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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE ON RULES

- - -

Monday, June 6, 2005
10:30 a.m.

- - -

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

- - -

BILLS NO. 050302, 050346, 050364, 050365,
050366, 050367, 050368, 050370, 050372,
050373, 050380, 050381, 050382, 050385,
050386, and 050414

- - -

PRESENT:

- COUNCILWOMAN ANNA C. VERNA, President
- COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
- COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN
- COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY
- COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY
- COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO
- COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
- COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER
- COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
- COUNCILMAN RICHARD T. MARIANO
- COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

- - -

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PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning, everyone. I am sorry, there is entirely too much noise. Those having conversations, I would suggest you do it in the corridor, please. Thank you.

This is the Public Hearing of the Committee on Rules. I would like the record to reflect that we do have a quorum. To my immediate left is Councilman Kelly, to his left is Councilman Cohen, to my immediate right is Councilwoman Miller and Councilman Kenney. And I see that Councilwoman Brown is on the phone, but she is here.

I would ask Ms. Murray to please read the title of Bill No. 050302.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 050302, an Ordinance amending Title 14 of the Philadelphia Code entitled "Zoning and Planning," by providing for new special district controls for the Girard Avenue area, under certain terms and conditions.

PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning. Please identify yourself for the record and

1 BILL NO. 050302 - 6/6/05

2 proceed with your testimony.

3 MR. THOMAS CHAPMAN: Good morning,
4 Madam President and members of the Rules
5 Committee. My name is Thomas Chapman, I am
6 the Director of the Development Planning
7 Division for the City Planning Commission, and
8 I am here today to testify on Bill No. 050302.

9 Councilman Clarke introduced this
10 bill on April 21 of this year. This bill is
11 an amendment to the Philadelphia Zoning Code
12 that would create a zoning overlay for a
13 portion of Girard Avenue.

14 The controls set forth in this bill
15 would be applicable to all commercially zoned
16 property with frontage on Girard Avenue, from
17 the 2500 block to the 3200 block, inclusive.

18 The following uses would be
19 prohibited in all commercially zoned
20 properties: Auto repair shops; the
21 installation of automobile, boat, motorcycle
22 or truck parts; retail sale of bakery goods,
23 confectionary goods, fruits, vegetables, or
24 groceries where the use exceeds a thousand
25 square feet of floor area; the retail sale of

1 BILL NO. 050302 - 6/6/05
2 automobiles; retail sale of drugs or
3 cosmetics; retail sale of variety store
4 merchandise; clubhouses, lodges, and
5 fraternity houses.

6 It would further prohibit businesses
7 or professional offices and the personal
8 treatment of patients when occupying the first
9 floor of the building.

10 This bill would also require any
11 newly erected buildings to have no setback
12 from the street line of Girard Avenue.

13 The Planning Commission at its
14 meeting of May 12, 2005, considered Bill No.
15 050302 and requested that the bill be tabled
16 for further study.

17 That concludes my testimony, and I
18 would be happy to answer any questions of the
19 committee.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Chapman, did
21 the Planning Commission have any role in
22 drafting this bill?

23 MR. CHAPMAN: No, we did not.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: It is my
25 understanding that this bill, which is,

1 BILL NO. 050302 - 6/6/05
2 essentially, a zoning overlay, would prohibit
3 a number of uses in a special control
4 district. Do many of these uses currently
5 exist?

6 MR. CHAPMAN: Along this stretch of
7 Girard Avenue, I really couldn't answer that
8 question, Madam President. I might have to
9 defer that one to Councilman Clarke.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: The record will
11 also reflect that Councilman Clarke has now
12 joined the committee.

13 Councilman Clarke.

14 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.
15 Thank you, Madam President. Good morning.

16 MR. CHAPMAN: Good morning.

17 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Madam President
18 and to those interested parties, as you may
19 know, Girard Avenue is currently under the
20 process of hopefully some redevelopment.

21 There is a substantial amount of
22 activity proposed and currently taking place
23 around this commercial corridor.

24 There have been some concerns raised
25 in the past about the potential use of some of

1 BILL NO. 050302 - 6/6/05
2 the parcels or stores on the avenue. What
3 we're attempting to do is to, essentially,
4 give the community and the business corridor
5 an additional voice.

6 Some of the zoning currently on the
7 avenue could potentially authorize some
8 developments that may not be conducive to what
9 it is the community is trying to do up there.

10 This particular bill, while placing
11 certain prohibitions in addition to what's
12 currently in place, does not prohibit any
13 developer or development from going to the
14 Zoning Board and getting a variance.

15 But this just adds another level of
16 process that, hopefully, community members
17 will be able to be involved in, if there is
18 something that's not conducive to what it is
19 we are attempting to do. So that's why we are
20 attempting to put this overlay in place.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,
22 Councilman.

23 The Chair recognizes Councilman
24 Kelly.

25 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Yes. I have a

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05
2 question for Councilman Clarke. I just want
3 to know how many businesses are currently
4 doing business in that Girard Avenue strip?
5 Are they going to be grandfathered in?

6 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN KELLY: They would be
8 grandfathered in?

9 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yes.

10 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Are there any
12 other questions from members of the Committee
13 on this bill?

14 Do we have anyone to testify on this
15 bill?

16 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
17 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
18 050346.

19 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050346, an
20 Ordinance amending Section 14-1629 of the
21 Philadelphia Code entitled "Yorktown Special
22 District Controls," by specifically amending
23 Section 14-1629, Subsection 3, entitled
24 "district Boundaries," all under certain terms
25 and conditions.

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05

2 PRESIDENT VERNA: Please proceed.

3 MR. THOMAS CHAPMAN: Good morning
4 once again, Madam President and members of the
5 Rules Committee. Once again, for the City
6 Planning Commission, my name is Thomas
7 Chapman.

8 Councilman Clarke introduced Bill
9 No. 050346 on April 28 of this year. This
10 bill is an amendment to the Philadelphia
11 Zoning Code that would extend the boundaries
12 of an existing overlay known as the North
13 Central Community Special District Controls.

14 This bill would add the area
15 generally bounded by Turner Street, Master
16 Street, Hutchinson Street, and 11th Street to
17 the existing area of controls.

18 The North Central Community Special
19 District Control section of the code prohibits
20 multiple-family dwellings, apartment houses,
21 tenement houses, student housing which is not
22 owner occupied, and fraternity or sorority
23 houses.

24 Currently this area is predominantly
25 zoned R-9A residential, which does not permit

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05
2 multiple-family occupancy as a matter of
3 right.

4 My understanding in discussing this
5 bill with Councilman Clarke is that these
6 amendments, as well as the original overlay,
7 were done in response to a legitimate
8 community concern regarding student housing in
9 the area, in this area of the city. This area
10 of the city is in a close proximity to Temple
11 University.

12 The Planning Commission had
13 previously considered the subject matter of
14 this bill at its meeting of October 14, 2003,
15 and had recommended that the bill not be
16 approved. Thank you.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: How many
18 properties will be affected by the expansion
19 of the boundaries of the Yorktown Special
20 Control District, do you know?

21 MR. CHAPMAN: No, Madam President, I
22 am afraid I don't know. I believe that the
23 expansion is approximately eight to ten
24 blocks.

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Chapman, what

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05

2 do you mean when you say the area is
3 predominantly zoned R-9A? Do you mean the
4 existing special control district or the
5 expanded district?

6 MR. CHAPMAN: I mean both, Council
7 President.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: Well, if these
9 controls exist in the adjacent area, what
10 reason is there not to expand the district?

11 MR. CHAPMAN: I'm not sure I
12 understand your question.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: If the controls
14 exist in the adjacent area -- do the controls
15 exist in the --

16 MR. CHAPMAN: Yes, they do. Yes.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. Then my
18 question to you is, if in fact the controls
19 exist in the adjacent area, what reason is
20 there not to expand the district?

21 MR. CHAPMAN: Well, I am sure that
22 Councilman Clarke's purpose in expanding the
23 district is to extend the same controls to the
24 expansion area that are in existence for the
25 existing area and to offer that area the same

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05
2 protections that are already in place.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: But you are saying
4 that City Planning is not recommending that
5 the bill be approved.

6 MR. CHAPMAN: That's correct.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: And I am asking
8 why?

9 If in fact the controls actually
10 exist presently in the adjacent area, what
11 reason can you give us not to expand the
12 district?

13 MR. CHAPMAN: It's our position that
14 the R-9A zoning in this area already prohibits
15 apartment houses, student housing which is not
16 owner occupied, tenement housing, and
17 multiple-family occupancy.

18 My understanding from discussing
19 this legislation with Councilman Clarke in the
20 past is that, he recognizes that it is his
21 belief that having this overlay will add an
22 additional layer of controls for this area,
23 making it even more difficult for someone to
24 establish one of these type of occupancies.

25 And our position is that those

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05
2 controls already exist. That rather what
3 maybe should happen in this area is that there
4 be a concerted effort to enforce the existing
5 provisions of the Zoning Code.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
7 recognizes Councilman Clarke.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam
9 President.

10 Mr. Chapman, I'm not going to shoot
11 the messenger. But do you believe that
12 Yorktown, Peoples Village, and Jefferson Manor
13 are probably some of the most stable
14 neighborhoods east of Broad in North
15 Philadelphia?

16 MR. CHAPMAN: Absolutely. Not doubt
17 about it.

18 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Don't you also
19 believe that we probably should maintain that
20 character?

21 MR. CHAPMAN: Yes, sir.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Do you believe
23 that the enforcement on the existing zoning
24 classification is essentially nil?

25 It is more or less driven by a call

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05
2 from a community resident? We don't currently
3 have enforcement officers going around
4 checking to see if people have converted
5 properties?

6 MR. CHAPMAN: I would agree with
7 that. It is, essentially, complaint-driven.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So if your
9 position is that we should, essentially, rely
10 on the existing zoning classification, the
11 likelihood is that we are going to continue to
12 have individuals or developers who are cutting
13 up that very, very, very pristine community, I
14 will even use that terminology, because I
15 think that is a pristine community, and
16 continue to create student housing?

17 MR. CHAPMAN: Without a strong
18 enforcement effort, without a concerted
19 enforcement effort in this area, I would have
20 to agree with you.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So given the
22 fact that we probably don't have the level of
23 enforcement that should take place, my option,
24 along with the community -- because the
25 community participated in pulling this

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05
2 legislation together -- would be to increase
3 the level of requirement by the developer to
4 ultimately get zoning.

5 That's what we are attempting to do,
6 short of having the appropriate enforcement.

7 MR. CHAPMAN: I understand your
8 position, sir, Councilman.

9 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. Well,
10 there is currently, if you can check this out,
11 there's currently a property on 12th Street, I
12 believe it is just south of Jefferson, that is
13 being converted, and I don't recall ever
14 seeing a zoning notification.

15 So if you can track down one of
16 those enforcement officers and ask them to go
17 out and look at that, because I am sure they
18 haven't got proper zoning notification. It is
19 being converted as we speak.

20 MR. CHAPMAN: 12th and where,
21 Councilman?

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: It is on 12th
23 Street, just south of Jefferson. It is
24 actually in the rear of a cul-de-sac. The
25 front of the property is on the cul-de-sac.

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05

2 And the rear, they are taking the garage out
3 and they are converting it into an apartment.
4 And I am willing to bet that there has been no
5 zoning and no building permits.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

7 Are there any other questions or
8 comments from members of the committee?

9 Seeing none, I would ask anybody
10 else like to testify on this bill?

11 MR. CHAPMAN: Thank you.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Chapman, you
13 can stay there. There are three seats.

14 Good morning. Kindly identify
15 yourself for the record.

16 MS. BARBARA KING: Good morning, my
17 name is Barbara King, and I am a resident of
18 Jefferson Manor.

19 And we have written a number of
20 letters to Councilman Clarke asking him to
21 straighten out the boundaries of Jefferson
22 Manor.

23 The way this bill is written up, the
24 townhouses were built in 1958, and it was two
25 sections. And all of the sudden our section

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05
2 is not included with the other section of
3 Jefferson Manor.

4 We need to be protected by the
5 special control district. At present, the
6 enforcement policy under L&I is not protecting
7 us.

8 And this is the first time I ever
9 seen this gentleman, and I don't understand
10 why he is speaking for our community.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
12 much.

13 Any questions or comments from the
14 committee of this witness?

15 Thank you for coming in to testify.

16 MS. KING: Well, I would like to
17 know what the results is going to be before I
18 leave.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: We have several
20 bills that are listed, and at the conclusion
21 of the hearing the committee will make its
22 determination. Or you could call Councilman
23 Clarke's office later in the day, since it is
24 his bill.

