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REMARKS OF DOI COMMISSIONER ROSE GILL HEARN

This two-pronged approach in attacking mortgage and deed fraud gives important tools to both law enforcement and homeowners, allowing them to detect wrongdoing early and stop it. The personal alerts that homeowners can sign up for are an important way for City residents to track transactions on their property and identify potential fraud. And the Unusual Property Activity Reports from the Criminal Justice Coordinator's Office will be another way for DOI to follow up on potential corruption cases with a City nexus, such as cases that include City employees or City properties.

For years, DOI has worked with the Finance Department and our law enforcement partners in exposing this type of fraud. Several years ago, for instance, an alert Finance clerk became suspicious about a deed transaction, and reported it to DOI, helping our investigators expose that a Brooklyn man attempted to steal the SoHo Grand hotel by transferring ownership to himself. The man was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to a jail term.

DOI will continue to work with the Finance Department in uncovering these crimes and we appreciate the focus and collaboration by the Criminal Justice Coordinator, the Finance Commissioner, and the District Attorneys on such a significant issue.

DOI is one of the oldest law-enforcement agencies in the country. The agency investigates and refers for prosecution City employees and contractors engaged in corrupt or fraudulent activities or unethical conduct. Investigations may involve any agency, officer, elected official or employee of the City, as well as those who do business with or receive benefits from the City.

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