



**NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL
JOINT HEARING BY THE COMMITTEE ON PARKS AND RECREATION AND
COMMITTEE ON CONTRACTS**

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF JOCELYN E. STRAUBER
COMMISSIONER, NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATION**

**CONCERNING OVERSIGHT OF THE PARKS DEPARTMENT CONTRACTING
PRACTICES AND VENDOR ACCOUNTABILITY**

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2025

Thank you to Chair Krishnan, Chair Won, and members of the Committee on Parks and Recreation and the Committee on Contracts for the opportunity to submit testimony about the Department of Investigation's (DOI) Integrity Monitorship Program.

DOI's Integrity Monitorship Program

Vendor integrity is a critical part of DOI's mission to root out corruption, protect public funds, and ensure the existence of strong internal controls and best practices with respect to City contracting. As part of that effort, DOI has managed an Integrity Monitorship Program since 1996 that permits the City to enter into or continue contracts with City vendors that might otherwise be precluded from doing business with the City due to integrity issues, under close supervision by an outside monitor and DOI, and also to monitor large-scale, high-value projects ideally to prevent, or at least to promptly identify fraud, waste, or other misconduct. Through the program, DOI contracts with and supervises outside integrity monitors, which are individuals or entities with legal, auditing, investigative, and other skills, that help the City keep close watch over the activities of specified City vendors.

DOI manages two types of monitorships. Programmatic monitorships are for certain large-scale City projects, oftentimes complex capital-intensive projects. For those projects, the City pays to hire an integrity monitor, selected and supervised by DOI, to guard against corruption, fraud, waste, and abuse by the vendors or by others involved in the project, generally for the duration of the project. Recent examples of programmatic monitorships include the monitors that DOI engaged to monitor the Borough-Based Jails capital project, the Asylum Seeker Initiative, and the rehabilitation of New York City Housing Authority properties after Superstorm Sandy.

The second type of integrity monitorship, most relevant to today's hearing, is the rehabilitative monitorship. Rehabilitative monitorships permit the City to enter into or continue contracts with vendors that have integrity issues and might otherwise not be deemed sufficiently responsible vendors to do business with the City. With a rehabilitative monitorship, these vendors may be awarded City contracts if they agree to pay for and be monitored by an outside, independent integrity monitor that is selected by and reports to DOI, and to take other steps to ensure they have the requisite business integrity, as directed by DOI and the monitor. These steps may include separating principals who engaged in misconduct from the business, implementation of anti-corruption policies and procedures, or employee training. Through these monitorships, the integrity monitors can help the vendors reform their business practices so they can be considered for City contracts in the future or continue with a contract in progress. By agreement, rehabilitative monitorships typically last three years, with the option to extend the monitorship for an additional period. DOI regularly seeks extensions of integrity monitorship agreements to provide coverage for longer contracts and/or to ensure that a City vendor complies fully with the monitorship's requirements and can demonstrate a sustained track record of integrity.

An agency typically requests that DOI oversee a rehabilitative monitorship for a vendor if the agency determines that a vendor with integrity issues is crucial to the agency's project(s) – for example because the vendor provides critical or specialized services that cannot easily be found elsewhere or because replacing a vendor on an existing contract would be too time-consuming or costly. DOI evaluates each request based on the specific need as well as the vendors' conduct but generally defers to the agency as to the need for a particular vendor and, where a vendor with integrity issues is critical to the agency, seeks to oversee an appropriately stringent monitorship where feasible.

For both programmatic and rehabilitative monitorships, DOI's work with the integrity monitors is staff intensive. It includes maintaining regular communication with the integrity monitors, receiving and evaluating both written and verbal reports, holding meetings with the integrity monitors and vendors to address issues in real-time, and conducting site visits when necessary. Overseeing these monitorships also involves extensive coordination and communication with the stakeholder agencies to ensure that they have real-time updates and insights into the projects and contractors.

Current Rehabilitative Monitorship with the Department of Parks and Recreation

DOI is currently overseeing two rehabilitative monitorships for vendors who are contracting with the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) – one is for Griffin's Landscaping Corp. (Griffin's) and one is for Dragonetti Brothers Landscaping, Nursery, & Florist, Inc. (Dragonetti).

Griffin's Integrity Monitorship

Griffin's is a landscaping company that has several existing contracts with DPR for a variety of construction, removal, landscaping, and masonry services. Glenn Griffin, the founder, owner, and former president of Griffin's, was indicted in July 2022 on federal charges in connection with a bribery and illegal dumping scheme and a bid-rigging scheme, raising significant concerns about the integrity of his company. Glenn Griffin pled guilty and in June 2025 was sentenced to 24 months in prison. DPR represented to DOI that it needed to continue contracting with Griffin's in order to avoid delays in service and higher costs, and because of a lack of other qualified vendors with Griffin's capacity and experience. In order to ensure that Griffin's would be closely supervised in light of its prior integrity issues, DOI entered into an integrity monitorship agreement with Griffin's on April 20, 2023, that is currently scheduled to end on April 20, 2026.