25 MS. KING: Can I ask, what does this

1 BILL NO. 050346 - 6/6/05
2 gentleman have to do with our communities?

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: He makes
4 recommendations; he is from City Planning.

5 MS. KING: You will be hearing from
6 us.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone
8 else to testify on this bill?

9 Seeing no one, I would suggest that
10 Ms. Murray please read the title of Bill No.
11 050363.

12 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050363, an
13 Ordinance approving the eighth amendment of
14 the redevelopment proposal for the Haddington
15 Urban Renewal Area, Unit No. 1, being the area
16 beginning at the intersection of the northerly
17 side of Parrish Street and the westerly side
18 of 52nd Street, including the eighth amendment
19 to the Urban Renewal Plan and the First
20 Amendment to the Relocation Plan, which
21 provides, inter alia, for the additional land
22 acquisition of approximately four properties
23 for residential and related uses; the
24 provision of certain relocation services, as
25 required by law; and declaring that

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05
2 condemnation is not imminent with respect to
3 this project.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: All right. Are we
5 going to hear from Mr. Wetzel or someone from
6 his office?

7 Good morning.

8 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
9 morning.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify
11 yourself for the record and proceed with your
12 testimony.

13 MR. WETZEL: I promise I'm not
14 reading everything in here. Good morning. My
15 name is Herbert Wetzel. I am Executive
16 Director of the Redevelopment Authority of
17 City of Philadelphia.

18 Madam Chairperson and members of the
19 committee, I am here to speak in support of
20 Bill No. 050363, which is the eighth amendment
21 of the redevelopment proposal and the eighth
22 amendment of the urban renewal plan for the
23 Haddington Unit 1 Urban Renewal Area.

24 This bill would authorize the
25 Redevelopment Authority to acquire four

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05
2 properties, four vacant structures will be
3 acquired on behalf of Mr. Carmel Human
4 Services Corporation in partnership with
5 Jacques Ferber.

6 These structures will be
7 substantially rehabilitated and sold to low-
8 and moderate-income first-time home buyers.

9 Madam Chairperson and members of the
10 committee, I respectfully request favorable
11 consideration of Bill No. 050363 and would ask
12 for the suspension of Council Rules to allow
13 first reading on June 9, 2005.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Mr.
15 Wetzel, what is the estimated cost of
16 acquisition for the four properties?

17 MR. WETZEL: The estimated
18 acquisition budget is \$112,600.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry?

20 MR. WETZEL: \$112,600.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Am I correct in
22 assuming that NTI bond proceeds are being used
23 for this acquisition?

24 MR. WETZEL: That is correct, Madam
25 President.

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 PRESIDENT VERNA: What is the source
3 of funding that will be used for the
4 development phase of this proposal, and will
5 that funding come from the Year 31 CDBG
6 budget?

7 MR. WETZEL: My understanding is
8 that this project is going to use the HRP
9 program, the Homeownership Rehab Program,
10 that's administered by the Redevelopment
11 Authority.

12 It could come from Year 31, it could
13 come from Year 30 money, depending on if there
14 is any Year 30 money left.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Great. Mr.
16 Wetzel, can you please explain to this
17 committee what is meant in the last clause in
18 the title of this and all condemnation bills
19 declaring that condemnation is not imminent
20 with respect to the project?

21 MR. WETZEL: Yes, Council President.
22 What's before this body in the form of an
23 ordinance is a redevelopment proposal that was
24 adopted by the Redevelopment Authority's
25 Board, which was reviewed by the Planning

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 Commission and is in front of you today.

3 It adopts the proposal, but does in
4 the require the Redevelopment Authority to
5 acquire these properties. The act of
6 acquisition has to be an act taken by the
7 Board of Directors of the Redevelopment
8 Authority.

9 So Council is authorizing -- or, by
10 authorizing this proposal allows the authority
11 to take that action, but doesn't require or
12 mandate that that action be taken.

13 And there are cases where, for
14 example, Council President, that the project
15 doesn't have all its financing in place, and
16 there may be a desire to wait until the
17 project is fully financed before you would
18 acquire the properties.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: I guess for the
20 benefit of those in the audience, too, how is
21 the declaration of taking different from what
22 we are doing here today in Council?

23 MR. WETZEL: The declaration of
24 taking, which would be approved by the Board
25 of Directors of the Redevelopment Authority,

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 is the actual act of using its eminent domain
3 powers to acquire the real estate.

4 There are other actions that are
5 taken prior to that, including an appraisal of
6 the property, allowing the owner to be
7 accompanied by the appraisal, an offer letter,
8 and other acts taken by the authority.

9 But the declaration of taking itself
10 is the act of the authority using its eminent
11 domain power to acquire the real estate.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you define
13 what a moderate-income buyer is according to
14 the RDA? What is the upper income that a
15 buyer could have and still qualify for a
16 property?

17 MR. WETZEL: Council President, for
18 the specific dollar amounts, we will get back
19 to you.

20 But in the way the city structures
21 its CDBG program, 80 percent of median or less
22 is considered low and moderate. In many
23 cases, low income is around 50 percent of
24 median, in between 50 and 80 is moderate
25 income.

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 And if you would like the specific
3 dollar amounts for the current year for what
4 those represent, depending on family size, we
5 can make sure you have a copy today.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: I would appreciate
7 that.

8 Is the income criteria the same for
9 all affordable housing developments funded
10 through the RDA?

11 MR. WETZEL: The 80 percent of
12 median is tied to all federal funding that the
13 city has adopted, when you adopt the
14 consolidated plan.

15 Occasionally the Redevelopment
16 Authority will receive or have bond proceeds
17 that have a different criteria and,
18 essentially, consider moderate income up to
19 115 percent of median.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

21 Any questions of Mr. Wetzel from
22 members of the committee?

23 The Chair recognizes Councilman
24 Cohen.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: You stated that

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 you have put aside a certain sum of money, I
3 think \$112,000. How was that dollar amount
4 arrived at?

5 MR. WETZEL: There is an estimate of
6 the value of the real estate. There are also
7 the advertising costs, the appraisal costs.
8 There is a contingency of 35 percent in the
9 event that there is a negotiated settlement.
10 There are monies set aside for legal fees and
11 other items that all together compose that
12 number.

13 So it may not cost \$112,600 in the
14 end; it may be less than that or it could be
15 more than that.

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: It could be more?

17 MR. WETZEL: Yes, it could be.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And from whom do
19 you get approval for that larger sum, if
20 needed?

21 MR. WETZEL: For additional sums of
22 money?

23 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes.

24 MR. WETZEL: We would have to come
25 back and get approval from the Administration

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 to spend any additional dollars over that
3 amount.

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is there a
5 document which shows the present amount?

6 MR. WETZEL: Yes, there is.

7 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Could we have a
8 copy of that document? Could you send it to
9 the President, so she can make it available?

10 MR. WETZEL: Yes, we can get you the
11 detailed budget that's behind that number.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And suppose the
13 number is lower than that?

14 MR. WETZEL: Then that money gets
15 reprogrammed and not used.

16 This money, I believe, is in
17 Councilman Nutter's district, so there is a
18 budget for his district. And, so, any unused
19 money then goes back into that budget to be
20 used for future acquisitions.

21 COUNCILMAN COHEN: What about this
22 budget per district; how is that arrived at?

23 MR. WETZEL: I'm sorry, Councilman?

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: How is the budget
25 for each district arrived at?

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 MR. WETZEL: That's in the NTI
3 program statement and budget. There is a
4 detailed breakdown of how the acquisition
5 money was divided among the various districts.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: How it was
7 divided. By whom was it divided?

8 MR. WETZEL: There is three
9 categories, Councilperson: High, districts
10 that had a high level of vacancy and blight; a
11 moderate level; and I'm not quite sure what
12 the other one was, but let's just say it was a
13 very low level of vacancy and blight.

14 And there was a formula developed to
15 divide the acquisition money among the
16 districts based on that calculation.

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Who developed the
18 formula?

19 MR. WETZEL: Councilperson, I
20 believe it was the NTI office that put that
21 together.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Could we have
23 some document showing that, showing how it
24 was --

25 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Could that be
3 sent together with the document establishing
4 the sum of money allotted?

5 MR. WETZEL: Right. That document
6 is contained in the program statement and
7 budget. And we can find the reference page in
8 the program statement and budget that each of
9 you have received.

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right. I
11 would be pleased if you would do that. Thank
12 you very much.

13 MR. WETZEL: You are welcome,
14 Councilman.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Are there any
16 other questions from members of the committee
17 of Mr. Wetzel?

18 Do we have anyone else to testify on
19 this bill?

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: Please approach
21 the witness table. And Doris, you can also
22 approach the witness table.

23 Good morning. Kindly identify
24 yourself, sir, for the record, and proceed
25 with your testimony.

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 REV. ALBERT F. CAMPBELL: I am
3 Albert F. Campbell, Pastor of the Mr. Carmel
4 Baptist Church in West Philadelphia, which is
5 part of the Haddington district.

6 And President Verna and members of
7 the Rules Committee, I am pleased and
8 delighted to have the opportunity to address
9 this group on behalf of the Mr. Carmel Baptist
10 Church, which is currently in the process of
11 redevelopment of its own facilities and,
12 hopefully, the acquisition of other housing
13 locations that will help to expand the
14 services that we already render in this
15 community.

16 Mr. Carmel Baptist Church is 125
17 years old in that location, in Haddington.
18 And we have invested just during my own 39
19 years of tenure there something close to 5 or
20 6 million dollars in redevelopment.

21 We have built Mt. Carmel Gardens,
22 which is a low- and moderate-income housing
23 development adjacent to our church facilities.
24 We have provided counseling for victims of
25 alcohol and drugs and HIV/AIDS. We provide

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05
2 after-school programs for youngsters in
3 reading, writing, and arithmetic, and in
4 music, both voice and instrumental.

5 And we sponsored a successful
6 charter school, at least it is successful up
7 to this point, called Discovery Charter
8 School.

9 So that we feel we have established
10 an important and meaningful track record in
11 the Haddington area. And, so, our desire is
12 to expand our facilities in order to expand
13 our services.

14 But in light of the bills, two of
15 the bills, 050363 and 050366, which have
16 mentioned eminent domain, it is our desire to
17 redevelop the spaces that are made available
18 to us and the houses that are made available
19 to us; but also to rehabilitate other housing,
20 make other housing renewable for the benefit
21 of those persons who may be relocated, who
22 will want to continue to live in the immediate
23 area. And they will be provided with
24 virtually new housing.

25 And we feel that we have the entity,

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05
2 we have Mt. Carmel Human Development
3 Corporation, we have access to responsible
4 legal counsel and financial counsel that will
5 help to stabilize the community.

6 That's our desire, ultimately, to
7 help stabilize what is a changing, if not
8 deteriorating, neighborhood and community.
9 And we think we can play an important role in
10 making that happen, stabilization, both for
11 the present and the long-term future of the
12 neighborhood and community.

13 And I am here on behalf of Mt.
14 Carmel Baptist Church.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
16 much, Reverend. Thank you.

17 Good morning, please identify
18 yourself for the record.

19 THE WITNESS: Hello. I can't hear
20 you.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: I said, please
22 identify yourself for the record.

23 MS. DORIS WARREN: My name is Doris
24 Warren, 5711 Race Street.

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you in favor

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 of the passage of this bill?

3 MS. WARREN: I know nothing about
4 it. I am here for information. This is all
5 that I know.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh, she received a
7 letter.

8 Councilman Nutter.

9 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam
10 Chair.

11 Madam Chair, I would have to believe
12 that the witness is probably holding up a
13 notice that she had received regarding this
14 property.

15 The documents that we have as a part
16 of this package show 5711 Race Street
17 presently as a vacant structure. And, again,
18 as Reverend Campbell has alluded out, this
19 would be part of a revitalization opportunity
20 for the neighborhood.

21 I do not believe that I know the
22 lady individually, or what her circumstance or
23 situation may be. But I fully support both
24 bills, 363 and, I believe it is, 366, as
25 possibly some of the most important work that

1 BILL NO. 050363 - 6/6/05

2 will be done in this part of West
3 Philadelphia.

4 I would be glad to have a
5 conversation, or if she needs to talk to the
6 Redevelopment Authority further, about the
7 matter involving this property. But it is
8 listed as a vacant structure and clearly is in
9 need of rehabilitation.

10 Thank you, Madam Chair.

11 REVEREND CAMPBELL: Madam President,
12 I would be happy for us to sit together and
13 talk about this.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: That would be
15 wonderful. And Councilman Nutter just offered
16 his time and service. Thank you, Reverend.

