

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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May 10, 2012
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway
Committee Room, 14th Floor

B E F O R E:
MATHIEU EUGENE
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Lewis A. Fidler
Daniel Dromm
Vincent J. Gentile
James Sanders Jr.

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

Terrance Holliday
Commissioner
Mayor's Office of Veterans' Affairs

Ronald Cohen
Deputy Commissioner & Senior Advisor
Office of the Mayor

Anthony Pike
Membership Coordinator
Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good

afternoon, excuse me, good afternoon, I'm Council Member Mathieu Eugene, Chair of the Council Committee on Veterans. Today's hearing will focus on how New York City prepares for Fleet Week.

As you already know, New York City will hold its 25th Fleet Week this year from 23rd through May 30th. During Fleet Week, New York City has the honor of being host to over 3,000 service members from the United States Navy, Marine Corp, and Coast Guard. Fleet Week provides the citizens of New York with the opportunity to view exhibits which showcase both the impressive technology of our maritime services, and the skill of our service members.

Fleet Week, however, should not merely be about giving the citizen of New York an opportunity to learn more about the armed services, it should always be about welcoming our service members and reaching out to all individuals who have served previously. It is important to remember that in addition to the 3,000 service members visiting New York City during the Fleet Week, roughly 210,000 veterans

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2 live in New York City. Many of these men and
3 women face challenges, including mental, have
4 issues homelessness, and unemployment.

5 While the City should offer
6 services to our veterans at all time, Fleet Week
7 provides an excellent opportunity to reach out to
8 veterans and let them know about the array of
9 services the City offers as thanks for their
10 service. As Memorial Day approaches and we begin
11 to see more and more men and women return from
12 serving their country in Iraq and Afghanistan, it
13 is essential that we show them that New York City
14 is prepared to properly welcome them home.

15 At today's hearing, the Committee
16 will learn about how the U.S. military and the
17 City cooperate to prepare for Fleet Week. It is
18 my hope that this hearing will shed light on how
19 we can work together to ensure that we provide our
20 service members and veterans with a safe,
21 exciting, and enlightening New York City
22 experience.

23 In closing, let me acknowledge that
24 we have been joined by Council Member Lew Fidler
25 and Council Member Danny Dromm.

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2 Let me take the opportunity also to
3 thank one more time all our veterans for your
4 service and, as I said all the time, you have made
5 the utmost sacrifice and we owe you a good deal of
6 gratitude and respect. And one more time from the
7 bottom of my heart, thank you for your service.

8 And I want to take the opportunity
9 also to wish to all the mothers, Happy Mother's
10 Day, and may God bless you because you are so
11 special to all of us and I can say that you are
12 very special also to all our veterans.

13 Commissioner Holliday, it is a
14 pleasure to see you again today and I want to
15 commend you for all your efforts on behalf of the
16 veterans. And I want to welcome also Mr. Ronny
17 Cohen, thank you for coming. You may start
18 anytime.

19 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: It's good?
20 Okay. Thank you very much, sir. Good afternoon,
21 Chairman Eugene and members of the Veterans'
22 Committee. My name is Terrance Holliday and I am
23 the Commissioner of the Mayor's Office of
24 Veterans' Affairs, MOVA. With me today is Mr.
25 Ronald Cohen, Deputy Commissioner and Senior

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2 Advisor, the Office of the Mayor. Thank you for
3 the opportunity to come before you today to
4 discuss the City's preparation for Fleet Week
5 2012.

6 Since 1987, MOVA has advised the
7 Mayor on issues impacting the veterans and
8 military community and has coordinated delivery of
9 City and non-profit services to these communities.
10 MOVA works closely with the U.S. Department of
11 Veterans Affairs, the VA, the New York State
12 Division of Veterans' Affairs, City agencies,
13 veterans' organizations, area military commanders,
14 and other stakeholders to assist active service
15 members, veterans, their dependents, and
16 survivors. MOVA is only one of a handful of city-
17 level veterans' offices in the United States and
18 we provide a critical link between individual
19 veterans and the myriad of services and
20 organizations that are available to assist them.

21 New York City hosted its first
22 Fleet Week in 1982. Ships are docked on the west
23 side of Manhattan near the New York Passenger
24 Terminal in Brooklyn and also at Stapleton, Staten
25 Island. It is anticipated that more than 3,000

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2 United States Sailors, Marines, and Coast
3 Guardsmen will be attending Fleet Week New York
4 2012. An estimated 1,500 coalition service
5 members will also be present. Fleet Week is also
6 something of a homecoming, as over 200 of the
7 service members attending Fleet Week New York call
8 the Tri-State area home.

9 Fleet Week is a tradition of the
10 United States Navy, United States Marine Corps,
11 and the United States Coast Guard. Historically,
12 recently deployed ships returning from overseas
13 operations dock in several major cities for one
14 week. Crews and military personnel are often
15 granted liberty to visit and enjoy the hospitality
16 of the host city. Additionally, air shows are
17 often provided by military demonstration teams
18 such as the United States Navy Blue Angels or the
19 Canadian Defense Force Snowbirds.

20 The bicentennial of the War of 1812
21 and the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner will
22 be the theme for this year's Fleet Week.

23 Coordinated by the Navy and Op Sail 2012, the week
24 will kick-off with a flotilla of 17 tall ships and
25 10 warships sailing up the Hudson River from the

1
2 Verrazano-Narrows Bridge to the George Washington
3 Bridge before berthing and welcoming the general
4 public for guided tours. Fleet Week is an
5 opportunity for the United States maritime forces
6 to interact with the American public and create an
7 opportunity for further understanding of the
8 military and its vital role. Each year MOVA and
9 the Mayor's Office of Special Projects and
10 Community Events, MOSPCE, work together to
11 coordinate the Fleet Week Welcome Reception hosted
12 by Mayor Bloomberg at Gracie Mansion. This year,
13 the event will be attended by 600 guests and will
14 provide a platform to inform service members about
15 New York City and its many attractions. New York
16 City & Company will furnish visitor's guides
17 containing information about all Fleet Week and Op
18 Sail events.

19 The Office of Citywide Event
20 Coordination and Management, CECM, takes the lead
21 role in the operational planning of Fleet Week.
22 They work closely with representatives of MOVA,
23 the United States Navy, the New York Police
24 Department, New York Fire Department, and other
25 appropriate agencies to coordinate safety and

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2 operational logistics. I did leave out the
3 Federal Aviation Administration because they're
4 involved in that as well, and New York City
5 Traffic Control--that was an omission.

6 The Navy develops a communication
7 plan that includes information for the
8 participants and is available to the public. The
9 Mayor's Office also provides this information on
10 www.nyc.gov and the Mayor's Office of Veterans'
11 Affairs shares all Fleet Week information with
12 veterans and veterans' groups on its website and
13 social media sites. Each year, the Fleet Week New
14 York website is updated with event information,
15 and the U.S. Navy Captains' Handbook, which
16 contains the entire schedule of events. New York
17 City & Company lists events and promotional
18 discounts, maps, and other helpful information on
19 their website, www.NYCGO.com.

