

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON TECHNOLOGY

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February 28, 2012  
Start: 11:00 a.m.  
Recess: 11:35 a.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
FERNANDO CABRERA  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Gale A. Brewer  
Letitia James  
G. Oliver Koppell  
Mark S. Weprin

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2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Good morning,  
3 everyone. Today we are going to be voting on Bill  
4 29-A, but first let me acknowledge the Council  
5 Members who are present: Council Member Tish  
6 James, Council Member Brewer. We're going to hear  
7 from her in a second, but first I want to  
8 personally thank the staff: Jeffrey Baker,  
9 Assistant Deputy Director; David Cyza [phonetic],  
10 Law Clerk; Crystal Gold-Palm [phonetic], Policy  
11 Analyst; and John Rigoso [phonetic], Financial  
12 Analyst. So at this moment, I'm going to turn it  
13 over to Council Member Brewer who is introducing  
14 literally a historical bill that is going to  
15 really change business as usual, and is going to  
16 really set a standard from which others in the  
17 nation are going to be able to now have a model of  
18 what open data should be all about. Council  
19 Member Brewer?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I want to  
21 thank you, Chair Cabrera, because you share our  
22 excitement in this endeavor and that means a lot,  
23 and so I really appreciate your leadership and  
24 understanding of the passion we all have for  
25 government transparency, and this is Intro No.

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2 29-A. It is an open data bill, and it's been in  
3 the works maybe four years much thanks to Jeff  
4 Baker whom you kindly mentioned, was counsel to  
5 the Technology Committee for a long time and is  
6 now been promoted. I also want to thank people  
7 who worked in my office who have now gone on to  
8 law school to be in charge of technology for  
9 treasury in Washington and gone on to work for a  
10 huge tech firm, including - - , Sam Wang  
11 [phonetic] and now Will Colgrove from my office.  
12 We've been talking about open data for a very long  
13 time, and there's been a great group of  
14 individuals—sort of like a posse; I call it a tech  
15 posse. And certainly the folks from open plan and  
16 the people from NYPERG [phonetic], the people from  
17 Common Cause, the people from Citizens Union,  
18 Reinvent Albany—I think I mentioned NYPERG and  
19 Andrew Richet [phonetic] who is head of personal  
20 democracy. These are all people who for the last  
21 four years have been part of this posse as well as  
22 many others. I think that this bill as the chair  
23 indicated will make sure that New York is in the  
24 forefront of any government transparency and  
25 technological revolution in terms of government

1  
2 openness. I really also want to thank Carol Post  
3 [phonetic], who is the Commissioner of the  
4 Department of Information, Technology and  
5 Telecommunications. She and her staff,  
6 particularly Nick Spordone [phonetic] have been  
7 champions of this issue. It would not have passed  
8 without their input. The very first time she  
9 testified before this Committee and the new  
10 commissioner, she said she would work with us on  
11 this legislation. I think we all know that this  
12 bill would require that city databases with some  
13 exceptions for security and other concerns will be  
14 published online via a single web portal in open  
15 data format, and it could be manipulated in a good  
16 positive way--usually in that - - --and analyzed  
17 by anyone with Internet access. The good news is  
18 that within six months, they'll be a technical  
19 manual which will describe the ways in which the  
20 portal is going to be built and talks to how the  
21 agencies are going to conform, and the year after  
22 that, the agency will have to list which databases  
23 they are going to have on the portal, and if  
24 they're not going to have one on the portal, why.  
25 The date sounds far off--2018--but it goes quickly,

1  
2 and the fact of the matter is some of these  
3 databases are legacy and will take more time to  
4 get on the portal, but all during this time period  
5 and this is a wonderful aspect to the bill,  
6 there's an active feedback mechanism, so people  
7 who are in the tech field, researchers,  
8 journalists, people who care about this issue will  
9 be able to say to the agency, "Why aren't you  
10 putting x data set up?" or "x data set has  
11 challenges. We'd like to work with you to fix  
12 them." So there are just lots of unprecedented  
13 ways that government transparency can be looked at  
14 through this legislation. I also think that it  
15 will curtail some of the FOIL [phonetic] requests  
16 'cause FOIL causes money and time or staff to  
17 implement and I think this will put the  
18 information up there. Most of all, thank you, Mr.  
19 Chair. Thank you, my colleagues. I look forward  
20 to working with you to implement a good 29-A.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so  
22 much. I would also like to recognize Council  
23 Member Weprin, also, I see - - around. He's not  
24 part of this Committee, but Council Member Nelson.  
25 Let me turn it over to the clerk now for a vote.

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2 COMMITTEE CLERK: William Martin,  
3 Committee Clerk, roll call vote in the Committee  
4 on Technology, Introduction 29-A. Council Member  
5 Cabrera?

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Aye. I  
7 encourage all others to vote aye on the bill.

8 COMMITTEE CLERK: Brewer?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye.  
10 Thank you.

11 COMMITTEE CLERK: James?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Hopefully  
13 Council Member Brewer, we will not have to wait  
14 years for FOIL requests going forward in the  
15 future. Congratulations to your leadership, to  
16 Council Member Cabrera and to Jeff Baker. I vote  
17 aye.

18 COMMITTEE CLERK: Weprin?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER WEPRIN: Aye.

20 COMMITTEE CLERK: By a vote of four  
21 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no  
22 abstention, item is adopted. Members, please sign  
23 the Committee Report. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: We're going  
25 to leave the vote open for the next half an hour.

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2 Thank you so much. This meeting is now over.

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[gavel]

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[pause]

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COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: This

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hearing is adjourned.

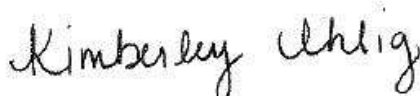
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[gavel]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig, 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

Handwritten signature of Kimberley Uhlig in cursive script, written over a horizontal line.

Date 3/13/12