17 Do we have anyone else to testify on
18 Bill No. 050363? Anyone else to testify on
19 Bill No. 050363?

20 Seeing none, no one, I would ask Ms.
21 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
22 050364.

23 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050364, an
24 Ordinance approving the sixteenth amendment of
25 the redevelopment proposal for the South

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05
2 Central Urban Renewal Area, being the area
3 beginning at the intersection of the southerly
4 side of Washington Avenue projected and the
5 easterly side of Delaware Avenue, including
6 the sixteenth amendment to the urban renewal
7 Plan and the twelfth amendment to the
8 relocation plan, which provides, inter alia,
9 for the additional land acquisition of
10 approximately three properties for residential
11 and related re-uses; the provision of certain
12 relocation services, as required by law; and
13 declaring that condemnation is not imminent
14 with respect to the project.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

16 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
17 morning. My name is Herbert Wetzel, Executive
18 Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the
19 City of Philadelphia.

20 Madam Chairperson and members of the
21 committee, I am here to speak in support of
22 Bill No. 050364, the sixteenth amended
23 redevelopment proposal and the sixteenth
24 amended urban renewal plan for the South
25 Central Redevelopment Area and the South

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05

2 Central Urban Renewal Area.

3 This bill will allow the
4 Redevelopment Authority to acquire a total of
5 three properties, vacant structures, to
6 support new residential project.

7 The planned amendment includes
8 properties to be acquired under the
9 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. This
10 ordinance provides for the acquisition of three
11 properties on behalf of Habitat for Humanity.
12 Habitat will rehabilitate the three vacant
13 structures on South Colorado Street for sale
14 to very-low-income households.

15 This new development in South
16 Central will support prior development by
17 Habitat and will not require additional public
18 subsidy.

19 This project was recommended in the
20 Office of Housing and Community Development's
21 RFP for the acquisition and development of
22 homeownership. The estimated acquisition
23 costs for this project is \$250,000.

24 Madam Chairperson and members of the
25 committee, I respectfully request favorable

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05
2 consideration of Bill No. 050364, and would
3 ask for the suspension of Council Rules to
4 allow first reading on June 9, 2005. Thank
5 you.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
7 Wetzel.

8 I am rather curious, why is it that
9 you have chosen to reveal the cost of
10 acquisition for this bill and two others, but
11 for the vast majority of the bills before us
12 you have included no testimony about the cost
13 of acquisition?

14 MR. WETZEL: You have got a very
15 good eye, Council President, and I would be
16 glad to include it in all in the future.

17 And I can also probably tell you on
18 the ones that don't have it in the actual
19 testimony, I believe I will either get you the
20 answer today or I will be able to tell you now
21 because I may have it in my material.

22 In the future, I will be cognizant
23 of and we will include the cost of acquisition
24 in the testimony directly.

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05

2 Is the cost identified for
3 acquisition just the fair market value
4 compensation for the land, or does it include
5 all RDA costs for legal and advertising, as
6 well?

7 MR. WETZEL: Yes, Council President,
8 the detailed budget that backs up each one of
9 these includes the estimate of the fair market
10 value of the real estate, but also the
11 additional costs associated with acquisition;
12 including appraisals, title reports,
13 advertising costs, potential legal fees, and a
14 contingency fund in the event that there is a
15 negotiated settlement.

16 PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you tell me
17 what the average price of homes in the nearby
18 area would be?

19 MR. WETZEL: Council President, I
20 can't off the top of my head. But we will get
21 that detail from the budget that was put
22 together and deliver it to you.

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: Very well. This
24 is my bill. And I will not at this time, I
25 will repeat, at this time, support the

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05
2 declaration of taking for 1024 South Colorado
3 Street.

4 Do we have any questions from
5 members of the committee?

6 The Chair recognizes Councilman
7 Cohen.

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I haven't heard
9 in any of the bills presented by you, Mr.
10 Wetzel, anything about an investigation as to
11 how the community feels.

12 Are these places without other
13 communities or other people going to be
14 affected by these various condemnations or
15 takings or improvements?

16 MR. WETZEL: Councilman, my
17 understanding in this particular instance, and
18 in many of these instances, this is three
19 vacant shells.

20 I think the Council President has
21 asked us not to acquire one of those three.
22 Am I correct, Council President?

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes. That's 1024
24 South Colorado Street. And I can only talk
25 for my bill, Councilman --

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05

2 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I am not thinking
3 of any particular bill. I am just noting --

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: If I can finish,
5 please.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: I can tell you
8 that both SOSNA and the ward leader have
9 agreed to what we are doing here.

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I am just
11 wondering, don't you, as a matter of course,
12 document your efforts made to inform community
13 residents in case any of them have any
14 knowledge?

15 I am content that the area covered
16 by the Council President is fully dealt with,
17 but I am thinking of other areas. You have
18 covered quite a wide area here this morning.

19 MR. WETZEL: Councilman, what we do
20 is, we rely on the other city agencies that
21 are asking for this acquisition and District
22 Councilpeople to inform us as to whether or
23 not there are any issues with the
24 neighborhood.

25 We would not proceed if the

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05
2 Councilperson or the entity that's asking that
3 we acquire these, if they felt that there
4 wasn't some sense of support for this. So we
5 do rely on others, Councilman, in order to put
6 this package together.

7 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, do you
8 indicate somewhere the extent on which you
9 rely and how deeply you question whoever
10 speaks on behalf of the community to make sure
11 yourself that the investigation has covered
12 enough ground?

13 If I had a conference with each
14 member of City Council to know that each one
15 did a thorough investigation and had full
16 concern, that would be one thing.

17 But District Council members are
18 quite busy, and they may or may not have the
19 time nor the inclination for whatever reason
20 to make a full investigation.

21 I am interested in my duty to
22 protect constituents much more than I am
23 interested in the particular rights of the
24 Council member.

25 (Applause.)

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05

2 MR. WETZEL: I understand,
3 Councilman, and my answer is the same.

4 We are relying on the different city
5 entities that make these requests and working
6 closely with District Councilpeople. That's
7 the extent of our investigation.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: And, Councilman, I
9 am sure that before a Council member
10 introduces an ordinance that's in his
11 district, he certainly wants to be completely
12 aware of --

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I don't like to
14 disagree with Madam President --

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: -- of how that
16 affects the community.

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: There is a
18 difference of opinion with respect to that,
19 particularly on several occasions Council
20 members get very busy, and they may or may not
21 have the time.

22 I think it is the duty of the
23 acquiring agency to make certain, not to
24 depend on unknown factors involving other
25 people's decisions. And, to me, it has always

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05

2 been fundamental that the acquiring agency
3 must make an independent investigation.

4 Has that matter been researched by
5 Redevelopment?

6 MR. WETZEL: No; but I would gladly
7 look into it for you, Councilman

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I would
9 like you to and would be requesting
10 independently a recommendation from the City
11 Solicitor

12 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: And I think that
14 City Council is the authorizing agency, that's
15 why we are here today.

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I'm not trying to
17 lessen the role of the Council member, but I
18 think it gives the Council member full
19 protection.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
21 recognizes Councilman Kelly.

22 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Yes. Mr. Wetzel,
23 I just want to know, these properties, they
24 are not vacant, are they? Or are they vacant?

25 MR. WETZEL: In this ordinance, yes,

1 BILL NO. 050364 - 6/6/05

2 they are.

3 COUNCILMAN KELLY: They are vacant.

4 And I understand that they are being developed
5 by Habitat?

6 MR. WETZEL: Yes. Habitat for
7 Humanity Philadelphia.

8 COUNCILMAN KELLY: In other words,
9 they have the properties in hand and they are
10 doing the restoration or all the improvements
11 to these properties?

12 MR. WETZEL: Well, they don't have
13 them in hand. We have to carry out this
14 ordinance, and then we will convey them to
15 habitat.

16 Habitat has done a number of rehabs.
17 And I think one of the fascinating things with
18 Habitat is that the buyer, the person that's
19 going to buy, actually has to work on the
20 house and help rehab the house they are going
21 to live in. It is a very exciting program.

22 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you.

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

24 Are there any other questions from
25 members of the committee?

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 Do we have anyone else to testify on
3 this bill?

4 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
5 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
6 050365.

7 THE CLERK: 050365, an Ordinance
8 approving the First Amendment of the
9 redevelopment proposal for the 51st and
10 Baltimore Avenue Urban Renewal Area, being the
11 area in and around the 5000 and 5100 block of
12 Baltimore Avenue at 51st Street, including the
13 First Amendment to the urban renewal plan and
14 the relocation plan, which provides, inter
15 alia, for the additional land acquisitions of
16 approximately 24 properties for institutional
17 and related uses; the provision of certain
18 relocation services, as required by law; and
19 declaring that condemnation is not imminent
20 with respect to the project.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. The
22 Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
24 Madam President.

25 We strongly support this bill and

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 its intended use; that is, the redevelopment
3 of this stretch of Baltimore Avenue supported
4 by BARC, Baltimore Avenue Redevelopment
5 Corporation.

6 Almost ten years ago we first met
7 with Bishop Patterson to create this urban
8 renewal area for Mercy Health Center and made
9 a commitment to redevelop this stretch of
10 Baltimore Avenue with the social service theme
11 and recognition of the growing needs of
12 families in adjacent blocks.

13 We welcome the University area
14 residents and institutions, as well as Cedar
15 Park neighbors who may want to deal with the
16 creation of retail shops and push the real
17 estate market.

18 We would like, however, to note that
19 in the 5100 and 5200 blocks of Baltimore
20 Avenue, the churches and pastors in that area
21 have long had a stewardship about what
22 happens.

23 And we hope that the faith-based
24 community and Cedar Park neighbors and others
25 can work together with regard to the future of

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 this area.

3 We applaud faith-based redevelopment
4 plans and it reminds us that this area is a
5 gateway to Southwest, a section of the city
6 that has high rates of disease and
7 unemployment.

8 We believe that this redevelopment
9 proposal will provide a balance for the
10 existing residents, as well as new residents,
11 so that we maintain a diverse and equitable
12 community now and into the future. Thank you.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. The
14 Chair recognizes Mr. Wetzel.

15 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
16 morning. My name is Herbert Wetzel, Executive
17 Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the
18 City of Philadelphia.

19 Madam Chairperson and members of the
20 committee, I am here to speak in support of
21 Bill No. 050365, which is the first amendment
22 of the redevelopment proposal and the first
23 amended urban renewal plan for the 51st and
24 Baltimore urban renewal area.

25 This bill would authorize the

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 24 vacant
3 structures and lots. 21 properties comprised
4 of 6 vacant structures and 15 lots will be
5 acquired on behalf of the Baltimore Avenue
6 Redevelopment Corporation, Incorporated, or
7 BARC.

8 These structures will be demolished
9 and on the assembled land will be a newly
10 constructed with 38,000 square feet community
11 development center, which will be leased by
12 the Richard Allen Preparatory Charter School
13 and shared for night and weekend adult and
14 continuing education programming.

15 Three vacant structures will be
16 acquired on behalf of the Peoples Baptist
17 Church to be fully rehabilitated and used as a
18 community center.

19 Madam Chairperson and members of the
20 committee, I respectfully request favorable
21 consideration of Bill No. 050365 and would ask
22 for the suspension of Council Rules to allow
23 first reading on June 9, 2005.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel, I am
25 assuming that all of the properties that we're

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 referring to in this bill are vacant?

3 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No. No.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: Just a moment,
5 please.

6 MR. WETZEL: The data that we have
7 indicated that all the structures were vacant.

8 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Do your homework.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: So how many
10 properties are we talking about?

11 MR. WETZEL: There's 24 properties,
12 Council President. There are 15 lots and 9
13 structures.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: You know, the 24
15 properties to be acquired in this bill
16 represent one of the larger proposed takings
17 we're considering today.

18 I think the total under
19 consideration is approximately 185 properties;
20 is that correct?

21 MR. WETZEL: That's correct.

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: That makes me
23 wonder how quickly the Redevelopment Authority
24 can process these bills.

25 If we approved these bills today and

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 the Mayor were to sign them this month, when
3 do you reasonably anticipate the Redevelopment
4 Authority will have these properties in their
5 inventory for disposition to redevelopers?

6 MR. WETZEL: Council President,
7 approximately nine months from the time the
8 Mayor approves the ordinance.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: I know that you
10 would probably not have this answer off the
11 top of your head.

12 But of the more than 5,000 parcels
13 that Council has approved for acquisition
14 since 2002, how many have actually been
15 acquired by the RDA and how many have been
16 disposed of to the intended recipients?

17 MR. WETZEL: I can give you a
18 estimate.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: I know you have
20 that information off the top of your head, I
21 just know that.

