

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

-----X

TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

-----X

September 24, 2008
Start: 11:14am
Recess: 11:27am

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
DIANA REYNA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Joel Rivera
Leroy G. Comrie, Jr.
Erik Martin Dilan
Lewis A. Fidler
Robert Jackson
Melinda R. Katz
Michael E. McMahon
David I. Weprin
Vincent J. Gentile
Inez E. Dickens
Daniel R. Garodnick
James S. Oddo
Christine C. Quinn

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

James Vacca

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

Fadil B. Brija

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Good morning
3 and welcome to the Committee on Rules, Privileges
4 and Elections. My name is Diana Reyna and I'm
5 Chair of the Committee. Before we begin I'd like
6 to introduce other members, colleagues of this
7 Committee, who are present with us today. We have
8 Council Member Melinda Katz, Council Member Daniel
9 Garodnick, Council Member Michael McMahon, Council
10 Member Erik Martin Dilan, and we are joined by an
11 honorary member of the Committee, Council Member
12 Jimmy Vacca. I want to welcome our resident of
13 the Bronx, who is being considered before us as an
14 appointment by the Mayor, to the Tax Commission,
15 Mr. Brija. Today the Rules Committee will
16 consider this matter. Mr. Fadil Brija, on the
17 advice and consent of the Council, he will fill a
18 vacancy and serve the remainder of a six year term
19 that will expire on January 6th, 2012. I would
20 like to first briefly describe the functions of
21 the Tax Commission. The Tax Commission is
22 responsible for reviewing and correcting all
23 assessments of real property within the City. The
24 Commission has a President and six Commissioners,
25 all of whom with at least three years experience

in the field of real estate or real estate law.

The President receives an annual salary of

\$177,698, and Commissioners receive an annual

salary of \$25,677 dollars. Welcome, Mr. Brija.

Will you please raise your hand and be sworn in by
counsel?

COUNSEL: Do you swear or affirm to
tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but
the truth?

FADIL B. BRIJA: I do.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: And Mr. Brija,
if you have an opening statement that you'd like
to share with us, now is the time to do so.

FADIL B. BRIJA: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Is the mic on?

FADIL B. BRIJA: Is this on? Is it
on now?

CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Yes.

FADIL B. BRIJA: Okay. Good
morning, Chair Reyna and Committee members. I
want to thank Mayor Bloomberg for nominating me
and the Council for giving me the opportunity to
come before you and be considered for appointment
to the New York City Tax Commission. I have lived

1
2 in this City for 39 years and worked for the City
3 for 21 years. The work of the Tax Commission is
4 important to the public in that fair and efficient
5 hearings on property tax protests promotes
6 confidence in the City's tax system. You have my
7 resume in the materials, so I will briefly tell
8 you a little bit about my background and
9 qualifications. I was an assessor at the
10 Department of Finance for more than 21 years,
11 during which I acquired an education in real
12 property valuation and property assessments. I
13 educated myself in valuation modeling using the
14 computers and the mass appraisal system, and the
15 use of spreadsheets in property valuation. This
16 is why I wish to work at the Tax Commission in the
17 same field in which I have 20 plus years
18 experience. This position would afford me the
19 opportunity to use my expertise in reviewing the
20 property assessments at the Tax Commission. I
21 thank you for taking the time to review my
22 application and consider my appointment. I hope,
23 if I am confirmed, to be able to use my experience
24 in valuing properties to ensure the most fair and
25 accurate determinations of tax appeals. I would

1
2 be happy to answer questions, and I would also
3 like to add, thanks Jimmy for being here to
4 support me.

5 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Thank you, Mr.
6 Brija. I'd like to just allow Council Member
7 Vacca, who has joined us in support of Mr. Brija's
8 appointment, to comment at this moment. Thank
9 you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Thank you,
11 Chairperson Reyna. It's my privilege to be here
12 today to support Mr. Brija. He's a resident in my
13 district, and when I reviewed his qualifications,
14 I think the Mayor has made a very, very good
15 choice. He has the background, the knowledge.
16 I've had occasion to meet with him to go over many
17 issues that small property owners and homeowners
18 face. And I think someone of his knowledge will
19 be an unbelievable asset to the tax commission.
20 Although I'm not on this Committee, I very much
21 would like to urge the Committee and the full
22 Council to vote in favor of his appointment. He
23 will be an asset. His background and experience
24 lends him to this position, and we can be proud in
25 voting to support him affirmatively. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Thank you,
3 Council Member Vacca. Are there any questions
4 from Members of this Committee? Comments? I'd
5 like to just share with Mr. Brija how proud we
6 are, as a son of the Bronx, to have you here
7 before us, and your valuable service to the City
8 of New York. You certainly have an impeccable
9 resume that will continue to drive the force
10 within the City of New York in relation to real
11 property, real property taxes, real property
12 assessments. And so, without further ado, I'd
13 like to call for a roll call at this moment.

14 [Pause]

15 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: We've been
16 joined by Council Member Robert Jackson.

17 [Pause]

18 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: I apologize,
19 Mr. Brija. We're waiting for quorum. We're short
20 one person and people are tied in leadership
21 meetings and Committee hearings. And we have been
22 saved by the day-- leadership team is here. We've
23 been joined by Council Member Inez Dickens and
24 Council Member Lewis Fidler. Thank you. I'd like
25 to call for a roll call.

2 WILLIAM MARTIN: Council Member

3 Reyna.

4 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: I urge in favor
5 of Aye and I vote Aye.

6 WILLIAM MARTIN: Dilan.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER DILAN: I vote Aye.

8 WILLIAM MARTIN: Fidler.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Aye.

10 WILLIAM MARTIN: Jackson.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Aye.

12 WILLIAM MARTIN: Katz.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KATZ: Aye.

14 WILLIAM MARTIN: McMahon.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MCMAHON: Aye.

16 WILLIAM MARTIN: Dickens.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Aye.

18 WILLIAM MARTIN: Garodnick.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Aye.

20 WILLIAM MARTIN: Oddo.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Yes.

22 WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote of nine
23 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no
24 abstentions, item is adopted. Members, please
25 sign the committee report. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: I'd like to
3 thank the staff of this Committee, Counsel to this
4 Committee, and investigative members of this
5 Committee. We will be joined by the Speaker who
6 is on her way up, and congratulations to Mr.
7 Brija.

8 FADIL B. BRIJA: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON REYNA: Thank you.

10 [Pause]

11 WILLIAM MARTIN: Rivera.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I vote Aye.

13 [Pause]

14 WILLIAM MARTIN: Speaker Quinn.

15 SPEAKER QUINN: Aye.

16 [Pause]

17 WILLIAM MARTIN: Council Member
18 Weprin.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: I vote Aye.

20 [Pause]

21 WILLIAM MARTIN: Hang on.

22 [Pause]

23 WILLIAM MARTIN: Final vote on the
24 Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections now
25 stands at 13 in the affirmative, zero in the

1

2

negative and no abstentions. Thank you.

3

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Erika Swyler, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.



Signature _____

Date January 28, 2009