20 As I mentioned, we anticipate that
21 more than 3,000 U.S. Sailors, Marines, and Coast
22 Guardsmen will be attending Fleet Week New York
23 2012. In preparation, all participating military
24 personnel must view a videotape developed by the
25 staff of Commander Carrier Strike Group TEN

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2 regarding Fleet Week. Additional briefings
3 include senior non-commissioned officers will
4 conduct safety briefings with personnel and there
5 will also be briefings on ethics and conduct by
6 way of a video while on New York City liberty.
7 During their visit to New York City for Fleet
8 Week, many of the service members are encouraged
9 to get involved in community outreach events.
10 Outreach events for Fleet Week 2012 include: Boys
11 and Girls Club; military concerts at Times Square
12 and Central Park; a visit to soup kitchens,
13 hospitals, schools, and more. There are joint air
14 and ground demonstrations planned for Coney
15 Island, New York City schools, and 23 New York
16 City parks. Fleet Week events will also be held
17 at Citi-Field and Military Island in Times Square.
18 Service members will visit veterans groups
19 throughout the five boroughs and participate in
20 Memorial Day parades within the five boroughs.

21 New York Fleet Week 2012 will be an
22 outstanding moment in our calendar of events and
23 the history of the Big Apple. Opportunities will
24 be abundant to meet and greet Sailors, Marines,
25 and Coast Guardians throughout the five boroughs

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2 of our great city. I urge all of the members of
3 the Veterans' Committee to take advantage of the
4 moment and visit the gallant members of our
5 military--many of whom have probably deployed to
6 Iraq and Afghanistan, some several times and some
7 of whom may soon return. Fleet Week provides all
8 of us with an opportunity to thank these men and
9 women for their continued service to our nation.

10 Thank you for the opportunity to
11 testify, and at this time I will be happy to
12 answer your questions.

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
14 much, Commissioner.

15 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Mr. Cohen, you
17 may start, please. You have testimony also?

18 RONALD COHEN: I don't have a--

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]
20 Oh, you don't have.

21 RONALD COHEN: Okay.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: But is there
23 anything you want to say before we start asking
24 some questions?

25 RONALD COHEN: I think just to echo

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2 Commissioner Holliday's remarks, I'd also like to
3 urge that the Council--

4 [Crosstalk]

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Can you please
6 turn on the mic, please?

7 RONALD COHEN: Sure.

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

9 RONALD COHEN: Take time to visit--

10 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]
11 Would you please also state your name for the--

12 [Crosstalk]

13 RONALD COHEN: [Interposing] Sure,
14 my name is Ronald Cohen, I am a Senior Advisor in
15 the Office of the Mayor and also one of the main
16 planners for the City for this year's Fleet Week.
17 And just to echo the Commissioner's remarks, I'd
18 like to urge the Council and the Committee members
19 to take some time out of your very busy schedule
20 and try to visit some of these events because
21 they're very eye opening and really prove to be a
22 treat to watch.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
24 much, Mr. Cohen, and I welcome the invitation, but
25 one more time this year again I will be there and

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2 I remember, Commissioner Holliday, we used to be
3 at Gracie Mansion together--

4 [Crosstalk]

5 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: [Interposing]

6 And I met you at the Sunset Parade on one of the
7 carriers--

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes.

9 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: --the assault
10 ships, yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Absolutely.

12 And I will be there and I will--

13 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --encourage
15 the other members of the Veterans Committee to try
16 to make it also.

17 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: If they don't
19 have any other commitment that prevent them to do
20 it.

21 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I know
23 that they would be more than happy to be there
24 also.

25 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

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2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Because all
3 veteran, they are special to us and we owe them so
4 much, this is the least that we can do for them.

5 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And let me
7 acknowledge that we have been joined by Council
8 Member Gentile. Thank you.

9 Again, one more time, you know,
10 thank you to all of you veterans for your service.
11 And, Commissioner, in your testimony, you said
12 that New York City hosted its first Fleet Week in
13 1982.

14 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: That's nice.
16 Anything has been changed from 1982 to now in
17 terms of the Fleet Week activities?

18 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: And this is
19 notional, sir, the numbers were a lot greater, we
20 were not a country at war. I recall a larger
21 number of ships, the theme, the template for what
22 we're doing now has basically remained the same.
23 I think, from what I'm seeing that we were doing
24 in later years and particularly now, there's more
25 community engagement when the military personnel

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come up. But now I imagine because of current operations, instead of having ten ships, I remember a time when, you know, we may have had, you know, twice that number. But, again, that's just a notional thing.

But if you saw it in 1982, it's something that is pretty much the same in 2012: The equipment is different, missions have changed, and, you know, you probably see less people.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know that-- I'm sorry, go ahead [off mic].

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: No, I'm finished, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know you mentioned that this is a tradition for the Navy, Army, and Coast Guard, it seem that is 90% is a military activity, but the involvement and the participation of the community, what has been done, you know, to let the community know about the Fleet Week and to increase the participation of the people of New York? Because what I want to say is that our veteran, they have done a wonderful job, they put their life in danger for us, but I don't believe that the people realize

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2 exactly the importance of veterans and I don't
3 think that they take the time really some of the
4 time to show their gratitude and, you know, to our
5 veterans. Would it be a good idea to do more
6 outreach to let the people know that during the
7 Fleet Week, they are welcome to be part of the
8 different activity? I don't know if it's fitting,
9 I don't know if it's proper.

10 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Well, sir, let
11 me take off my Commissioner's hat for a minute and
12 wear my Public Affairs Officer's hat--

13 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Right.

14 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: --with the Air
15 Force. The Navy has developed a communication's
16 plan. The communication's plan includes how do
17 they speak to their--the sailors and marines who
18 are going to be coming up, all right? What are
19 you going to do, how are you going to do it?
20 There'll be color guards, excuse me, they'll have
21 people marching in parades, elements marching in
22 parades in various communities. Having Sailors
23 and Marines and Coast Guardians at soup kitchens
24 and in communities cleaning up parks and those
25 types of things will begin to bring attention to

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the services.

Now part of the mission that the Navy has, I'm very sure, and I haven't seen this, is that they want to outreach to the community because the military is very much a part of every community and they want to make certain, just as the folks up in the Bronx and Fort Hamilton, they're good corporate citizens in New York City, and the thrust is to make certain that the people of the United States understand the mission of the United States Navy and they understand the men and women who serve on those ships and they're people from Hometown, USA, and some of them--200 of them are from New York City. You know, so they'll have a chance to do that.