22 MR. WETZEL: Council President, I
23 wish I did.

24 Well over 2000 have been acquired,
25 and I will have to find out how many have been

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 disposed of.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay.

4 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

5 PRESIDENT VERNA: What is the
6 Baltimore Avenue Redevelopment Corporation?
7 Who is the head of that organization?

8 Would you take the witness table,
9 please. Good morning, sir. Welcome. Kindly
10 identify yourself for the record and proceed
11 with your testimony.

12 BISHOP JOSEPH D. PATTERSON: My name
13 is Joseph D. Patterson. I am the former
14 Pastor of the church at 50th and Baltimore
15 Avenue.

16 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. And,
17 Bishop, you are the head of the organization?

18 BISHOP PATTERSON: Yes, I am.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you tell us
20 who is the head of the Board of the Richard
21 Allen Preparatory Charter School?

22 BISHOP PATTERSON: I am.

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: You are. Fine.

24 BISHOP PATTERSON: When I came to
25 that area, 50th and Baltimore, I began to

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 think in terms of the academics of our young
3 people. And I developed a child care center
4 that had over 175 children, and then we moved
5 into the charter school area. And we now have
6 350 young people, with a waiting list of
7 another 75. And that is the reason why we
8 want to expand our facilities.

9 I also was the builder of the
10 wellness center at 50th and Baltimore Avenue
11 that will be adjacent to this property.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Bishop.
13 Do we have anyone else to testify on
14 this bill?

15 Your name, please. We will take
16 everyone. Please. Please identify yourself,
17 sir, for the record.

18 DR. BENJAMIN SMALLWOOD: I am Dr.
19 Benjamin Smallwood. I am a consultant to the
20 Baltimore Avenue Redevelopment Corporation,
21 and my firm is Management and Environmental
22 Technologies, Inc.

23 Just to add with what Dr. Patterson
24 said, the Baltimore Avenue Redevelopment
25 Corporation was created in 1990, and its

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 mission was to combat deteriorating areas,
3 particularly the Baltimore Avenue business
4 corridor.

5 In 1997, the Baltimore Avenue
6 Redevelopment Corporation was named
7 redeveloper of the 51st and Baltimore Avenue
8 urban renewal area and acquired properties
9 from 5008 Baltimore Avenue to 5038 Baltimore
10 Avenue.

11 Those structures were demolished and
12 a new \$3 million outpatient medical center was
13 constructed in an area which had been
14 heretofore considered medically underserved.

15 In October 1998, the Samuel J.
16 Patterson Mercy Wellness Center opened with a
17 lease to Mercy Health Systems for 15 years,
18 and it carries with it two 15-year options.

19 Additionally, after the opening of
20 the medical center, support for the Baltimore
21 Avenue Community Development Center was
22 requested by BARC and support was received
23 from Councilwoman Jannie L. Blackwell.

24 The community center will be located
25 adjacent to the medical center on 50th and

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 Baltimore Avenue. The Baltimore Avenue
3 Community Development Center will be used by a
4 public education entity and will host evening
5 and weekend job training, education training,
6 and social events for community organizations,
7 adults, and youths.

8 The local community will be involved
9 in the planning of the evening and weekend
10 activities of the center.

11 Thank you.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, sir.

13 Do we have any questions of the
14 witnesses from members of the committee?

15 Thank you very much, Bishop. Thank
16 you very much, sir.

17 We will now hear from members of the
18 community, I assume.

19 THE CLERK: Carla Brown, who has
20 signed.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: She had called and
22 said she wanted to testify.

23 Can you pull the chair closer to the
24 witness table, please, identify yourself for
25 the record, and proceed with your testimony.

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 MS. CARLA BROWN: My name is Carla
3 Brown and I am a property owner in the area
4 that they are talking about redeveloping, that
5 they are stating that all the properties have
6 been researched and they found that they were
7 vacant. My property is not vacant. I am 739
8 South 51st Street.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry. 739 --

10 MS. BROWN: 739 South 51st street.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Now, that is a
12 residential property?

13 MS. BROWN: It was a residential
14 property. It is a garage. I purchased this
15 for a business. I purchased this from the
16 city.

17 And if the city knew that they
18 were -- they already had this in the makings,
19 why did they sell it to me? Why did they sell
20 it to me and let me put my money in it?

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: When did you
22 purchase this from them?

23 MS. BROWN: September last year.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
25 President.

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
3 recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I
5 understand that this may be one of those
6 Lineberger issues. Because Reverend
7 Patterson, from at least ten years, has been
8 working on this, Bishop Patterson and his
9 project. But, you know, Lineberger doesn't
10 always work with City Council. That's one of
11 our myriad issues with them.

12 And I agree with her, knowing that
13 this was well underway, and Bishop Patterson
14 had a record building the wellness center in
15 the middle of the block on Baltimore Avenue,
16 they should communicate.

17 But, you know, it is part of the
18 issues that we have with Lineberger because
19 they should not have had her come out and plan
20 to -- she planned to do a development in a
21 garage that was planned for another project
22 for years and years, at least ten years. So
23 it's --

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: When you say you
25 acquired this property, was it through

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 sheriff's sale?

3 MS. BROWN: I acquired it through
4 sheriff's sale, which means it was public
5 notice. Which means that anybody and
6 everybody that had anything to do with this
7 property should have known that it was up for
8 sheriff's sale.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: And what kind of
10 business are you anticipating?

11 MS. BROWN: Automotive business. It
12 is a garage. It was already a garage. We
13 went -- first of all, we had squatters there,
14 so we had to legally remove the squatters.
15 So, that's the first issue.

16 So now that we are actually
17 physically into the property after all the
18 redevelopment, we are ready to open for
19 business, and now we get this letter.

20 We spent a lot of money on this
21 property, and now we get this letter saying
22 that, "We're going to acquire this property."

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. We will
24 certainly have to put this under
25 consideration.

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 The next witness, please.

3 MS. KATHY HUGGINS: I am Kathy
4 Huggins from the Peoples Baptist Church for
5 the Peoples Community Center. And I have a
6 representative from our organization to speak
7 on behalf of our church.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.
9 Please identify yourself for the record.

10 MS. DEBRA McMILLAN: My name is
11 Debra McMillan, I am one of the Board members
12 of the Peoples Community Center.

13 We would like to thank Council
14 Jannie Blackwell for helping us in the process
15 of identifying these properties for us
16 adjacent to our church for us to be able to
17 continue our community outreach and social
18 services to the neighbors around Baltimore
19 Avenue and Baltimore Avenue corridor.

20 We are a little disappointed that we
21 had a community meeting in April, and to know
22 now that Cedar Park has concerns about our
23 project.

24 But we did have a community meeting
25 where all the neighborhood groups were brought

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 together. And at that time there was a lot of
3 support for our plans.

4 Our first project is a culinary arts
5 program for the neighborhood, to include a
6 collaboration with the Penn State extension
7 program to focus on nutrition, as well as
8 healthy eating and cooking, to start this
9 summer.

10 And we are looking forward to
11 expanding our services to the community after
12 we get these properties, and then are able to
13 plan toward the building of a community center
14 to properly serve the area. Thank you.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
16 much.

17 Are there any questions from members
18 of the committee of these witnesses?

19 Thank you, ladies.

20 Good morning. Please identify
21 yourself for the record, sir.

22 MR. JOSH SCHNEIDER: My name is Josh
23 Schneider, and I am with Cedar Park Neighbors
24 Community Corporation. I would like to thank
25 the Council for hearing us.

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 Cedar Park Neighbors includes the
3 area -- or, Cedar Park includes the area under
4 consideration here. And we are currently
5 coordinating a major effort to renovate the
6 park at 49th and Baltimore, Cedar Park, and
7 have been interested in commercial development
8 and other development on Baltimore Avenue from
9 49th to 52nd. Our boundary goes out to 52nd.

10 And we would very much like to see a
11 comprehensive development plan go forward here
12 and would like dialogue with others about what
13 form this will take.

14 We hope that the full details will
15 be made available to the community and input
16 taken before any construction plans are
17 approved.

18 And we did have this meeting in
19 April, the mentioned meeting, but we really
20 didn't get any information about this project.
21 And we also have some specific concerns which
22 we would like addressed, if we can.

23 There has been no information about
24 the proposed plan shared with residents,
25 really; a very, very tiny bit. And it has

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 been difficult to get any details about the
3 project.

4 And this is a time when there is
5 significant and frustrated demand for retail
6 space on the Baltimore Avenue corridor. And
7 this proposal calls for the elimination of a
8 major portion of retail space to accommodate
9 what we understand -- part of it for what we
10 understand will be parking lots temporarily.

11 And that is because we understand
12 that Peoples Baptist may not have the funding
13 right now to go forward with their community
14 center project on the north side of Baltimore
15 Avenue.

16 We understand that the plan calls
17 for land to be utilized for nonprofit
18 purposes. And we are a little concerned about
19 the undermining of the tax base by changing
20 these properties into nonprofit entities
21 across the board.

22 And we are concerned about the
23 splintering of retail space by the leveling of
24 property on the north side of the avenue, and
25 it may have a significant negative impact on

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2 new and old businesses because of the
3 diminishment of the overall retail potential.

4 And, finally, we are wondering if
5 anyone has determined whether the existing
6 properties are structurally unsound or too
7 expensive to rehabilitate, particularly on the
8 north side of Baltimore, and has consideration
9 been made of the value of the original
10 architecture on the avenue, also considering
11 that real estate values have been increasing
12 in the area.

13 And, finally, it should be noted
14 that several businesses have started,
15 including the Browns, and there is another
16 business in one of the properties that's to be
17 taken on the south side of Baltimore that's
18 currently being rehabbed to be a salon.

19 So we are concerned about taking
20 aware those potential commercial properties.
21 Thank you.

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Schneider,
23 where is your property located?

24 MR. SCHNEIDER: I am not a property
25 owner on the block; I am a representative of

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2 the community organization that covers this
3 neighborhood. And our real concern is that we
4 don't have a comprehensive idea of what this
5 plan consists of.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: I understand.
7 The Chair recognizes Councilman
8 Kelly.

9 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Mr. Schneider, I
10 just want to know, have you been working with
11 the Baltimore Avenue Redevelopment
12 Corporation? Have you recommended --

13 MR. SCHNEIDER: I have had one
14 contact with Dr. Smallwood, who just spoke,
15 and with Dr. --

16 COUNCILMAN KELLY: You seem to be
17 interested in commercial development of that
18 strip, rather than Richard Allen Preparatory
19 Charter School.

20 MR. SCHNEIDER: We are not opposed
21 to the charter school or the community center.
22 We are interested in knowing more about the
23 project, to know what form it will take,
24 whether there is the potential even for retail
25 space on the first floor of it, and other

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2 details like where parking might be.

3 COUNCILMAN KELLY: In other words,
4 you are thinking of mixed use, more or less?

5 MR. SCHNEIDER: That would be of
6 interest to us, yes. And, simply, we would
7 like to have a conversation with the BARC and
8 the Councilwoman's office about this.

9 COMMISSIONER KELLY: I just wanted
10 to clear that up. Thank you.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
12 much.

13 Our next witness, would you please
14 identify yourself for the record, please.

15 MS. VICTORIA BASSI: I am Victoria
16 Bassi. I own a property on 5040 Baltimore
17 Avenue. I bought the property, and they sent
18 me my title for the property, and I am
19 surprised I am hearing they want to repossess
20 the property for their use.

21 I am building a drugstore, an
22 individual drugstore, and I have my plan set,
23 which are they should be finishing by
24 December. So...

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry. Did we

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 understand you to say that you own the
3 property?

4 MS. BASSI: Hello?

5 PRESIDENT VERNA: You do own the
6 property?

7 MS. BASSI: Yes.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: Where is that
9 located.

10 MS. BASSI: 5040 Baltimore Avenue.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: And how long have
12 you been there?

13 MS. BASSI: I bought the property
14 March, and I bought it from the owner. And
15 the owner bought it from sheriff's sale, he
16 said. And I just got my title came in.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: When did you buy
18 the property?

19 MS. BASSI: March.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
21 President, again, this is an instance. As you
22 know, all of us get lists of properties on
23 sheriff's sale, but we never know -- on the
24 other end, we don't get lists of people, if
25 they are purchased or not. So we don't have

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2 any way of knowing that.

3 And these really should not have,
4 after all these years, at least ten years on
5 the project, it should not have happened. But
6 we never get, we don't get information in that
7 regard.

8 MS. BASSI: I came to the city to
9 ask them if my property is among the one they
10 were talking about, and they told me no.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We will
12 work with her.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

14 MS. BROWN: Excuse me. I worked
15 with the sheriff's sale properties. And you
16 can go online. And if you are tracking a
17 property, you can go online and find out when
18 it is going to be sold, what the results were,
19 and you can contact the sheriff's office to
20 find out who bought it.

