

# Council hires Shelly Silver prosecutor to investigate Grodenchik sexual misconduct claims

By Joe Anuta

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The City Council has hired a former federal prosecutor to look into ethics complaints against Council Member Barry Grodenchik.

Carrie Cohen — who litigated the federal corruption case against disgraced former Assemblyman Sheldon Silver and is now in private practice at Morrison & Foerster — has been tapped by the Council to investigate claims that Grodenchik paid unwelcome attention to a staff member over the course of a year.

Cohen will look into the matter, which was publicly disclosed by the Council's Committee on Standards and Ethics [earlier this month](#), draft a series of charges and then present the case against Grodenchik to committee members, a Council spokesperson said.

Grodenchik may also have a lawyer for the proceedings. The Council member declined to comment through a spokesperson.

The committee will ultimately compile a report with disciplinary recommendations that will be put to the full Council should the allegations be substantiated.

The decision to hire an outside expert, [first reported](#) by *The New York Times*, shows how seriously the Council takes sexual misconduct allegations, according to its press office, and was the best way to handle the matter quickly and fairly.

Grodenchik has already been removed from the budget negotiating team in the wake of the ethics committee's findings that he commented on a staff member's weight and singled her out for hugs and kisses on the cheek. Grodenchik suggested in a statement earlier this month that Council Speaker Corey Johnson also wants him stripped of his chairmanship of the Committee on Parks and Recreation.

Elsewhere in the statement, Grodenchik said he regretted making anyone uncomfortable and accused Johnson of over-reacting.

"I will not allow the good name my parents gave to me to be dragged through the mud for this single action which, as the Speaker well knows, was never intended to make anyone uncomfortable," his statement read.