

UNIFORMED
FIRE DEPARTMENT, CITY OF NEW YORK
FIRE OFFICERS
LOCAL 854, INTERNATIONAL ASSN. OF FIREFIGHTERS, AFL-CIO
ASSOCIATION

225 BROADWAY * NEW YORK, N. Y. 10007 * SUITE 401
TEL: (212) 293 - 9300 * FAX: (212) 292 - 1560

TESTIMONY BY CAPTAIN ALEXANDER HAGAN, PRESIDENT
UNIFORMED FIRE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
BEFORE THE STATE AND FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
May 31, 2012

Good Morning, my name is Eddie Boles, and I'm a Lieutenant in the New York City Fire Department and I'm speaking on behalf of our President Alexander Hagan. I also serve as the Treasurer and Legislative Chair of the Uniformed Fire Officers Association, a union of over 2,500 lieutenants, captains, battalion chiefs, deputy chiefs, supervising fire marshals and medical officers of the FDNY.

I appreciate the continuing efforts of Speaker Quinn, Committee Chair Foster, and the entire committee for your consideration of a Home Rule Message for a Training Bill that will provide necessary training of Fire Officers in Building Inspections. In April of 2010, your committee and the entire City Council provided a Home Rule Message on this bill and we hope that due to the increasing complexities of the buildings in New York City, the current revisions to the 2008 Building and Fire Codes, and the increasing accountability of our Fire Officers who are conducting building inspections, that you provide a Home Rule for this Bill once again.

The New York City Fire Department has been conducting fire inspections for nearly fifty years without formally training their Fire Officers on how to conduct proper inspections. Fire inspections done by the FDNY were never really meant to enforce the law or adequately protect the public. In fact, I have nearly 20 years in fire service and I have never been formally trained on how to inspect buildings or even write a summons. Other than units familiarizing themselves with the buildings in their fire response district, fire inspections done by our Fire Officers were nothing more than teachable moments for our units.

That was the way it was for fifty years until the infamous fire in August 2007 at the "Deutsche Bank" building. The tragic fire at 130 Liberty Street, next to the site where we experienced our worst day in the history of the FDNY, saw two of our brother firefighters - Bobby Beddia and Joe Graffagnino - succumb to a horrific fire where many more firefighters could have been killed. In fact, if it were not for the heroic efforts of many of our Fire Officers and Firefighters and the personal ropes used by many of our members to escape this death trap by rappelling to the exterior scaffolds, many more would have died.

AFFILIATED WITH



NEW YORK STATE AFL-CIO
NEW YORK CITY CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL AFL-CIO * MARITIME PORT COUNCIL OF
GREATER NEW YORK & VICINITY * UNION LABEL & SERVICE TRADES COUNCIL OF
GREATER NEW YORK & LONG ISLAND * NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

After that fatal fire, the finger pointing ensued to cast blame on everyone but the real culprits. Unfortunately, they scapegoated three Fire Officers who possessed impeccable records and storied fire careers for not conducting 15 day inspections in a building under abatement and demolition. This was a rule buried deep within the Fire Prevention Manual, that most Fire Officers didn't even know existed, forget about enforcing it. It was rarely, if ever done. Even if 15 day inspections were performed in that building, our Officers would never have been able to conduct an adequate fire inspection or recognize some of the hazards that existed – because our members were never formally trained on how to properly inspect toxic buildings and enforce the Fire and Building Codes.

So since the City of New York and the Fire Department are holding our members more accountable in performing fire inspections, we are requesting a Home Rule message on a Training Bill that will provide our members with a minimum of eighty (80) hours of fire and building inspection training. This is a modest request, especially since Firefighters and Fire Officers in the State require about 180 hours of training and NYC civilian fire inspectors who conduct audits of the inspections done by our FDNY units have well over 200 hours of training. We realize some steps have been made by the Department to increase the training for our members in Building Inspections but we feel it falls short of the training needed to adequately inspect NYC buildings.

A great deal of time, money and effort was used to revamp the NYC Fire and Building Codes, which were implemented in July, 2008. As I stated earlier, these same codes are being revised again- Wouldn't it make sense to properly train those Fire Officers who are asked to enforce these codes on a daily basis? We think it makes common sense and should be a strong consideration in the revision.

The UFOA strongly encourages this committee to vote in favor of this "Home Rule" message, which will further enhance the professional training of our Fire Officers who are committed to keeping the citizens of this City safer.

We appreciate the Committee's efforts and I am available to answer any questions that you may have.



AFFILIATED WITH

NEW YORK STATE AFL-CIO
NEW YORK CITY CENTRAL LABOR COUNCIL AFL-CIO * MARITIME PORT COUNCIL OF
GREATER NEW YORK & VICINITY * UNION LABEL & SERVICE TRADES COUNCIL OF
GREATER NEW YORK & LONG ISLAND * NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL



City of New York
Department of Parks & Recreation
Adrian Benepe, Commissioner



Hearing before the
New York City Council
Committee on State and Federal Legislation

May 31, 2012

S.2513/A.4874: Discontinue use of and convey certain park land.
a.k.a St. Michael's Cemetery

Testimony by Larry Scott Blackmon, Deputy Commissioner for Community Outreach

Good morning Chair Foster and members of the State and Federal Legislation Committee. I thank you for the opportunity to testify on the home rule on the committee's agenda today that would affect New York City park land.

This legislative item as it relates to Parks is a resolution requesting the New York State Legislature to pass bills introduced by Senator Gianaris, S.2513, and Assembly Member Simotas, A.4874, which would authorize the City of New York to discontinue the use of certain park land and convey it to St. Michael's Cemetery in Queens. The park land that is being referred to is a 3.77-acre strip of land adjacent to the cemetery.

Any alienation action is subject to the requirement that the City use any proceeds and/or land received in exchange for the conveyance authorized by this act to acquire or improve upon land for park purposes in an amount equal to or greater than the fair market value of the land being conveyed. At this time no replacement parkland or compensation has been identified in order to adopt alienation legislation. Given the uncertainty surrounding the replacement parkland, it would thus be premature to adopt alienation legislation prior to reaching an agreement and the Parks Department is opposed to this piece of legislation at this time.

The Parks Department has been exploring options to potentially facilitate this action and we have been in communication with DCAS regarding the appraisal of this property. DCAS and Parks will be reaching out to St. Michael's Cemetery to set up a meeting to discuss DCAS' findings. We are happy to have these discussions; however, we must stress that this is only the beginning of the process.

We take the alienation of parkland very seriously and alienation occurs after, and only after, extensive dialogue and negotiation. Passing this legislation without identifying replacement parkland sets a very dangerous precedent.

I thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I'd be happy to answer any questions you may have.

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. T 2012-4829 Res. No. _____

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/31/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Lt. Eddie Boles

Address: _____

I represent: Uniformed Fire Officers Assn

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms

**THE COUNCIL
THE CITY OF NEW YORK**

Appearance Card

I intend to appear and speak on Int. No. _____ Res. No. T 2012-4825

in favor in opposition

Date: 5/31/12

(PLEASE PRINT)

Name: Larry Scott Blackmon, Deputy Commissioner

Address: 830 5th Avenue

I represent: Parks Department (DPR)

Address: _____

Please complete this card and return to the Sergeant-at-Arms