

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

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June 8, 2010
Start: 10:25am
Recess: 10:55am

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:
JAMES VACCA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Council Member Gale A. Brewer
Council Member Daniel R. Garodnick
Council Member Peter A. Koo
Council Member G. Oliver Koppell
Council Member Jessica S. Lappin
Council Member Ydanis A. Rodriguez
Council Member Deborah L. Rose
Council Member James G. Van Bramer
Council Member Eric A. Ulrich

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

N/A

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2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Today--I'm
3 sorry. Today, today is June 8th, this is a meeting
4 of the Transportation Committee of the New York
5 City Council. I'm James Vacca, Chair of the
6 Committee. I'd like to introduce the members of
7 our Committee. To my right, Oliver Koppell,
8 Debbie Rose, Peter Koo; to my left is Gale Brewer,
9 Jimmy Van Bramer, Ydanis Rodriguez, and myself.
10 Today we're passing three pieces of legislation
11 concerning taxis. And accountability and
12 transparency in the taxi industry. And I, I first
13 want to start off by saying that I've been in the
14 Council now four-and-a-half years, and I think
15 that this action today represents one of the most
16 significant instances where oversight hearings
17 that the Council has had really produced results.
18 I do want to thank the members who participated
19 and I want to thank the Taxi and Limousine
20 Commissions new chair, David Yassky. I think our
21 hearings were the impetus here for significant
22 legislation. On March 12th, our Committee
23 convened--on March 12th, rather, the TLC brought
24 out that there were 35,000 instances where taxi
25 drivers charged passengers the out-of-town fare,

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2 known as rate four, by charging the fare rate on
3 the meter inappropriately. And in response, my
4 Committee held oversight hearings on April 7th, and
5 the overcharging issues were brought to light in
6 even a more substantive way. During those
7 hearings, Commissioner Yassky at that time
8 testified that because some of the vendors did not
9 track certain data regarding the use of rate code
10 four, the Taxi and Limousine Commission did not
11 have all the information it needed for its
12 investigation. So therefore, we want this
13 information maintained and preserved by the
14 vendors at all times. And my bill will require
15 all taxicabs to be outfitted with equipment that
16 would record and restore all the fare data and any
17 other information required by the Commission.
18 Storage and retention of information will assist
19 us in getting to the bottom of any additional
20 problems that relate to overcharging or other
21 instances of irregularities. The fact that that
22 information was not maintained and retrievable was
23 something that alarmed our Committee and today
24 results in legislative action. I should also say
25 that when we started to discuss this issue of

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2 overcharging, and other issues pertaining to
3 taxis, my concern was "Where do we get a handle on
4 how many complaints have been filed about
5 overcharging. Where does that data exist? And
6 when we went to such places as the Mayor's
7 Management Report, and we went to the yearly
8 report of the Taxi and Limousine Commission, we
9 could find no data available as to status of
10 complaints, the filing of such complaints, what,
11 how do we monitor where those complaints are
12 going, and whether or not there's an issue that
13 the Council especially, or the TLC should address,
14 if there's no place where that information is
15 recorded and accessible to the public. So, Local
16 Law 233-A, which I've introduced, will require
17 annual reports being filed regarding complaints
18 received from the TL--to the, going to the TLC
19 from the public, including but not limited to
20 complaints of overcharging, as well as enforcement
21 actions undertaken by the Commission, whether the
22 enforcement action was dismissed or settled, or if
23 a penalty was imposed by the Commission on the
24 subject of the enforcement action. And we're
25 talking about this information including but not

