAM MARTIN: With a
22 vote of 11 in the affirmative, zero in the negative,
23 and no abstentions, both items have been adopted by
24 the Committee.

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2 CHAIRPERSON KRISHNAN: Thank you so much.
3 Congratulations to our Colleagues, and this vote is
4 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 October 6, 2023