Now in terms of reaching out, part of that Navy communication's plan, now this I know from the person that I spoke, contains marketing and marketing is how do you get that message out to everybody and that the message is going to get out to folks. So if you have a sunny day, it's going to be very difficult moving around some of those ships. They'll advertise on the Internet, in newspapers, and on TV when you can go out and

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2 the general public can just line up to visit a
3 ship. I remember that as a kid, well I don't
4 think I was that much of a kid in 1982, but I
5 remember doing that and you'll see tons of lines.

6 So I think the public should
7 respond.

8 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right,
9 thank you. Let me recognize Council Member
10 Gentile for a question.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chair. Commissioner, I'm just curious, when I
13 represented part of Staten Island in the State
14 Senate, it seemed to me that every year they had
15 their own committee and their own effort geared
16 toward Fleet Week and would have the ships dock
17 there at the Stapleton Navy port and would have a
18 whole series of activities throughout the week
19 there on the port and throughout the Staten
20 Island. Is that part of what you plan or is it
21 separate? Am I not correct about, about that?

22 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: So Ron Cohen
23 may be able to speak about that in more detail,
24 but I do recall that also. I believe that there
25 was separate committees and that continued for a

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2 period of time, and there's only one committee
3 that's involved in this. I remember going to
4 something where they had destroyers that were tied
5 up and you had a chance to visit a bunch of them,
6 but I think it was a separate Staten Island Fleet
7 Week committee. In fact, that's what it may be
8 called and I can check and get back to you. Ron?

9 RONALD COHEN: Yes, actually,
10 Councilman, you're correct, there is a Staten
11 Island Fleet Week Committee and they are very
12 involved--

13 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Okay.

14 RONALD COHEN: --in the activities
15 that take place on the pier at the home port.
16 That said, the Navy works very closely with their
17 nonprofit partners to sort of take part in
18 additional events that make it more feasible for
19 the public to attend, more enjoyable for the
20 public to attend. So though Staten Island has a
21 Fleet Week committee, there are many different
22 committees throughout the city that help
23 participate in this overall event.

24 As far as the coordination of
25 operations and logistics, that's basically left to

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2 the City of New York with the Navy in terms of
3 berthing and space and different things like that,
4 more operational items.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So you
6 arrange with the committee on Staten Island for
7 what ships would be berthed there and--

8 RONALD COHEN: [Interposing] We do
9 not, we arrange that with the Navy. If the Staten
10 Island Fleet Week committee would like to speak
11 with the Navy and give them some thoughts and
12 recommendations, the Navy will take that into
13 consideration, then come to the table with the
14 City and, based on certain logistics and
15 operational needs, we could collectively determine
16 if those ships would be appropriate for that
17 berthing space.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: I see, but
19 it's not the Mayor's Office responsibility, it's
20 the committee's responsibility, at least in Staten
21 Island, to run activities during that week,
22 correct?

23 RONALD COHEN: In part, they do run
24 activities during that week, but not in full. The
25 Navy also runs activities on the piers as well and

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the Staten Island Fleet Week is basically a supplement to what the Navy already provides.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: And in Brooklyn, you berth ships at Red Hook, is it--

RONALD COHEN: [Interposing] There are ships being berthed this year in pier 7 and pier 8, and this is a first in a while, the ships are usually berthed in Manhattan and Staten Island, but this year, because we have foreign ships coming in, there will be additional berthing space made available in Brooklyn and, that said, there'll be additional events that are going to be planned by the Navy and its foreign countries.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: So the Red Hook berths, but not the Navy ships, there'll be other countries' ships?

RONALD COHEN: The Red Hook berths will consist of foreign ships this--

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
[Interposing] Foreign ships?

RONALD COHEN: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE:
Interesting. Okay. Well that's news to me.
Thank you, that's great, good luck. Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
3 much, Council Member Gentile.

4 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, just one
5 thing--

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I'm sorry.

7 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: As we get
8 closer to the event and you can check the website
9 and the website will tell you where everything is
10 going to be, and I imagine some of that, up until
11 maybe about a week or so out might be subject to
12 change because I think it's like the cement is
13 like hardening at this point in terms of where
14 they're going to be.

15 RONALD COHEN: In addition to the
16 foreign ships that are going to be berthed in
17 Brooklyn, we will have a couple of Coast Guard
18 ships that will also join the foreign navy
19 vessels.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: In Red
21 Hook.

22 RONALD COHEN: In pier 7 and 8--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Pier 7.

24 RONALD COHEN: --yes, correct.

25 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very

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2 much. Commissioner, in your testimony, you
3 mentioned that about 3,000 U.S. Sailors, Marine,
4 and Coast Guard will be in attendance, I don't
5 remember if you mention how many of those are
6 veterans or service men and women live in New York
7 City.

8 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: About 200, sir.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: About 200?

10 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yeah.

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. Also,
12 what do you use to inform the veterans about the
13 services available during the Fleet Week? I know
14 that probably you post it and--not probably, you
15 post information on the MOVA webpage, is there any
16 other way you inform them?

17 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: We'll do most--

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Just to make
19 them, you know--

20 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yeah.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --be aware of
22 all the activities available during the Fleet
23 Week?

24 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Everything that
25 we're going to get from the committees and the

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2 Navy for Fleet Week we'll put on Facebook and
3 we'll put it on Facebook and we'll also put it on
4 our website. And then, as things get closer, we
5 will take the schedule of events that we'll get
6 from Ron Cohen's office or from the Navy, we'll
7 send an e-mail blast out to the veteran service
8 organizations that we have and then they'll get
9 the word out to their folks. And using that
10 formula, we can get out to about 1,500 e-mail
11 addresses between all the organizations that we're
12 using.

13 So that information will get out,
14 but I would also say that if the marketing plan,
15 the communication's plan, the marketing portion of
16 the communication's plan that the Navy has put
17 together, okay, they're going to have news
18 releases and they'll have a lot of stuff that's
19 out there about that so no one in the public could
20 really say they don't know anything about it--
21 veteran or otherwise.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know that
23 social media is very powerful, is very effective
24 in terms of reaching out people, but we still have
25 a large number of people who don't use--still

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2 don't use computers and they are not, you know,
3 savvy in e-mail and Facebook, Twitter in the
4 least. But what do you have or MOVA has to reach
5 out to this population of people?

6 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: As far as Fleet
7 Week is concerned, really it's the Navy who is
8 marketing their program to New York City, so the
9 part of their plan, they've got a whole group of
10 public affairs offices and specialists who are
11 part of that plan. That plan is going to include
12 news releases that are going to go out to print
13 and electronic sources so that information, quite
14 frankly, as we approach Fleet Week is going to
15 flood the area. Now there may be some veterans
16 and there may be some New York City residents that
17 might not know that there's a Fleet Week going on
18 and that they can come and visit it, but they will
19 have ample opportunity, aside from MOVA, and it
20 will be particularly the Navy driving that to get
21 that word out to the people to come and visit us
22 because this is their show.