1 limited to enforcement actions relating to illegal
2 street hails, unlicensed vehicles, overcharging,
3 and toll lane infractions. And that this
4 information shall be dissected by the type of
5 license held by the person or entity who was the
6 subject of the complaint, the month that the
7 complaint was filed, and/or the enforcement action
8 undertaken. So, those two pieces of legislation,
9 plus the third that deals with the E-ZPass issue,
10 which many of you know we had issue with cab
11 drivers who, even though there was a policy
12 requiring them to use E-ZPass lanes, they were
13 continuing to use the cash lanes; therefore,
14 charging more than they should have to the
15 customer, relative to the amount of the fare, or
16 the toll, and then also involving more time in the
17 ride. So we have three pieces of legislation. I
18 think that these three pieces of legislation may
19 be just the beginning. I know we're talking about
20 working with the State on many issues. We have an
21 issue with the collection of fines, where we had
22 testimony just about a week-and-a-half ago at one
23 of my hearings, at the oversight, budget oversight
24 hearing, where the TLC admitted that they have
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2 millions of dollars, millions of dollars in fines
3 that they cannot collect. And therefore, once a
4 driver leaves their employ, they are not able to
5 collect fines. And we want to work with the State
6 if we have to, or we want to enact City
7 legislation, to get that going. And I also think
8 meeting with Commissioner Yassky and hearing him
9 at the oversight hearing we he--we held, we're
10 starting to identify other areas where the Council
11 can take a more active role. And I think that
12 with him there at the TLC, I want to give him an
13 opportunity to address many issues which I think
14 went, went unaddressed in the previous
15 administration. So, with that in mind, and with
16 that being said, I would urge my colleagues to
17 vote yes on all three pieces of legislation before
18 you, and I look forward to any remarks any members
19 of the body may have. Any Committee member wish
20 to speak on any of the three Intros before you?
21 Oh, okay, fine, we will, we will then call the
22 roll.

23 CLERK: William Martin, Committee
24 Clerk, roll call on the Committee on
25 Transportation. Council Member Vacca.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: I vote aye
3 on all.

4 CLERK: Brewer.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I vote aye
6 on 233-A and 235-A, but abstain on 232. And the
7 reason is, if you're an individual, you can't get
8 an E-ZPass. I don't have a car, I can't get an E-
9 ZPass. I've tried for years, and if you don't
10 have a license plate, you can't get one. So, the
11 bill mentions that if there is one attached to the
12 car or if an individual has one. I don't know how
13 an individual would have one, except it be
14 attached to some car that has a license plate,
15 which may or may not be that car. So, I just
16 think it's, the E-ZPass situation has to be
17 straightened out. But I'd like to add my name to
18 233-A and 235-A, vote yes, and abstain on 232.

19 [pause]

20 CLERK: Koppell.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: [pause] My
22 name is not on the bills, I don't have it in front
23 of me, I would like my name to be added as a
24 sponsor, and I vote aye on all.

25 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: So done, thank

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you, Council Member.

CLERK: Rodriguez.

COUNCIL MEMBER RODRIGUEZ: [off
mic] Aye.

CLERK: Rose.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Aye on all
and I would like to add my name to the bills.

CLERK: Van Bramer.

COUNCIL MEMBER VAN BRAMER: [off
mic] Aye on all.

CLERK: Koo.

COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Aye on all.

[pause]

CHAIRPERSON VACCA: I thank the
members for voting on these bills, and we will
leave the record open for the next 15 minutes. We
have several members who've indicated that they're
on route. Without further to do, this meeting is
hereby adjourned. [gavel] Adjourned temporarily.

[background noise]

[pause]

CLERK: Council Member Garodnick.

COUNCIL MEMBER GARODNICK: Thank
you, thank you very much. And I vote aye.

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2 CLERK: By a vote of eight in the
3 affirmative, zero in the negative, no abstentions,
4 introductions 233-A and 235-A are adopted. And by
5 a vote of 230--Excuse me, Introduction 232 is
6 adopted by a vote of seven in the affirmative,
7 zero in the negative, and one abstention.

8 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Really?

9 CLERK: Council Member Lappin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: Aye.

11 CLERK: Council Member Lappin.

12 CLERK: Council Member Lappin.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LAPPIN: Aye.

14 CLERK: Council Member Ulrich.

15 [laughter]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Aye.

17 [pause]

18 CLERK: Current vote on the
19 Committee on Transportation now stands,
20 Introduction 233-A and 235-A stand at ten in the
21 affirmative, zero in the negative and no
22 abstentions, with the exception of Introduction
23 232 which is adopted by a vote of nine in the
24 affirmative, zero in the negative and one
25 abstention.

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[pause]

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CHAIRPERSON VACCA: This meeting is

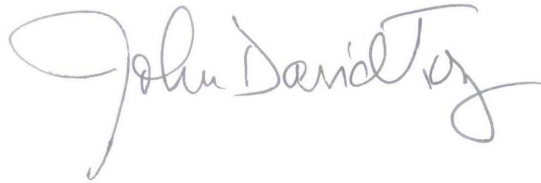
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adjourned. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T

I, JOHN DAVID TONG, 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.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John David Tong". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature_____

Date June 23, 2010