Pursuant to the integrity monitorship agreement with DOI, Griffin's agreed to retain an integrity monitor to oversee its work in connection to City contracts, remove Glenn Griffin as an employee of the company and to appoint a managing director to operate the company in his stead, transfer all of Glenn Griffin's company shares to a trustee, and remove Glenn Griffin as an authorized agent of the company on a certain bank loan.

DOI selected Kroll to be the integrity monitor for Griffin's and Griffin's and Kroll executed an engagement letter dated July 7, 2023. Based on DOI's extensive communication and collaboration with Kroll and Griffin's throughout the monitorship, it is DOI's opinion that Griffin's has complied with the terms of the monitorship to date.

Dragonetti Integrity Monitorship

Dragonetti is a landscaping and concrete sidewalk company that has several existing contracts with DPR for landscaping, tree planting and pruning, pedestrian crosswalk ram construction, and sidewalk reconstruction services. Dragonetti, and two of its principals, Nicholas Dragonetti and Vito Dragonetti,¹ were indicted for various felony charges including insurance fraud, filing of false instruments, and New York State Workers' Compensation Law violations, raising significant concerns about the integrity of the company and its principals. DOI worked with the Manhattan District Attorney's Office on this criminal investigation. In response to the indictment, Dragonetti hired a workers' compensation expert to ensure compliance with all workers' compensation laws and rules. Dragonetti, Nicholas Dragonetti, and Vito Dragonetti pled guilty in October 2022 and agreed to pay restitution, a three-year debarment from contracts with the Department of Design and Construction (DDC), and a three-year conditional discharge.

DPR represented to DOI that it would be in the best interest of the City to continue its contracts with Dragonetti despite its integrity issues so as not to disrupt citywide tree pruning, which is necessary to maintain the safety of the urban canopy. In order to ensure that Dragonetti would be closely supervised in light of its prior integrity issues, DOI entered into an integrity monitorship agreement with Dragonetti on February 24, 2022, that lasted for three years. On February 20, 2025, DOI and Dragonetti extended the monitorship agreement for a period of two additional years through February 27, 2027.

Pursuant to the integrity monitorship agreement with DOI, Dragonetti agreed to retain an integrity monitor to oversee its work in connection with City contracts; that Nicholas and Vito Dragonetti would not be employees or board members of the company, have access to banking and financial accounts, or participate or influence the company's business activities; to appoint a managing director to operate the company; to create a trust to receive profits from the City contracts, the trustee of which would control

¹ Vito Dragonetti's indictment was related to his work with another company, D.B. Demolition, Inc., which is not the subject of an integrity monitorship agreement with DOI.

Nicholas and Vito Dragonetti's voting shares; and that neither Nicholas nor Vito Dragonetti would receive payments from any City contract during the course of the monitorship. Dragonetti further agreed to create a Code of Business Ethics and to distribute it to key people and employees.

DOI selected Ruzow & Associates to be the integrity monitor for Dragonetti and Dragonetti and Ruzow & Associates executed an engagement letter dated April 21, 2022. During the course of the monitorship, DOI had concerns regarding Dragonetti's full compliance with the terms of the monitorship, specifically the extrication of Nicholas and Vito Dragonetti from the company during two years of the initial three-year monitorship and kept DPR informed of the developments within the monitorship. As a result of these concerns, pursuant to the terms of the initial February 2022 integrity monitorship agreement, in February 2025 DOI extended Dragonetti's monitorship for two years through February 2027, even though DOI acknowledged at the time of the extension, and Ruzow & Associates agrees, that Dragonetti had become substantially in compliance with the agreement.

Conclusion

DOI is proud to provide the services of its Integrity Monitorship Program to the City and individual agencies. Through the work of the program, DOI strives to provide agencies with the opportunity to work with vendors that are critical to their work and to their ability to serve the public, while simultaneously providing the public with confidence that the vendors with which the City contracts are operating with integrity, particularly those with historical issues, and that the City's tax dollars are being safeguarded. DOI is happy to answer any questions that the Committees or any Council Members may have about the Integrity Monitorship Program. Please reach out to DOI's Director of Intergovernmental Affairs and Special Counsel Rebecca Chasan at rchasan@doi.nyc.gov for further information.