23 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah, I do
24 understand you, but the Navy is driving that, is
25 leading that, but what is the participation of New

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2 York City to ensure that that becomes a very
3 successful event, not only for the Navy, but for
4 the people, for New York City? Is there any
5 participation of New York City? What is the
6 collaboration of New York City, of MOVA, you know,
7 to the Navy also? Because I think that--

8 RONALD COHEN: Yeah.

9 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --we going to
10 host them and they will come to New York City, so
11 I think that MOVA should be part of that.

12 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, I'm
13 looking at this from a resource standpoint, okay?
14 You know, if you take a look at the Navy trying to
15 sell a product and their product is Fleet Week,
16 I'm telling you, the Navy's got a lot of people
17 who are pushing this information out to the public
18 and as long as they get information and the people
19 come, I would say that they've been successful and
20 they've been doing this since 1982. You know, I
21 know that we're going to help get that information
22 out, but that information's going to come to us
23 and we're going to push it out and we're going to
24 help to try to make this thing succeed, but it's
25 primarily a Navy responsibility, and committee is

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working on that, but they're going to get it out.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see. So, you know, we know that there are different type of services available to our veterans, but some of the time they don't know, not only for veteran, the people in New York, some of them, they don't know about certain services that are available. Do you think that there is a way that the city can use the Fleet Week to connect veterans to the services available? Is there any way that we can use the Fleet Week to let the veteran be aware of the services available for them in New York City since we are going to have such a large number of veterans, you know, participating in the Fleet Week?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Well I can see us exploring every opportunity that we have to make certain that people understand what service to the nation is and service to the nation in any form, but service to the nation in uniform and exactly what that's going to result in. So any opportunity that we're going to have in addition to going out and visiting veteran service organizations and getting other information out

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2 there about there, you know, we'll take advantage
3 of that to make certain that the public knows
4 about this. But this is an ongoing process,
5 that's what I've been doing for a year and a half.

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CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yes, and I
7 commend you for it, you know, in trying to make
8 sure that there are veteran that are aware of the
9 services available and I've been seeing you also
10 in several time working hard for them, but what
11 I'm saying is that is there any way we can use
12 this specific event, the Fleet Week, to promote
13 the services that we are providing to veteran in
14 New York City by, you know, producing brochure or
15 promoting the services during the Fleet Week, is
16 there any way we can do that?

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RONALD COHEN: Yeah, actually--

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TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yeah.

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RONALD COHEN: --Mr. Chair, as
20 you're aware of the ships that berth in these
21 different locations and on the piers they have
22 what's known as static displays, so I think what
23 the City might be able to do is explore some
24 additional opportunities to put out some
25 literature and some informational pieces possibly

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on those piers to attract the clientele that we're discussing.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see. How many city agency participate in the preparation of the Fleet Week? Is there any city agencies--

RONALD COHEN: There are--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --in addition to MOVA?

RONALD COHEN: --there are many additional city agencies--the NYPD, the fire department, the Economic Development Corporation, the Parks department, and a couple of other agencies that all take a very significant role in the participation and organization of Fleet Week. The overall mission from operationally is to ensure the well-being and safety of our residents and our servicemen. And that said, with the appropriate coordination that gets done between the Office of Citywide Event Management and [off mic] is to make sure that everyone is aware of the information, the planning is done, and it is done well in advance in the event there any glitches come up, and this way, we have an operational

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2 readiness where we're able to deal with that, but
3 there is much agency participation in the
4 coordination of Fleet Week.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Yeah, in term
6 of the safety of the participant, you know, we
7 think about the fire department, also police
8 department, but could you elaborate on the
9 collaboration, on the role of the other agency?

10 RONALD COHEN: Sure I can. Why
11 don't we use an event in Staten Island that takes
12 place annually where the Navy and the Marines put
13 together a display with helicopters and Marines
14 and do a really wonderful piece in the park. The
15 police department and the fire department, along
16 with the Parks department and the Mayor's office,
17 do site visits, multiple site visits to ensure
18 that these locations that are being conducted and
19 picked, have safety, have the requirements that
20 would be needed to conduct an event like that. So
21 the fire department would determine whether or not
22 this would be an appropriate landing zone for a
23 piece of military equipment, the police department
24 would put down barricades to ensure that the
25 residents and pedestrians who come out to visit

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2 the different locations, they maintain a barrier
3 so this way no one would come too close during the
4 landing of these planes. And then what we do is
5 organize queue lines in order for the people of
6 the different boroughs to come up and actually
7 view and meet our service members, view their
8 equipment, ask questions, and with all of those
9 different events taking place, it's critical for
10 those agencies to have a significant involvement.

11 In terms of the ships and the
12 vessels, the Economic Development Corporation
13 provides an invaluable service to assist with
14 ensuring that our piers are appropriate for the
15 type of ships that berth in those spots. They
16 work closely with the Navy to ensure that there's
17 enough depth for the different vessels in order to
18 moor in different particular locations. And all
19 of this involvement is critical and without the
20 agency involvement, Fleet Week could not take
21 place.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know that
23 you, MOVA, you provided information about cultural
24 activities and also special discount from stores
25 to the service members, so how do you determine

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2 which stores or institution that are providing the
3 discount to the members? Do you have a lease?
4 How do you select them or do you determine which
5 one to promote?

6 RONALD COHEN: I think that's more
7 the Navy's outreach, they work very collectively
8 with New York City & Company to communicate with
9 businesses and the businesses in this city are
10 always more than willing to give special
11 accommodations to our service men and women. And
12 that said, it's for them, the Navy, to finally
13 really decide as to what would be appropriate and
14 what would not be in terms of discounts and
15 whatnot to their service people.

16 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I know right
17 now we have many veterans, you know, they are
18 coming back home from Afghanistan or from Iraq, so
19 is there any modification that has been made to
20 accommodate them or to feed them, make them
21 participate? Any modification in term of the
22 program mission of the Fleet Week?

23 RONALD COHEN: Well what Fleet Week
24 does is all the events that surround Fleet Week
25 are made public and these events are made

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2 available to all of our residents, and during the
3 visits of the ships, the military will give a
4 little special attention to our veterans and to
5 our first responders and to other groups. If
6 veterans would like special tours of the ship, the
7 Navy has made accommodations for that, and I'm
8 sure they'll continue to do that as the years move
9 on. But in terms of special accommodations to
10 feed them, that I can't speak to, I'm not--

11 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]
12 No, I'm talking about, you know, those veterans
13 that who would come back home from Iraq and
14 Afghanistan, those who are returning home. Is
15 there any special welcome for them, any special
16 activity?