21 So I can't even believe that this is
22 the second sheriff's sale property that was
23 sold, and -- under this planning.

24 You already knew you wanted it. Why
25 didn't you take it? You had, you had a

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2 greater opportunity of getting it before we as
3 a small businesspeople came along and took our
4 hard-earned money and put it into this
5 property. You had that opportunity.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry. I'm
7 sorry. We have witnesses at the table that I
8 would like to recognize.

9 Sir, please identify yourself for
10 the record.

11 MR. FRANKIE FRANCIS: My name is
12 Frankie Francis, owner of Francis Funeral Home
13 located 5201 Whitney Avenue, which is
14 approximately 100 yards from the properties
15 that are at issue here.

16 The Francis Funeral Home has made a
17 major investment in the community, and also we
18 actually have acquired four of the properties
19 ourselves for the purpose of development.

20 And I want to say that there are
21 three business owners presently sitting here
22 before you all that have a lot at risk, you
23 know.

24 Development is underway, there is a
25 lot going on at the 52nd Street -- 51st Street

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2 area, 51st and Baltimore Street area.

3 You know, pretty much, you know, we
4 stand here to, we want to keep what we have,
5 we don't want to sell it, and development is
6 in progress.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: How long have you
8 been located at your place of business?

9 MR. FRANCIS: Francis Funeral Home
10 has been at this location, we relocated there,
11 approximately in 1999. But prior to that, we
12 have been open, we have been established, for
13 18 years.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
15 President, we remember when this business,
16 this funeral parlor, relocated to the area,
17 and the people only have fine things to say
18 about it. And I know people who do business
19 with them.

20 I had no idea, we had no idea, that
21 he was interested in properties in the area.
22 He didn't contact us. We are happy to work
23 with him in that regard because he has been a
24 good addition to that corner, and we are glad
25 to have him to that side of Baltimore Avenue.

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2 So if they will contact Alicia
3 Snead, we are happy to have discussions with
4 him.

5 But he has interacted with various
6 community groups, et cetera. And, frankly, I
7 am just surprised he didn't contact us,
8 because he does work with businesses and other
9 entities and store owners and, you know, other
10 businesses on the Baltimore Avenue.

11 So if he will contact us, or contact
12 Alicia Snead, we can have a discussion.

13 MR. FRANCIS: Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Thank
15 you.

16 Our next witness.

17 MR. SEAN DORN: My name is Sean
18 Dorn, and I would like to thank Council for
19 letting us all speak.

20 I am a business owner on the 5000
21 block of Baltimore. We opened -- we bought
22 the building two years ago. And we have
23 had -- we have opened a new store, basically a
24 boutique store, gift store, on that block.

25 And since we have opened -- well, in

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2 the time that we were working on that block,
3 every day that I was painting and doing
4 restoration of the commercial space, I would
5 have two or three people stop by asking about,
6 you know, would we be renting that space.

7 I know there is a big demand for
8 commercial development on that block. It is
9 just these buildings that they are in very
10 rough shape, and I think a lot of people have
11 been hesitant to tackle those buildings.

12 I also understand very much that
13 there is financial limitations for what -- in
14 these kind of projects, how much is available.
15 But as a business owner on that block that has
16 seen four new businesses open in the last two
17 years, our business is Mialou at 5009
18 Baltimore. And at, like, 5031, I think there
19 is a store called Culture that's also brought
20 a lot of foot traffic to the block.

21 As much as possible on both these
22 developments, if there is any way, I would
23 like to encourage -- to be a voice for
24 encouraging retaining commercial on the ground
25 floor.

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2 And I realize, of course, that there
3 is limitations in that. But, this is a very
4 busy commercial corridor. I mean, it is on
5 the trolley line, it is a very -- it was once
6 the densest block of store fronts in that --
7 on the entire Baltimore Avenue corridor.

8 So part of the problem is, I have
9 been playing phone tag with BARC. But it is a
10 little -- I have very much respect for what
11 BARC has done with the Mercy Health Center as
12 an addition to the block.

13 But I would very much like to
14 emphasize that, as a business owner on that
15 block, it would be great for any new
16 development on that block that provides
17 community services to include commercial on
18 the ground floor as part of the new
19 development. Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
21 President, if I may. For those who may know
22 the area, it is really blighted, this area we
23 are talking about. And it is just amazing; we
24 have a lot of interest today. And I just
25 regret that we couldn't have had these

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2 meetings earlier.

3 We were at a meeting attended by
4 several hundred people, the meeting that was
5 referenced here. And I believe that, you
6 know, my opinion is always that,
7 well-intentioned people can work things out.

8 So we certainly will be available to
9 have Cedar Park neighbors and BARC have a
10 meeting, but we certainly believe that we
11 should move forward.

12 I mean this is an opportunity to
13 really -- you know, the wellness center was
14 mentioned a few times because it is really a
15 beacon in that area. It is a really, really
16 blighted area.

17 And we are glad to have all of this
18 interest. But, as I said, this has been
19 planned since the wellness center. I mean, we
20 are talking ten years.

21 And we are glad to have the interest
22 now, but we don't believe that it is in the
23 best interests of the community to stop the
24 project; but meet, we will make ourselves
25 available, have Cedar Park Neighbors and BARC

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2 meet, and see what we can work out together.

3 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Councilwoman, I
4 just have a question. How long has this area
5 been a blight?

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It has been
7 blighted -- gosh, I don't know. It has
8 been -- how many years? 20 years? I mean --

9 COUNCILMAN KELLY: In 20 years there
10 hasn't been anyone from the business community
11 to come around and say, we will develop it or
12 we will put stores in, or whatever?

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: There
14 hasn't been that concerted push. No,
15 Councilman, there hasn't.

16 And we want to work with them. And
17 we realize that real estate values here and
18 across the country are moving.

19 But it just seems somehow unfair to
20 now say, we have ideas, when we have been
21 waiting forever and tried -- and the church,
22 Bishop Patterson who has his church on one of
23 the main corridors in that community, said we
24 have got to do something to service the people
25 in the neighborhood.

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2 So absolutely it has been vacant 20,
3 25 years, it has been blighted. And you know,
4 I mean, seriously blighted, so that I am
5 embarrassed every time I go through the area.

6 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you,
7 Councilwoman.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone
9 else to testify on this bill?

10 Please approach the witness table.

11 MS. BROWN: Carla Brown again. I
12 just want to know when we are going to receive
13 an answer as to what the end result will be?

14 Because as it is, being that is my
15 husband's lifeline as far as his business
16 goes, that kind of leaves us flat.

17 We bought this intentionally to open
18 a business that is his business. And if we
19 don't have that business, we have no business.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
21 President, there is no business there now;
22 there is a vacant garage. We are happy to
23 work with her.

24 MS. BROWN: No, it is not. No, it
25 is not. No, it is not. No, it is not. Go

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2 there.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: Just a minute,
4 please.

5 MR. KEITH BROWN: I am her husband,
6 I am Keith Brown.

7 If she or any of her workers were to
8 come around, they would have seen that that
9 place had been rehabbed, with trees planted in
10 it, painted, all redone correctly. If you had
11 been around there.

12 And, like I said, when your city
13 workers, your little project came around to
14 put fences up around it, the only thing that
15 your project came in and broke up the sidewalk
16 with its big tractors while it went and
17 cleaned everything up.

18 Which I then took my money out and
19 patched up the sidewalks to make sure that it
20 was correct. \$3,000 of my own cash.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I invite my
22 colleagues to visit the area.

23 MS. BROWN: I do, too. I would like
24 you to come around there and see, some of your
25 workers.

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2 PRESIDENT VERNA: I can see you are
3 getting very emotional.

4 MS. BROWN: This is what we do.

5 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel, please
6 approach the witness table.

7 Mr. Wetzel, assuming that the
8 Redevelopment Authority moves forward with the
9 acquisition, can you tell us what compensation
10 are the openers entitled to?

11 MR. WETZEL: The owners are entitled
12 to the fair market value of their property.
13 They are entitled, if there are operating a
14 business, for any cost of moving any machinery
15 or equipment.

16 They are entitled to services to
17 help them locate another facility. They are
18 entitled to up to \$10,000 for business
19 reestablishment purposes.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you understand
21 that?

22 MS. BROWN: Oh, I understand that.

23 COUNCILMAN KELLY: How about
24 renovations, if they made improvements to
25 the --

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2 MR. WETZEL: Those improvements
3 should be considered when the appraisal is
4 done as an increase in the value of the
5 property.

6 COUNCILMAN KELLY: But, for
7 instance, if they put a new roof on or
8 whatnot, they had a bill to prove that they
9 spent thousands of dollars for a new roof, you
10 would automatically include that?

11 MR. WETZEL: No. The property would
12 be appraised by an appraiser.

13 They would also have a right to have
14 an appraisal done, and we would provide them
15 up to \$500 towards an appraisal.

16 If their appraisal and our appraisal
17 were close, you could have a negotiated
18 settlement. If not, they have a right to have
19 a hearing at a Board of U, who essentially is
20 appointed by judges to hear the case, and then
21 a ruling could be done at the Board of U.

22 And then there is also the option of
23 Common Pleas Court.

24 COUNCILMAN KELLY: They do have a
25 right to appeal, in other words?

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2 MR. WETZEL: Yes, they do. And they
3 have a right to go to Common Pleas Court, as
4 well.

5 MS. BROWN: Which means spend more
6 money? Do we have to spend more money now?

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: I don't think that
8 you may have heard what Mr. Wetzel said.

9 MR. WETZEL: My understanding is --
10 and correct me, Councilwoman -- you said you
11 would be willing to sit down and talk with
12 folks?

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely.
14 Always. We have out there every day, all the
15 time. I am available. I am at meetings seven
16 days a week. You know, this is the first that
17 I heard that they or any of these folks have
18 an issue.

19 MR. BROWN: Well, when you were in
20 the meeting a couple of months ago down there,
21 don't you take a walk around the neighborhood
22 to see? I mean, I'm sure you do. But you
23 weren't paying close attention to, I am sure,
24 some of the houses then.

25 That's the answer I expect. No

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2 answer.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
4 President, I am work hard. I am out in that
5 area every day. So if there is an issue, we
6 have said we are willing to work with anybody
7 and everybody.

8 And out of that meeting, we did not
9 get -- it was a big community meeting, and we
10 thought it ended positively. And this is the
11 first time I am getting this feedback that
12 people have an issue in a public forum.

13 We are happy to meet. We schedule
14 meetings with everyone, and had that meeting
15 and had all the ministers and everybody else
16 there. I mean, it is what we do.

17 I believe in my community. I
18 believe in the residents there. We are happy
19 to work with them. We can argue, but it is
20 not going to change anything.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel, I am
22 assuming that the acquisition and relocation
23 of the businesses is going to be very costly.
24 Wouldn't you be in agreement with me?

25 MR. WETZEL: I'm sorry, Council

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2 President?

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: Won't the
4 acquisition and the relocation of businesses
5 be very costly?

6 MR. WETZEL: It depends on what the
7 appraised value of the real estate is and
8 whether or not there is significant machinery
9 and equipment that needs to be moved. Or, if
10 it is left in place, we have an obligation to
11 purchase it.

12 But, again, the question is,
13 ultimately, does this project and any public
14 purpose outweigh that. And that's a judgment
15 call that has to be made by a body like this
16 and our Board of Directors.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: I know that you
18 are really quite emotional right now. And I
19 think it is imperative that all of you who
20 have concerns about this sit with Mr. Wetzel
21 and Councilwoman Blackwell and try to work
22 this out to the best of everybody's interest.
23 Okay.

24 Do we have anyone else to testify on
25 this bill?

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2 Yes. Mr. Schneider, is it?

3 MR. SCHNEIDER: Yes. Briefly I just
4 wanted to emphasize, again, we are not against
5 this Baltimore Avenue Redevelopment
6 Corporation project, nor are we against
7 Patterson's project.

8 But we -- our concern with the
9 Baltimore Avenue Redevelopment Corporation
10 project, in my communications with Dr.
11 Smallwood, my understanding as of about a
12 month and a half ago was that there is no
13 final architectural plan yet for this project.
14 I don't know if that has changed.

15 But the parcels under consideration
16 include about two blocks of vacant lot, which
17 is a serious problem for the neighborhood.
18 And I'm not sure whether the plan could make
19 better use of the vacant land, rather than
20 existing properties. So, that's number one.

21 And then on the north side of
22 Baltimore Avenue, the properties that
23 Patterson would like to take, our concern
24 would be severalfold.