17 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: No, sir--
18 [Crosstalk]

19 RONALD COHEN: Not to my knowledge
20 around Fleet Week, no. There is recognition
21 ceremonies that take place for all service members
22 and whether they're coming home or they've been
23 home for a while, they're all invited to
24 participate, but for specific service members
25 coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan, I'm not

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aware of it. However, we could explore it and then get back to you at a later time.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Okay. So we know that our veterans, they are facing many challenges and you know more than I do and we're talking about jobs, we're talking about housing, and access to many services, is there any way that we could use the Fleet Week to the job fair or to promote the services for veterans? I don't know if it's fit in you, you know, I'm just saying because I know that the military, you know, has a protocol and their rules and regulation, but I'm talking, you know, as the Chairman of the Veteran Committee, as a City Council Member, we know that our veterans, you know, they are in need of so many services, we always, you from MOVA and many-- and we elected official have been always trying to create ways to address the need of jobs and the need of services, but is there any way that we can use the Fleet Week to promote jobs for the veterans?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: I haven't really given that a thought, but I'm sure that we can get together with the press desk, we can do a

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2 few other things to make certain that we continue
3 to get that message out there, and we can
4 probably--I'm sure we can come up with something.
5 But in terms of if you're talking about having a
6 job fair like the one that we had in January, we
7 wouldn't be able to put that together that quickly
8 to do something like that. What we may be able to
9 do is to reach out to Workforce1, okay, and let
10 them know we've got these soldiers and these
11 Marines and sailors and everyone else in here and
12 perhaps work something out with them where they
13 reach out with their services to capture these
14 folks coming in or to the attention that veterans
15 are still looking for jobs. So there's something
16 we can do there.

17 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And,
18 Commissioner, I know that you have organized many
19 job fairs and I attended, you know, some of them
20 and I know that you are planning to do more, but
21 the reason I'm saying that, you know, I'm thinking
22 about the momentum and, you know, the number of
23 people are going to be involved, you know, at
24 Fleet Week, you know, just to capitalize on the
25 momentum to see if we can get people who would be

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2 job providers who would be interested to be part
3 of a big job fair for the Fleet Week, not for this
4 week but for the next one.

5 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Well, you know,
6 one thing, I'm just thinking about this now as
7 you're talking about, that we can probably do is
8 make certain that we get information out to
9 members of the military who are participating in
10 Fleet Week who are anticipating leaving the
11 service and settling here in New York City to make
12 certain that they are aware of the services that
13 we have in New York City and perhaps to make some
14 connection so that they can share their intentions
15 and we can help them as they begin to make that
16 transition over the next year or so as they start
17 to come back this way. So I think that's
18 something that we can easily do--not easily do,
19 but I think it's something that we can do. We can
20 accomplish that.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
22 Commissioner. Let me acknowledge that we have
23 been joined by Council Member Sanders. And I
24 think that he has some question or so.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Yes, thank

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you, Chair. Good afternoon, Commissioner Holliday, how are you, sir?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Doing well, sir. Yourself?

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Good, I'm doing well. Deputy Commissioner Cohen, how are you?

RONALD COHEN: Very well, thank you, sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: I trust that the seat has not been that hot today?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Oh, he's roasting it, he's roasting--

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Okay.

RONALD COHEN: It has not been, but might I say, Mr. Councilman--

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Sir.

RONALD COHEN: --given my size, we may have to expand the sides a little bit.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Well we've been hearing that government is expanding all the time--

[Laughter]

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COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: --maybe that's what they meant by that. I have expanded a great deal since I've taken office--

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yeah.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: --and I don't mean my territory. Which brings me to a point of saying, Commissioner, you were very kind when I was Chair once and you had me and several members of my staff involve themselves in Fleet Week and it was a--we actually christened the-- that wasn't the--the New York, the New York. So under those conditions, I want my colleagues on City Council to have a Fleet Week experience. How do we invite the Council to more events taking place during Fleet Week?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: I can let Ronny answer that, but we need to know, once we get a schedule of events, once we get a schedule of events and we have what your interest is, I think we can make it happen?

RONALD COHEN: I think we absolutely can once--

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: [Interposing]
Fine, I knew that's what the answer was, but I had

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2 to have him put the absolutely in there, so if
3 there's something--there are a number of things
4 that's open to the general public, okay, so that's
5 really not a problem, but there are a couple of
6 other things that we think you might enjoy, and
7 particularly in your own boroughs, you know, that
8 you need to know and you don't need us to get to
9 them, but if there's like a group tour that you
10 want of a ship, we can make that happen.

11 RONALD COHEN: Yes, we can.

12 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Okay. And if
13 there's something that we need to do close up with
14 some of the equipment that we have and we need to
15 have it, we'll make that happen as well too.

16 So it's really like forward
17 planning, I know you all have very, very busy
18 schedules with a lot of things, you just need to
19 take a look at the schedule of events, contact us
20 and just say, hey it's not happening for me, make
21 it happen, and we'll do, that's not a problem.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Well I--

23 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Want to throw
24 out the first pitch at Citi-Field?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Well I

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actually I want to throw the pitch that gets that million dollars, I must admit.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: No, I'm going to get that one first.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: Well then I will yield, sir.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Okay, sir.

COUNCIL MEMBER SANDERS: But I must admit that I'm with the fewer and fewer elected officials going in service, it's more incumbent upon all of us that we have to link these events to our elected officials and to everyone else for that matter, link it, otherwise, we run the risk of having a distant military where we all love the military, but the veterans are on their own, but we love the military and this may be a part of what we need to do to make the military real to people so that they can see that these are their sons and their daughters, these are their fathers and mothers, their neighbors and friends. And at the same time, the troops need to know that there's real support, that it's not some distant, yes, yes, we love you, and, you know, keep your distance, but we want to see you up close and

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2 personal, we want to give you a personal thank
3 you, we want to do everything that we can. If you
4 were kind enough to give me an agenda and I'll
5 share it, but the better person, of course, to
6 share it is our chair and if you make sure that
7 our chair had these things, he can make a big
8 thing of getting it to the rest of the Council
9 people and perhaps collect whatever names and who
10 wants to do what and have it done in a organized
11 fashion.

12 Chair, I thank you, Chairman and
13 Deputy Chair, I thank you also.

14 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
15 much, Council Member Sanders. I think this is
16 very important what Council Member mentioned, this
17 is, I think that was one of my questions in terms
18 of participation of the community to the Fleet
19 Week and I think that this is very important that
20 the people come closer to our veterans, to those
21 people who have served us, all of us, to have a
22 certain communication. Even the children, the
23 student, to invite the school, the student, you
24 know, to be part of that and they can learn about
25 the sacrifices and they can be closer to the

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2 heroes and I think that would be a great
3 experience for them and even for all of us elected
4 official.

5 As a matter of fact, before I came
6 to the hearing, I was speaking with my staff to
7 see if we can organize in my district or probably
8 throughout New York City a special event for the
9 community and for the student for the Memorial
10 Day, to invite a community to see our veterans, to
11 see those who fought for us, this is something
12 that Commissioner Holliday probably would--I would
13 have to meet with you and sit and discuss about it
14 and see what we can do to make sure that the
15 community involve at the higher level.

16 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Well, you know,
17 let me--

18 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]
19 But again, let me say that I will respect the
20 rules and the protocol of--

21 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Right.

22 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --the military
23 institution, but I think that, you know, as
24 Council Member Sanders mentioned and insist in
25 putting [off mic] on, it is very important that

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the community become closer to our veterans.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I'm sorry.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: You know, I would just make this a suggestion to 'cause we're really close in to Memorial Day and particularly Fleet Week and then Memorial Day, my calendar is like really beginning to populate with a number of parades and dedications and memorial events from 10 to 12 block events in Forest Hills on a Monday, to Douglaston, I think on the 25th, to just a lot of things. And I think this close in, it would really be a great thing if there was a schedule of the parades and the locations, and I think there's something on the New York City, WNYC website or whatever, but we can work to get something to you on that and encourage the schools, okay, encourage the schools to have their young men and women attend these functions.

There's one that's going to be in Brooklyn on the 25th and it's a dedication of a small park or a rededication of a small park of-- and I don't know his name, I think he was a Vietnam veteran who was awarded--excuse me, not

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2 awarded, he received the Medal of Honor and it's a
3 very small event, it starts about 2 o'clock in the
4 afternoon and it's probably about 20 or 30
5 minutes, but those types of things I think we can
6 get out there to do something more about--I think
7 we should talk about it and make certain we can
8 build on that, I agree with that 100%.

9 And one of the other things, some
10 of the community outreach things, it's designed to
11 put military members hand-in-hand, face-to-face
12 with the community and some of them involve
13 schools, engagements at schools, and the park
14 clean ups. I did a park clean up, sort of, okay,
15 with the Air Force and we went to Grand Army Plaza
16 and we did that about two--and everybody came up.
17 We did one up in the Bronx up in Riverdale and
18 that was good the way people reacted with us too.
19 So those types of things are already on the
20 calendar, we can do more.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Commissioner,
22 could you send down to the community, you know, a
23 list of the different events--

24 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

25 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --that will

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2 take place for veterans and probably, you know,
3 not only the members of the committee would be
4 interested to attend--

5 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Okay.

6 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --but the
7 other members also, City members, because we would
8 like to be very supportive to our veterans and we
9 should [off mic].

10 RONALD COHEN: Mr. Chairman, if I
11 could just say a brief word on Councilman Sanders
12 remarks in that the schools and the children, the
13 Navy and the Marines plan to visit one high school
14 throughout the boroughs--Brooklyn, Queens, Staten
15 Island, and the Bronx--where they plan to fly a
16 helicopter and land on the field where both
17 Marines and Navy will come out of that helicopter,
18 and once the landing zone is safe, the children
19 will then come out and view the equipment and
20 speak with the military members. So the Navy, in
21 my experience in the past Fleet Weeks and I know
22 during this current Fleet Week, is always very
23 ambitious to get as much information and as much
24 involvement with the children and the students of
25 New York City.

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2 In terms of the Council Members and
3 the Committee Members and our elected officials, I
4 could say in the past most notable thing I've ever
5 heard in when attending some of these events is
6 the traditional saying would be when you meet a
7 service member, thank you for your service, but in
8 New York City their response back is not only
9 thank you, but it's and thank you for your
10 service. So they really appreciate coming to this
11 city and I think more of elected official and
12 community involvement is definitely important.

13 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: You know, the
14 Coast Guard, it really amazed me, I sat in--I
15 forget where it was, oh yeah, I had a meeting of
16 the area military commanders and I hosted it up at
17 MOVA and we sat and chatted, the Coast Guard is
18 very involved in some of the schools and I think
19 it's one or two schools in Staten Island, like an
20 adopt-a-school program, I didn't know they were
21 that involved in it, and I think Fort Hamilton did
22 the same thing but they were all trying to be good
23 corporate citizens in doing that. There's the
24 Naval Reserve Center up in the Bronx, I believe
25 they've adopted a school up there as well too. So

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that's something that's done on a constant basis
as well.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you all
very much, Commissioner. I want to recognize
Council Member Gentile for a question.

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Thank you,
Mr. Chairman. We're talking about the different
parades that are happening. On Memorial Day, I'm
curious if you have this listed, but the oldest
continuously running parade, Memorial Day parade,
in the country, in the country is in Brooklyn, New
York, along 3rd Avenue in Bay Ridge to Fort
Hamilton Army base, and I'm curious if that is
listed in the activities, not only for the
military people, but in general listed as part of
what's going on during Fleet Week on the--what is
that--the 28th I believe.

RONALD COHEN: In having the
privilege to get a snapshot of the draft schedule
of events, I can you tell you, Councilman, that
the Navy plans to attend almost all of the parades
that is scheduled for that weekend, they take that
very seriously and, though I can't speak for them,
I have heard them speak about it and it is

1
2 definitely part of their overall schedule of
3 events package.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Great.

5 You know, it is a parade that we've been raising
6 money for in the community and throughout Brooklyn
7 trying to keep this parade alive and, as I said,
8 it is the oldest continuously running parade--
9 Memorial Day parade in the country, so it would be
10 an honor to have the Fleet Week military personnel
11 to join us.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
13 Councilman. Thank you very much, Council Member
14 Gentile. Commissioner, we know that there are
15 MOVA events and also non-MOVA events, but does
16 MOVA keep track of the non-MOVA event and does
17 MOVA post those event in its website also?

18 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Sir, anything
19 of that nature that comes to us, we post it on
20 both Facebook and on our website. What I try to
21 do, I realize that a lot of the parades struggle
22 for participants and attendants, and so I make
23 certain that it's out there so that anyone who
24 comes to anything that we put our hands would
25 participate. So the short answer is, yes, we do.

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I don't know that we capture everything, but if it comes across my desk, it gets there.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: What do you do, how do you reach out--what do you do to be informed or to know about the different activities? Is there any outreach or they reach out to MOVA? What is--

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: It's a--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --how does it work?

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: --it's a combination of both the parade that Council Member Gentile just spoke about, I just found out about it by word of mouth this morning, and so people will send stuff to us, they'll e-mail us, they'll call us. I found about a parade on the 27th of May by way of a telephone call from a fellow in the American Legion who inherited it from someone else, the Continental Post of the American Legion, it's a 12-block parade and I said I'd be there. And I didn't know about them before. But I think what we'll do is we're going to make a list of everything that we have because there's so much that comes to us right now. We're going to miss

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some things, but we try to make as much as we can.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right.

Thank you very much, Commissioner.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Okay, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --thank you, Mr. Cohen, and, again, thank you for your service.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you.

RONALD COHEN: Thank you for your service.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And I'll see you at Gracie Mansion.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: Yes, sir.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Probably.

TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: You know, I just want to put a quick plug in to the Marines, the 6 Communication Battalion Marines are having a family day at Floyd Bennett Field on the 19th of May, and I'll send you information about that. And then also southeastern Queens, the Proctor-Hobson Chapter is having a Veteran Stand Down and we just happened to receive a letter from them and we jumped right in and we hooked them up with a couple of the partners that we have to help us

1
2 with veteran stuff. So that's next week Thursday
3 and I think that's an all-day deal out in Queens
4 out in Jamaica. All right, sir?

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
6 much.

7 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: And I'll see
8 you at Gracie Mansion, I'll even save--

9 [Crosstalk]

10 TERRANCE HOLLIDAY: --a muffin for
11 you.

12 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you,
13 and, Mr. Cohen, thank you very much.

14 RONALD COHEN: Thank you, sir.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Now let me
16 call on Mr. Anthony Pike from Iraq and Afghanistan
17 Veterans of America. [Long pause] Mr. Pike,
18 thank you for coming, thank you very much, and
19 thank you for your service. You may start
20 anytime, start by stating your name.

21 ANTHONY PIKE: Yes, my name is
22 Anthony Pike, I represent the Iraq and Afghanistan
23 Veterans of America. Good afternoon, and thank
24 you for having us this afternoon, Chairman.

25 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Good

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afternoon, sir.

ANTHONY PIKE: On behalf of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America's 250,000 member veterans and supporters, including more than 2,100 members who call New York City their home, thank you for inviting me to speak.

My name is Anthony Pike and I'm a membership coordinator at IAVA. IAVA is the first and largest nonprofit, non-partisan organization dedicated to improving the lives of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and empowering them to become the next Greatest Generation. We strive to build an empowered generation of veterans who will provide sustainable leadership for their country and their communities.

I myself am a veteran of two combat tours to Iraq as a United States Marine. I joined the Marine Corps in March of 2000, shipping off for basic training in December of 2000 and serving until December 2004. I returned to active duty in 2006 for one last deployment to Ramadi, Iraq. Although during my time in service I never had the opportunity to participate in Fleet Week, I did participate in several training deployments with

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2 comparable experiences of being in a new city and
3 wanting to get out and explore. During these
4 deployments, I came to love the host countries in
5 the same way that our service members
6 participating in Fleet Week will come to love New
7 York. This is an opportunity for the greatest
8 city in the world to recruit the New Greatest
9 Generation by opening up the city and making it
10 more accessible during Fleet Week.

11 New York City is an amazing place.
12 The sights, sounds, and opportunities that are
13 found here are unique and countless. New York
14 City is a place where the entrepreneurial person
15 can thrive--and the military breeds that
16 entrepreneurial spirit. New York can and should
17 be the place where our service members, not only
18 want to spend their vacations, but to be the place
19 where they settle down when they leave the
20 service. This is the city where they should want
21 to pursue new endeavors, return to school, and
22 raise their families. The Council should look
23 into making New York as accessible as possible
24 while also using this opportunity to showcase the
25 many opportunities available to veterans and their

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families.

One of the biggest challenges I experienced on my deployments that I participated in was a lack of readily available transportation. With a world class public transportation system in place, IAVA recommends that the City should consider making available weekly passes to all service members participating in Fleet Week. New York's public transportation is easily accessible, well connected, and easy to understand. By opening up the city to our Armed Forces, it will ensure that they can see all the city has to offer and come to look forward to their opportunity to return.

Today, the vast majority of service members have deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan or other forward locations in support of the global War on Terror. In fact, more than 2.4 million members of our military have deployed in the wake of September 11th. The military community is linked to that day and their lives have been shaped by deployments to Iraq and the ongoing operations in Afghanistan.

I first visited Ground Zero several

1
2 years ago before the memorial opened. Along with
3 other veterans of Iraq, I walked around the area
4 taking in the emotions that that location evoked.
5 I returned again last year after the memorial
6 opened to the public and I was once again
7 overwhelmed by the connection I made to the
8 memorial and my service in Iraq. We are all
9 uniquely tied to the World Trade Center and the
10 memorial that now stands in the footprints of the
11 Twin Towers. For now, and for many untold years
12 to come, the memorial at the World Trade Center is
13 the only national memorial our veterans have for
14 their service in Iraq and Afghanistan. IAVA
15 recommends making visitor passes available to our
16 service members as it will provide a chance for
17 them to connect to the city in a very personal
18 way. The memorial is a place for them to heal and
19 remember.

20 The interests of our service
21 members are as many and varied as the people
22 themselves. Fortunately for them, New York City
23 has something for everyone. Again, my
24 recommendation is to make these opportunities
25 available for all. The majority of the armed

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2 forces are made up of junior enlisted individuals
3 on their first enlistment and as such there is not
4 a lot of disposable income. Making discounts
5 available to the Fleet Week participants on the
6 widest possible level will help to ensure that
7 these members are able to take advantage of all
8 the city has to offer. Museums, theaters, and
9 concert halls should all be encouraged to offer
10 discounts and passes to bring in the Fleet Week
11 participants. New York City landmarks, such as
12 the observation deck of the Empire State Building,
13 should also be encouraged to open their doors.

14 Finally, the City should present
15 itself as a veteran friendly city. As members
16 transition from active duty, they do so to pursue
17 new interests, careers, and education. With the
18 reduction in force and the planned withdrawal of
19 troops from Afghanistan, it is estimated that over
20 the next five years, one million service members
21 will be leaving the service. This city should
22 open its arms to welcome the New Greatest
23 Generation of veterans into the city.

24 New York City is home to many great
25 schools. With the New GI Bill and Yellow Ribbon

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2 programs these schools can be affordable to
3 thousands of veterans. These schools offer world
4 class education and programs for advanced studies
5 and they should be recruiting these veterans.

6 IAVA encourages these schools to open their
7 campuses to tours targeted at bringing the
8 veterans to their programs.

9 For veterans ready to enter
10 directly into the work force, programs such as the
11 Veterans on Wall Street, or VOWS, should be
12 readily available to talk about the services that
13 they offer. New York City employers will find
14 that this New Greatest Generation of veterans are
15 capable, willing, and readily able to overcome any
16 challenge presented to them. IAVA encourages New
17 York City to be a leader in reducing veteran
18 unemployment from the 17% rate that our members
19 are facing. In doing so, this city will come to
20 truly understand that veterans are an investment
21 and not a charity.

22 It is my sincere hope that my
23 testimony will show the Council that New York City
24 should open its arm and welcome the New Greatest
25 Generation of veterans. Thank you, and I'm happy

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to answer any questions.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very much, Mr. Pike. You mentioned that when you were in service, you didn't participate to the Fleet Week and when was the first time that you participated in, you know, to the Fleet Week? What was--

ANTHONY PIKE: I've been here a few years--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --if you remember.