25 First of all, if it is going to be

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 turned into a parking lot as an interim
3 project while money is being raised, because
4 we have heard there isn't funding in place for
5 them to actually build new buildings in that,
6 the old building's place, so that's a concern
7 to us. Having a parking lot is a concern to
8 us.

9 And the destruction of the old
10 properties, if they could be rehabbed, is of
11 concern to us, in addition to having
12 commercial space.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Well, all of the
14 issues as you have expressed and concerns are
15 not something that this committee could be
16 responding to.

17 As I said, you are going to have to
18 get together with Councilwoman Blackwell, I
19 assume the Bishop, and Mr. Wetzell, and whoever
20 else could give you the information that you
21 are seeking.

22 MR. SCHNEIDER: Okay. We have
23 tried, and we will again. Thank you.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

25 Do we have anyone else to testify on

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05

2 this bill?

3 Seeing no one.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
5 President.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes, Councilwoman.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We are not
8 sure that even all code requirements are even
9 in compliance with regard to all of that. So
10 all this arguing, you know, for no reasons.

11 You know, we are not even sure that
12 they are in compliance with all our city rules
13 and regs and tax requirements.

14 But, again, we want to work with
15 everyone. But, as Councilman Kelly asked,
16 after 25 years, it is just makes me wonder
17 why, if folks had other ideas, and even Cedar
18 Park, if they had other mixed-use issues, we
19 worked with them on everything else, I was
20 with them at an affair last week.

21 That's why we are here. We are the
22 Councilperson elected to represent the area.
23 You want to work with me, come. If not, I
24 have no way of knowing if, when I interact
25 with you, you don't say it. And we have been

1 BILL NO. 050365 - 6/6/05
2 meeting with Bishop Patterson all these years
3 and years.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone
5 else to testify on this bill?

6 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
7 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
8 050366.

9 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050366, an
10 Ordinance approving the eighth amendment of
11 the redevelopment proposal for the Haddington
12 Urban Renewal Area, Unit No. 2 and Unit No. 3,
13 being the area beginning at the northwest
14 corner of Parrish and 52nd Street to the
15 southerly side of Wyalusing Avenue, including
16 the fourth amendment to the urban renewal plan
17 and the third amendment to the relocation
18 plan, which provides, inter alia, for the
19 additional land acquisition of approximately
20 12 properties for residential and related
21 uses; the provision of certain relocation
22 services, as we required by law; and declaring
23 that condemnation is not imminent with respect
24 to the project.

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel, I

1 BILL NO. 050366 - 6/6/05

2 invite you to the witness table.

3 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good

4 morning.

5 PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.

6 MR. WETZEL: Madam Chairperson and

7 members of the committee, I am here to speak

8 in support of Bill No. 050366, which is the

9 eighth amendment of the redevelopment proposal

10 and the fourth amendment of the urban renewal

11 plan for Haddington Units No. 2-3 urban

12 renewal area.

13 This bill would authorize the

14 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 12

15 properties. 12 vacant structures will be

16 acquired on behalf of Mt. Carmel Human

17 Development Corporation, in partnership with

18 Jacques Ferber.

19 These structures will be

20 substantially rehabilitated and sold to low-

21 and moderate-income first-time home buyers.

22 Madam Chairperson and members of the

23 committee, I respectfully request favorable

24 consideration of Bill No. 050366 and would ask

25 the suspension of Council Rules to allow first

1 BILL NO. 050366 - 6/6/05

2 reading on June 9, 2005.

3 Madam President, this bill is a
4 companion bill to the first bill that was
5 heard today. The church actually is near two
6 urban renewal areas, so this is the second one
7 that adds additional properties for the church
8 to rehabilitate and sell.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: I am just a little
10 curious, how is the Haddington Units No. 2-3
11 urban renewal area different from the
12 Haddington Unit No. 1 urban renewal area?

13 MR. WETZEL: I would like to ask a
14 staff person to go up there and point those
15 out.

16 Council President, sometimes these
17 things are really old and it is hard for
18 anybody on a temporary basis to determine why
19 they would even name something they way they
20 named it.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: While he is
22 walking up to the map, can you give us the
23 estimated cost for acquisition for these 12
24 properties?

25 MR. WETZEL: \$286,000.

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2 PRESIDENT VERNA: \$286,000?

3 MR. WETZEL: That is correct.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. There is 2.

5 And where is 1? Okay.

6 Are they directly adjacent to each

7 other?

8 MR. WETZEL: Yes, they are. 1 is

9 just beneath 2, so that 1 is here.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Very well. Thank

11 you very much.

12 Any questions from members of the

13 committee?

14 Do we have anyone else to testify on

15 this bill?

16 Good morning, sir. Please identify

17 yourself, for the record.

18 MR. RAY BOUN: My name is Ray Boun.

19 I own a property at 5852 Race. I would like

20 to ask the Council to exclude that property

21 from this bill that's being presented right

22 now.

23 I have an individual who wants to

24 take that property and renovate it and use it

25 for a childcare center. And I can't see why

1 BILL NO. 050366 - 6/6/05
2 the city wants to pay money for a private
3 individual who is going to take over and have
4 to spend all the city's money. And he is
5 ready to do it now.

6 We just got a notice like two
7 weeks -- less than a week. Actually, picked
8 up mine only on Friday, come down for a
9 hearing, and the other one was dated on the
10 23rd. So we don't even know what's going on.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Well, I think
12 that's an issue you would have to discuss
13 with -- Councilman Nutter is just walking in.
14 And, sir --

15 The Chair recognizes Councilman
16 Kelly.

17 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Sir, you own this
18 property now?

19 MR. BOUN: I own the property. The
20 property is vacant.

21 COUNCILMAN KELLY: When did you
22 purchase it.

23 MR. BOUN: I didn't purchase it. It
24 was left to me in a will. It was left to me.

25 COUNCILMAN KELLY: It was left to

1 BILL NO. 050366 - 6/6/05

2 you?

3 MR. BOUN: Right.

4 COUNCILMAN KELLY: And before that
5 the person --

6 MR. BOUN: It was a drugstore at one
7 time. And now it was left to me. And we have
8 a lot of people that want to use the property
9 as sort of a grocery-store-type thing, but
10 they did not -- the people in the area did not
11 agree to have that. I was talking to people
12 just informally.

13 COUNCILMAN KELLY: And what is it
14 being used for now?

15 MR. BOUN: Now, it is vacant now.

16 COUNCILMAN KELLY: How long has it
17 been vacant?

18 MR. BOUN: It has been vacant for
19 several years.

20 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Several years?

21 MR. BOUN: Yes.

22 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Okay.

23 MR. BOUN: And, also, this gentleman
24 wants to use it, ready to renovate, bring it
25 up to snuff, and we were just getting ready to

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2 do it, when we got this notice. So that's why
3 I am here to ask that it be excluded from this
4 bill.

5 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
7 recognizes Councilman Nutter.

8 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam
9 Chair.

10 Sir, I apologize. I was not in the
11 room when you came up to the table. It is my
12 understanding you are the owner of the
13 property; is that correct?

14 MR. BOUN: That is correct.

15 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: How long have
16 you owned the property?

17 MR. BOUN: It's been -- it's about
18 '92.

19 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And who is the
20 person who is interested in renovating the
21 property?

22 MR. BOUN: His name is Tyrone Brown.

23 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And what does he
24 do?

25 MR. BOUN: He is, I guess you call

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2 it, an entrepreneur. He has -- he does
3 redevelopment or remodeling on the side, has
4 another job.

5 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: What do you
6 mean, "on the side"?

7 MR. BOUN: He remodels houses. And
8 he wants to use this property to develop -- to
9 put the property up for code for a daycare
10 center.

11 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand.
12 What do you mean, he does it on the side?
13 What does he do?

14 MR. BOUN: I mean, this is just
15 another source of his income, to renovate.
16 And he does that type of work, renovating, and
17 he has done it for several years.

18 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: What's his main
19 income?

20 MR. BOUN: His main income, he works
21 for the City of Philadelphia.

22 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

23 MR. BOUN: I'm not sure exactly what
24 the -- his actual area where he works. It's
25 like, I guess -- I don't know, you guys doing

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2 this redevelopment and stuff like that. And
3 he does it, is tear down buildings and
4 whatnot. I don't know.

5 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: For the city?

6 MR. BOUN: For the city.

7 So he says he know how it does, he
8 has been doing other work, and he wants to use
9 that property.

10 He has a family that lives
11 next-door, so he is very interested in doing
12 that.

13 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So you own the
14 property. The property is on the list. You
15 are trying to work a deal with someone else
16 who works for the city so the property is
17 not --

18 MR. BOUN: He works for the city. I
19 mean, there is not any kind of funny business
20 going on. He just -- I know the family, and
21 he wants to -- he doesn't want to have a
22 business that's next-door to him where you
23 have a lot of people hanging out on the
24 corner. It is a corner property.

25 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand

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2 that.

3 MR. BOUN: And we have been trying
4 to find somebody that's suitable to keep the
5 property -- keep the -- so the property will
6 not go down the tubes.

7 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, you are
8 going down a path that I don't particularly
9 want to go down.

10 So, the property is on the list. I
11 expect that the bill is going to go forward.
12 Anything else that you would like to try to
13 work out, you are going to need to have a
14 conversation with the Redevelopment Authority
15 about that.

16 The property is not going to be
17 taken off the list, and it is going to stay
18 there. Okay?

19 MR. BOUN: Okay.

20 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: That's the
21 situation.

22 All these other side issues, and who
23 is working with who and who is connected to
24 who, other than trying to get an understanding
25 of what's going on here, I'm not getting into

1 BILL NO. 050366 - 6/6/05
2 those matters. That's not a place for me to
3 be.
4 But the property is vacant?
5 MR. BOUN: Yes.
6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. All
7 right. What's the condition of it?
8 MR. BOUN: It needs to be renovated.
9 We have some windows that were broken.
10 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: The property is
11 considered dangerous, is that not right?
12 MR. BOUN: Not to my estimation, no.
13 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Are you an
14 engineer?
15 MR. BOUN: No, I am not an engineer.
16 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I think it has
17 been examined by engineers and I think it is
18 in a dangerous situation.
19 MR. BOUN: I don't know how they
20 examined it. But, okay. I will go along with
21 what you are saying.
22 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: The gentleman
23 next to you would love to have a conversation
24 with you after this hearing.
25 Thank you for coming.

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2 MR. BOUN: All right.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone
4 else to testify on this bill?

5 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
6 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
7 050367.

8 THE CLERK: Bill 050367, an
9 Ordinance approving the third amendment of the
10 redevelopment proposal for the 45th and Sansom
11 urban renewal area, being the area generally
12 bounded by Market Street on the north, South
13 44th Street on the east, Walnut Street on the
14 south, and Farragut Street on the west,
15 including the third amendment to the urban
16 renewal plan and the First Amendment to the
17 relocation plan, which provides, inter alia,
18 for the expansion of the northern boundary of
19 the urban renewal area from Chestnut Street to
20 Market Street between 44th and Farragut
21 Street, for the additional land acquisition of
22 approximately 11 properties for residential
23 and related uses; the provision of certain
24 relocation services, as required by law and
25 declaring that condemnation is not imminent

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2 with respect to the project.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel, please
4 proceed with your testimony.

5 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Thank you.
6 Good afternoon Madam Chairperson and members
7 of the committee. I am here to speak in
8 support of Bill No. 050367, the third amended
9 redevelopment proposal and the third amended
10 urban renewal plan for the 45th and Sansom
11 redevelopment area and the 45th and Sansom
12 urban renewal area.

13 This bill will allow the
14 Redevelopment Authority to acquire a total of
15 11 properties, 4 vacant structures and 7
16 vacant lots, to support a new residential
17 project.

18 The plan amendment includes
19 properties to be acquired under the
20 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. The
21 purpose of this amendment is to provide for
22 the acquisition of these 11 properties on
23 behalf of Partnership CDC.

24 The Partnership will redevelop the
25 properties into single-family homes for sale

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2 at market rates.

3 This project was recommended in the
4 Office of Housing and Community Development's
5 RFP for acquisition and development for
6 homeownership. The estimated acquisition
7 costs for this project are \$580,000.

8 Madam Chairperson and members of the
9 committee, I respectfully request favorable
10 consideration of Bill No. 050367, and would
11 ask for the suspension of Council Rules to
12 allow first reading on June 9, 2005. Thank
13 you.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

15 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
16 Blackwell.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
18 Madam President. We are happy to speak in
19 support of this bill.

20 This is the second phase of a
21 redevelopment project under the Partnership
22 Community Development Corporation and a joint
23 venture with Charles Lomax. We are especially
24 pleased that we have minority market-rate
25 developer in our district who is doing this

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2 project.

3 To Mr. Wetzel, we say that a
4 gentleman came to us with regard to 131 South
5 46th Street. We will speak to you to the side
6 to talk about that, before the hearing is
7 over, to see if we need to support that or
8 not.

9 And let me just take advantage of
10 the opportunity to speak, to talk about those
11 folks who weren't even zoned for business, who
12 came in to complain.

13 It is very unfortunate to take our
14 time, when they are not even in order. To say
15 all this about business, they are not even
16 zoned for business and not zoned for auto
17 repair, in spite of all that fussing that was
18 done.

19 All right. Thank you, Madam
20 President. That's just an aside.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel. The
22 bill before us states that 11 properties will
23 be acquired, as does your testimony, but then
24 your testimony states that 4 vacant structures
25 and 11 vacant lots will be acquired, which

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2 would total 15 properties.

3 MR. WETZEL: Let me look at the
4 data.

5 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do I assume that
6 there are 7 lots? Are there 11?

7 MR. WETZEL: Council President,
8 there are 7 lots. My error. You are really
9 on it today.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: I just wanted to
11 make that correction for the record.

12 Normally the bills we consider for
13 eminent domain support affordable housing
14 developments. Your testimony states that
15 these will be market-rate homes.

16 That being the case, will the
17 developer be paying the RDA for the costs of
18 land acquisition so that those dollars can be
19 recycled into RDA's acquisition fund?

20 MR. WETZEL: Yes. The policy that
21 was adopted in the program statement and
22 budget with regards to properties acquired by
23 the bond funds from NTI require that
24 properties be disposed of for projects that
25 are going to sell at fair market value, that

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2 the actual land or the land and the buildings
3 be sold at fair market value.

4 And those funds then either go back
5 into the original administration pot, if
6 that's where the source was, or into the
7 District Councilperson's fund.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

9 Do we have anyone on the committee
10 to ask questions of Mr. Wetzel?

11 Good afternoon. Please identify
12 yourself for the record and proceed with your
13 testimony.

14 MR. BLAIN STODDARD: Good afternoon.
15 My name is Blain Stoddard, I am Executive
16 Director of the Partnership CDC. We are in
17 Council District 3. And I am here to testify
18 in support of this bill with regards to what
19 we are doing.

20 And I do have prepared notes, but I
21 am going to defer, as usual, from my prepared
22 notes to talk about two issues.

23 And one goes directly to your
24 question, Madam Chair, and to the
25 distinguished Councilpeople that are present,

1 BILL NO. 050367 - 6/6/05
2 and to our Councilperson, Jannie Blackwell.

3 The dollars that RDA is actually
4 using to acquire these properties were
5 actually from the first phase, where we paid
6 in to the RDA to purchase the properties. So
7 those dollars are being recycled. So this is
8 a testament to the success of the program.

9 Let me also say this: Of the
10 properties we are doing, although they are
11 market rate, we are doing 10 percent below
12 market rate for low income for this one
13 project.

14 For all the other projects across
15 West Philadelphia that we do, all those
16 projects are low-income housing. So this is
17 the only market-rate project we are doing
18 based on the specifications that we were given
19 by NTI.

20 Two other points I want to make.
21 One is, the Mayor of Philadelphia, along with
22 our Councilperson -- you were there, Madam
23 Chairperson -- signed an NTI bill on the 4500
24 block off Sansom Street two and a half years
25 ago, and the construction has started on that

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2 block.

3 So we are very happy to report that.
4 There was a press conference, and something is
5 actually happening. So, that's the first
6 point.

7 My second point is in defense of our
8 Councilperson, Councilwoman Blackwell. And I
9 am going to say this publicly for the record
10 as it relates to how we treat people with this
11 relocation business, because I know a lot of
12 people are here and they are concerned.

13 Let me say this: If you are in the
14 3rd Councilmanic District, nobody, I repeat
15 nobody, is going to be relocated unless they
16 are well taken care of. We do not put people
17 out on the streets.

18 PRESIDENT VERNA: It is a shame you
19 weren't testifying prior to the other people
20 testifying.

21 THE WITNESS: We moved -- by the
22 way, for the record, these houses are sinking
23 homes. We have had two engineering studies,
24 one by the City of Philadelphia and one
25 commissioned by the Partnership CDC, that says

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2 that there is a creek running under here.

3 And for new housing to be built in
4 this area, we have to put pilings 20 or 30
5 feet into the ground, and then on top of these
6 steel pilings you can put a new foundation.

7 So that's critical, that the
8 committee knows that this is the sinking homes
9 area on Sansom Street. So we strongly believe
10 that these houses and this land should be
11 taken so that new housing can go here, but
12 they have to be built and engineered in such a
13 way that they can withstand for another 100
14 years. And we have engineering studies to
15 prove that.

16 But my last point, again, is about
17 this relocation issue. We relocated two
18 families, the Ransoms and the Tucks. And some
19 of these people came to this City Council and
20 testified. And I wish they were here today.

21 We put them in Korman Suites when we
22 moved them out of their houses. Councilwoman
23 was able to work out a deal with the
24 Redevelopment Authority. We were able to
25 purchase new homes for them. And, actually,

1 BILL NO. 050367 - 6/6/05
2 we paid the movers to move them from their
3 house to the Korman Suites, from Korman
4 Suites, into their new homes. One family
5 moved into Yeadon and another moved into
6 Overbrook. And after they moved, they called
7 to thank us about the way in which they were
8 treated.

9 So, again, the Councilwoman has set
10 up very high standards for the City of
11 Philadelphia to follow in the way we treat
12 people and in the way we deal with this real
13 estate issue. Because these homes are
14 sinking, and the families didn't want to move.

15 And I kept going back night after
16 night. I would sit with these families at
17 their dinner table. And we said, basically,
18 we are not going to do you in. We are not
19 going to do you in.

20 And we are proud to say that for
21 everything we have promised these families, we
22 have kept that. I don't know what the other
23 developers are doing across the city, but I
24 can tell you in the 3rd Councilmanic District,
25 that the families that are affected, thanks to

1 BILL NO. 050367 - 6/6/05
2 Councilwoman Blackwell and to the
3 Redevelopment Authority, they are well taken
4 care of.

5 We have no money because we spent
6 all our money on relocating these people. But
7 it is better to be broke and have your
8 reputation, rather than have money in the bank
9 and have no reputation at all in the
10 community.

11 And, again, I want to thank this
12 able body for all the support they have given
13 us over the years, especially our
14 Councilwoman.

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
16 Councilman.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Anyone else to
19 testify on this bill?

20 MR. STEVEN LON: Good afternoon
21 Councilman, I am the owner of.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: State your name,
23 for the record.

24 MR. LON: Steven Lon, the owner of
25 122 South 46th Street. We have a plan that we

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2 have developed to rehab the property. We have
3 been tied up because there is a petition
4 before the Board of Review of Taxes on some
5 previous taxes that are being challenged.
6 That is the only thing holding us. We don't
7 think that it is appropriate to be subject to
8 condemnation.

9 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: This is one
10 property?

11 MR. LON: That's correct. 122 South
12 46th Street.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Is it occupied?

14 MR. LON: No; we are working on it.

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You are working
16 on it currently. Mr. Stoddard?

17 MR. STODDARD: Again, Mr. Chairman
18 and to the Councilpeople, we believe -- and we
19 have engineering studies to prove -- that the
20 properties as they stand right now will
21 eventually all sink.

22 So far, 50 properties or so have
23 sunk in that area, and there's Mill Creek runs
24 under there. And sooner or later these
25 properties will have to be taken down because

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2 the foundation will not be able to stand
3 long-term.

4 And that is our position, and we
5 have engineering studies to prove that, and
6 that's how we feel.

7 Now, let me just say this: I feel
8 that all the homeowners, whether they are
9 absentee landlords or they are there, I feel
10 that they should be treated in a fair and
11 equitable manner. But those properties, sir
12 and madam, will eventually sink.

13 MR. LON: May I respond to that?
14 What he say in effect presumes that they are
15 the only engineers in the city or in the
16 country that are qualified to view the house.
17 We have our own engineers.

18 When we finish submitting this to
19 the License and Inspection Department, they
20 will check the quality of the work to be done.
21 So that I hear that the place is not good and
22 we are the only person to be able to fix it is
23 not acceptable.

24 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Let me ask the
25 question. I'm not familiar with the project.

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2 I mean, Councilwoman can. If there is one
3 property -- is it an entire block?

4 MR. STODDARD: It is on a T. So you
5 have some properties running down South 46th
6 Street, the 100 block, and then you have some
7 properties on the 4600 block of Sansom. So
8 you have some going east/west on Sansom and
9 then south on South 46th Street.

10 MR. LON: Excuse me, Councilman.
11 This particular property is not on the corner
12 of either block; it is in the center. So I
13 don't see the need for this to be subject to
14 condemnation with reference to their project.
15 This should be out of their project.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: If there are
17 subsidence problems -- if there are, because I
18 am hearing now that there are conflicting
19 engineering reports -- the redevelopment of
20 the site, how would you be able to resolve
21 that issue? Would you have to do massive
22 excavation and fill?

23 MR. STODDARD: Yes, sir.

24 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: If there is a
25 creek underneath, wouldn't that creek --

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2 MR. STODDARD: There are actually
3 two studies in place that were commissioned by
4 two different people.

5 The City of Philadelphia did
6 commission their own study, L&I, which is
7 separate than the Partnership CDC. We did
8 commission the study working with Jeremy
9 Novak's organization.

10 And what we found is, yes, there has
11 massive excavation. And then after you
12 excavate, you have to put steel pilings down
13 into the ground before you can build or put a
14 foundation on top of the pilings. You have to
15 actually pour steel into the ground.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Let me ask you a
17 question. If somehow your property were able
18 to stay at that location, would you have to
19 have a similar treatment? How would you
20 treat?

21 MR. LON: Sure no doubt about that.
22 That's what I said earlier.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You would do
24 that for an existing property?

25 MR. LON: That is what I said. If

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2 you are to fix the property, it would be
3 subject to the qualification required by the
4 city, that's one thing.

5 It is interesting thing, is that he
6 is talking about corner. This is not corner.
7 And if they were to take all the block -- this
8 is at the middle of the block. If they were
9 to take all the block, that's a different
10 issue.

11 So I don't even understand why this
12 property should be subject to their job,
13 unless they can satisfy the concept that this
14 particular property, the engineering suggests
15 that this should be part of their project.

16 He is not suggesting that the whole
17 block should be taken; he is suggesting that
18 this particular property, which is in the
19 middle. So they are picking and choosing, and
20 that is not acceptable. It should not
21 acceptable to the Council, please.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Let me ask a
23 question with respect to occupancy, because I
24 think this is probably going to come up in a
25 number of bills we hear today. And I guess

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2 this is directed to Mr. Wetzel.

3 In the instance where a property
4 owner, you know, whereas the property comes to
5 us, City Council, and says it is occupied or
6 says it is vacant, and it is indicated on the
7 condemnation list that it is vacant and the
8 property owner says, well, it may be vacant,
9 but I am currently renovating the property,
10 how does the RDA determine whether or not
11 there is some active renovation,
12 rehabilitation of a building?

13 Is there a threshold in terms of
14 activity or building permits, or what?

15 MR. WETZEL: No, there isn't. And I
16 will tell you the reason why.

17 The properties -- the relevancy of
18 whether it is occupied or not is a budgetary
19 issue. If the desire is to acquire 14
20 properties for a specific purpose, whether
21 that be retail, commercial, residential, et
22 cetera, that's the redevelopment proposal.
23 The proposal is to acquire these properties to
24 do a project.

25 And, so, the relevancy has a lot to

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2 do with cost and budgeting, not so much -- for
3 the individual, obviously, who is doing the
4 work and were to get a letter saying that
5 there is an interest in acquiring the
6 property, it is very relevant to that
7 individual.

8 But for the purposes of planning a
9 project, it is not -- it is important for
10 budgetary purposes to know how many
11 acquisitions of properties are going to be
12 acquired are occupied, how many are
13 residential, how many are commercial.

14 The other part of this is -- and I
15 think it is a good thing that we are facing --
16 is that we now have a more dynamic real estate
17 market.

18 There was a time in which no one
19 would come forward on many, many of these
20 redevelopment proposals because there was no
21 value in the real estate.

22 So to a certain degree, with a
23 dynamic market, you heard earlier somebody
24 acquired a property in March. Maybe they have
25 started rehab, maybe they haven't. I don't

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2 know if there is any way that we could tell
3 other than going out maybe the week before we
4 have the hearings and doing one more survey,
5 for example.