ANTHONY PIKE: --I've been in New York City for two years and both times, unfortunately, I've been traveling with work, this will be my first time.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: This will be your first time.

ANTHONY PIKE: Correct. My two training deployments, I did have the opportunity to visit new cities and new countries so, for me, it was a Fleet Week.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Well could you tell us about what do you know about the Fleet Week?

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ANTHONY PIKE: Fleet Week is--

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: [Interposing]

For what you heard and--

ANTHONY PIKE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --what you
learned from.

ANTHONY PIKE: Like Commissioner
Holliday said, Fleet Week is the Department of
Navy's chance to get out to the community to build
the relations, it's a recruitment tool. It's also
a chance for the local communities to welcome the
service members in and show them what the cities
have to offer. It should be a mutual exchange of
respect amongst the service members and the city
itself.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: I see. You
mentioned, you know, the need for the city to be
more friendly to veterans and also to open the
opportunities. Do you have an idea how we City
Council Members, we can use the Fleet Week to make
it more beneficial to the veterans? How we can
use the Fleet Week, you know, with respect of
providing more jobs and more education? How to
make the city more friendly to veterans.

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2 ANTHONY PIKE: Correct. As you
3 mentioned earlier with Commissioner Holliday,
4 making sure that we're able to reach out to our
5 veterans that are in the city. As an
6 organization, we have over 2,100 members that call
7 the five boroughs their home and we do talk to
8 them via e-mail and social media about Fleet Week.
9 We encourage other organizations to continue their
10 outreach, let them know about different programs
11 that are happening.

12 Schools should come out readily to
13 recruit these individuals. The SUNY system,
14 Columbia, NYU, they all recruit veterans, but they
15 can do it at a greater level. These schools have
16 programs that veterans are interested in and want
17 to participate in, and this is a great opportunity
18 to go out and recruit the active duty force to
19 come into these systems when they leave service.

20 Employment initiatives, with
21 Veterans on Wall Street is one of the programs
22 that happens here in New York City, it's a great
23 program and we want to encourage wider
24 dissemination of information about it. We do so
25 to our members, again, via e-mail and our social

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media websites.

I believe you brought up something with Commissioner Holliday about job fairs. IAVA has partnered with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to conduct five job fairs, we are hosting one here in New York City, I need to double-check the date, but I believe it's in early June and we hope that your Council and the other organizations of the city can help spread the word.

CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You know, in terms of jobs, we all know that, you know, there's a need for jobs among the veterans population and we have been trying, you know, to do everything that we can to create more jobs for veterans and as a veteran, what do you believe the city should do to reduce the joblessness among veterans?

ANTHONY PIKE: I think that the biggest--one of the hurdles that veterans face as they transition is when they leave the military, they do so with skills that civilian employers do not understand. I have a friend who was a combat medic with the 82nd Airborne Division who, when he came home, he was not qualified to drive an ambulance, let alone to serve as an EMT, basic,

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2 intermediate, or otherwise. When you put him
3 against the civilian health care professionals,
4 such as the nurses, his experience and level of
5 care that he's been able to provide, it matched
6 with trauma nurses but, because he didn't a
7 civilian certification, nobody would hire him. We
8 hope that on a federal, state, and city level that
9 our government will see these. There are
10 initiatives in place where they're trying to
11 address this, but it happens all over the place.

12 A motor transport operator who
13 drives five tons in the military doesn't come out
14 of the military having that commercial driver's
15 license necessary to get a job to drive a truck.

16 Again, these are federal
17 initiatives that we're pursuing, but they can
18 trickle down to state and city levels.

19 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Does IAVA
20 address also the job issue? What you have been
21 doing, you know, through the organization for
22 veterans and--

23 ANTHONY PIKE: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: --what are you
25 planning, not exactly you, but IAVA.

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2 ANTHONY PIKE: Correct. Veteran
3 unemployment is our number one issue. The Bureau
4 of Labor and Statistics just came out and they
5 showed that veteran unemployment is 9.2%. This
6 January, we targeted our members of over 5,000 who
7 are post-9/11 service members and we found that
8 number is more like 17%. Again, like I said,
9 we've partnered with the Chamber of Commerce to
10 provide job fairs throughout the country, we held
11 our first in San Francisco last year, we have one
12 upcoming in Chicago, one upcoming here in New York
13 City, Atlanta, and a fifth location I can't think
14 of right now.

15 We've also last year pushed for
16 Congress and the President to pass the Hire our
17 Heroes Act of 2011, which the President signed
18 into law last October. There's many other
19 initiatives where IAVA is pushing local business
20 leaders and the Congress and the President to
21 offer tax breaks to employers that hire veterans,
22 especially veterans who have been unemployed for
23 certain benchmark periods of time. I believe six
24 months is one, three months is one, and any
25 veteran with a disability service-related.

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2 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: You said this
3 is going to be your first Fleet Week participation
4 or attendance, but do you have any specific events
5 you are interested on? Any specific activity that
6 you're planning to attend too?

7 ANTHONY PIKE: I know in the past
8 Fleet Weeks, the Marine Corp especially has
9 brought out the MV-22 Osprey, it's the tilt-rotor,
10 lands like a helicopter, flies like a plane. I
11 hope I get the chance to get up and see one of
12 those things. After I left the service, I pursued
13 a degree in aviation, so I love that aircraft and
14 hope to get to see it up close and personal.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: And let me ask
16 you that--probably I don't know if it may be out
17 of context, but I don't believe so--so what do you
18 know about MOVA?

19 ANTHONY PIKE: The Mayor's Office
20 of Veterans' Affairs, we work with them, not me
21 personally, but other of my colleagues, we work
22 with that office quite frequently in regard to
23 local veterans' initiatives. I know that my boss
24 was at the Robin Hood Foundation this week where
25 they brought in local veterans' organizations from

1
2 New York City and across the country to the
3 Intrepid. We do have a working relationship with
4 MOVA, Commissioner Holliday, and his staff.

5 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: That since
6 IAVA has been working, you know, with MOVA for how
7 many years?

8 ANTHONY PIKE: IAVA came out in
9 2004, my boss came home from Iraq and started the
10 organization back in 2004, it has been
11 headquartered here in New York ever since then. I
12 can't answer that right off the top of my head,
13 Chairman, but we have been working with MOVA for
14 some time.

15 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: All right,
16 thank you very much, Mr. Pike. And do you have
17 any other comment, anything you want to say?

18 ANTHONY PIKE: Thank you for having
19 us and I'm happy to answer any other questions you
20 may have.

21 CHAIRPERSON EUGENE: Thank you very
22 much, and thank you again for your service. Thank
23 you.

24 There is no other speaker, so the
25 meeting is adjourned.

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COMMITTEE ON VETERANS

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[Gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, 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 *Tammy Wittman*

Date May 25, 2012