6 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So with respect
7 to the level of activity in a building, it is
8 really not the jurisdiction of the
9 Redevelopment Authority to determine if there
10 is an active renovation of the building, or --
11 I mean, I only say that, as a Councilperson,
12 if I have to make a decision to maybe take a
13 property off a list or delay the condemnation,
14 if that person is actively renovating a
15 property, how would we know?

16 MR. WETZEL: If somebody comes here
17 and testifies that they are actively
18 renovating a property, we could, on your
19 behalf, do the research for you to make a
20 determination, does it have the building
21 permit, go out and inspect the property.

22 I don't know if everyone on Council
23 is aware, we could acquire the property and
24 revest it to the owner under a rehab
25 agreement.

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2 Or you could say -- or you could ask
3 us not to acquire on the commitment that the
4 individual is going to fix it up. And you can
5 hold them to that commitment for if down the
6 road, six months from now, they have done
7 nothing, you could suggest that we acquire it
8 again.

9 So you do have options. And, as I
10 mentioned earlier, the approval of any one of
11 these ordinances is not a condemnation, it is
12 not the use of eminent domain.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Just authorizing
14 you to proceed?

15 MR. WETZEL: It is authorizing. And
16 as you and other Councilpeople know, we work
17 very closely with District Councilpersons
18 regarding properties. And in many cases, you
19 know, we have been able to re-vest title to
20 somebody who is actually doing, you know, the
21 rehabilitation of the property.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. Thank
23 you. Anyone else? Anymore testimony on this?
24 Thank you.

25 MR. LON: If I may, can I ask a

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2 question?

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Certainly.

4 MR. LON: My concern is being
5 prejudiced. What I understand is that they
6 pick and choose 126 South 46th. There is 124
7 South 46th, why isn't that on the list? Are
8 they picking and choosing? That's what I want
9 to know.

10 MR. STODDARD: Yes, sir, we have
11 applied for the whole block. We have applied
12 for all of the 4600 block. And we have
13 applied for the whole block of South 46th,
14 between Sansom and Walnut.

15 Maybe some of those properties did
16 not come up today, and there are four more
17 properties that should come up at another
18 hearing, but we have applied for the whole
19 block.

20 In no way, shape, or form did we
21 apply for one or two or pick any properties.
22 However, let me just say this, Councilman, and
23 to the committee, we have very sensitive about
24 homeowners. In other words, we do this in a
25 stratified, hopefully correct, manner, where

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2 homeowners that live in their homes obviously
3 are a top priority.

4 Then there are investors that may or
5 may not be fixing up their properties, but
6 investors that live elsewhere. And, you know,
7 we work with the Redevelopment Authority and
8 with Councilpeople, with our Councilperson, to
9 work through all those issues.

10 But, again, obviously, since this
11 gentleman has come today, obviously the
12 Councilwoman and Redevelopment, we are all
13 going to sit down and try to work something
14 out. But we are very sensitive.

15 And I think with absentee landlords
16 the issue then becomes what is the fair market
17 value, what is the price, and that is
18 determined by an appraiser.

19 MR. LON: Councilman, with all due
20 respect, I think that the action today is
21 premature. I would ask that the bill be
22 denied at this time because I think that they
23 need to do a lot of homework before they
24 submit that to the Council.

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you very

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2 much.

3 Anyone else to testify on this bill?

4 There being none, will the clerk please read
5 the title of the next bill.

6 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050368, an
7 Ordinance approving the second amendment of
8 the redevelopment proposal for the Parkside
9 National Register Historic District Urban
10 Renewal Area, being the area generally bounded
11 by Parkside Avenue and Girard Avenue on the
12 north; the Conrail freight railroad
13 right-of-way running east of and parallel to
14 38th Street on the east; the railroad
15 right-of-way line on the former Pennsylvania
16 Railroad on the south; and Belmont Avenue on
17 the west; including the second amendment to
18 the urban renewal plan and relocation plan,
19 which provides, inter alia, for the additional
20 land acquisition of approximately 7 properties
21 for residential and related uses; the
22 provision of certain relocation services, as
23 required by law; and declaring that
24 condemnation is not imminent with respect to
25 the project.

1 BILL NO. 050368 - 6/6/05

2 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Mr. Wetzel.

3 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good

4 afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the
5 committee.

6 I am here to speak in support of
7 Bill No. 050368, which is the second amendment
8 of the redevelopment proposal and the second
9 amended urban renewal plan for the Parkside
10 National Register, historic district, urban
11 renewal area.

12 This bill would authorize the
13 Redevelopment Authority to acquire seven
14 properties, a total of six vacant blighted
15 structures and one vacant lot will be acquired
16 on behalf of Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia
17 for future residential and related
18 development.

19 Mr. Chairman and members of the
20 committee, I respectfully request favorable
21 consideration of Bill No. 050368 and would ask
22 for the suspension of Council Rules to allow
23 first reading on June 9, 2005.

24 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

25 Councilwoman Blackwell.

1 BILL NO. 050368 - 6/6/05

2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

3 This is a project sponsored by Habitat for
4 Humanity. We are happy to support this
5 project.

6 We realize there are a small number
7 of residents who would rather see market-rate
8 condos, but this area at this point won't
9 sustain investment at 100,000 or more.

10 We are hopeful this project will
11 give long-time renters an opportunity to
12 become homeowners, while increasing their
13 investment in the neighborhood where they
14 live.

15 Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

17 Is there anyone to testify on this
18 bill?

19 MR. TIM BLOCK: Tim Block, Executive
20 Director for Habitat for Humanity. And I have
21 with me today Jon Musselman, my director of
22 project planning, who will tell a little bit
23 about the project.

24 MR. JON MUSSELMAN: We have been
25 working with the community in the East

1 BILL NO. 050368 - 6/6/05
2 Parkside neighborhood for a number of years
3 following a successful long-term development
4 in the Cathedral Park neighborhood. And we
5 are very happy to be able to provide the type
6 of homeownership opportunity through rehab
7 that residents overwhelming in the
8 neighborhood are looking for at this time.

9 We do have very excellent
10 relationships with numerous community
11 organizations, including the East Parkside
12 Residents Association and the local churches.
13 So we are very happy to be able to continue
14 this partnership in the neighborhood with
15 these additional properties.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

17 Councilwoman Blackwell indicated
18 that this process would allow, I am assuming,
19 affordable housing to take place in this
20 neighborhood. What's the normal median income
21 for applicants?

22 MR. BLOCK: Councilman, the median
23 income that we service is between 30 and 50
24 percent of the area median income.

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So that's low.

1 BILL NO. 050370 - 6/6/05

2 MR. BLOCK: Very low.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Very low.

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

5 Anyone else to testify on this bill? Thank
6 you.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone
8 else to testify on this bill?

9 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
10 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
11 050370.

12 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050370, an
13 Ordinance approving the redevelopment proposal
14 of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of
15 Philadelphia for the redevelopment of the
16 Cathedral Park urban renewal area being the
17 area generally bounded by Girard Avenue, 52nd
18 Street, and Lancaster Avenue; approving the
19 urban renewal plan and determining that such
20 plan and redevelopment proposal conform to the
21 general locality plan and make adequate
22 provisions for individuals, business concerns,
23 and families who are displaced; determining
24 the necessity for changes in and for zoning,
25 streets, alleys, public ways, street patterns,

1 BILL NO. 050370 - 6/6/05
2 location and relocation of public utilities;
3 determining that the urban renewal plan and
4 redevelopment proposal meet all
5 nondiscrimination requirements of federal,
6 state, and local laws and the regulations and
7 policies promulgated with respect thereto;
8 declaring that certain expressly designated
9 and provided for condemnation is not imminent
10 with respect to the project; and declaring the
11 redevelopment undertakings in the project to
12 be an important part of the city's program to
13 remove and prevent the spread of urban blight.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

15 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
16 afternoon, Madam Chairperson and members of
17 the committee. I am here to speak in support
18 of Bill No. 050370, which is the second
19 amendment of the redevelopment proposal and
20 the creation of the urban renewal plan for the
21 Cathedral Urban Renewal Area.

22 This bill would authorize the
23 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 22
24 properties. A total of 5 occupied residential
25 properties will be acquired on behalf of the

1 BILL NO. 050370 - 6/6/05
2 West Philadelphia Empowerment Zone for future
3 development. The remaining properties consist
4 of 9 vacant blighted structures and 8 vacant
5 lots.

6 The properties to be acquired under
7 this plan amendment are within the project
8 footprint and will be used for residential and
9 related development.

10 Madam Chairperson and members of the
11 committee, I respectfully request favorable
12 consideration of Bill No. 050370 and would ask
13 for the suspension of Council Rules to allow
14 first reading on June 9, 2005.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
16 recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
18 Madam President.

19 This is a new project that we
20 received, a new area we have, because it was
21 formerly Councilman Nutter's area. However,
22 we are happy that we have the relationship we
23 have formed with Cathedral Park Civic
24 Association.

25 The president, Mrs. Minnis, is here,

1 BILL NO. 050370 - 6/6/05
2 who knew Lucien even before me, so we go way
3 back.

4 We do support this bill with the
5 exception of 4945 and 4951, and we ask that
6 the RDA not acquire these. And we are also
7 asking Mr. Wetzel if he would put on the
8 record that RDA would be willing to leave
9 these properties out of the equation.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: And those
11 addresses, again, are 4945 and 4951?

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

14 MR. WETZEL: Council President, I
15 received an e-mail earlier today from
16 Councilwoman Blackwell and indicated to her
17 that the Redevelopment Authority will not
18 proceed with the acquisition of 4945 and 4951
19 if this bill is approved by this body.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

21 For the record, can you explain the
22 difference between a redevelopment area and an
23 urban renewal area?

24 MR. WETZEL: Yes. A redevelopment
25 area is an area established by the Planning

1 BILL NO. 050370 - 6/6/05
2 Commission. The Planning Commission under
3 state law is the only entity, whether it is a
4 county Planning Commission or the city's in
5 this case, that can survey an area and make
6 what's called a blight determination.

7 And if the Planning Commission
8 certifies an area as blighted, they must
9 develop what's called a Redevelopment Area
10 Plan.

11 And that plan would indicate that
12 you want residential here and commercial there
13 and, essentially, a general plan for the area.
14 And that is established by the Planning
15 Commission.

16 An urban renewal area can be the
17 same size as a redevelopment area or it can be
18 smaller than the redevelopment area
19 established by the Planning Commission.

20 So, in many cases, there are
21 redevelopment areas such as the West
22 Philadelphia redevelopment area, that have
23 multiple urban renewal areas within them.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you know what
25 the West Philadelphia Empowerment Zone

1 BILL NO. 050370 - 6/6/05
2 proposes to do with these residential
3 properties, and when they intend to do it?

4 MR. WETZEL: I believe
5 representatives are here today to speak to
6 that, Council President.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: I think we ought
8 to have that, for the record.

9 MS. EVA GLADSTEIN: Good afternoon.
10 My name is Eva Gladstein, I am Executive
11 Director of the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone.

12 This project is one of several that
13 are scheduled for housing development and
14 housing rehabilitation in the West
15 Philadelphia Empowerment Zone through
16 Empowerment Zone funding, as well as funding
17 through the Office of Housing.

18 The plan is to do new construction
19 on this block, which is an important gateway
20 into this community.

21 Right now there are a large number
22 of vacant structures and vacant properties.
23 It will be developed for affordable housing
24 for homeownership.

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Mr.

1 BILL NO. 050370 - 6/6/05

2 Wetzels, have the occupied residents already
3 been contacted about relocation?

4 MR. WETZEL: Yes. And they would
5 have been noticed. I believe there was a
6 meeting on Saturday. Am I correct? Yes.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: What is the
8 estimated cost of this acquisition? And can
9 you tell us if that also includes relocation
10 benefits?

11 MR. WETZEL: Yes, it does. And the
12 estimate of the acquisition costs, including
13 relocation, is \$558,000.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

15 And I see we have a young lady to
16 your right, who we would be happy to
17 recognize. Please identify yourself for the
18 record.

19 MS. MINNIS: Thank you, Madam
20 President. And also thank you our
21 Councilperson, Ms. Blackwell.

22 It is great to be here today. It is
23 a long time coming. We have been looking
24 forward to this project for a long, long time.
25 And those of the Cathedral Park area, Girard

1 BILL NO. 050370 - 6/6/05
2 Avenue area, and other parts of Cathedral
3 Park, are very happy to welcome something new
4 and something different in our area. And we
5 want to thank you very much.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
7 much.

8 Mr. Wetzel, I don't believe I heard
9 you ask for a suspension of the Rules on this
10 particular bill.

11 MR. WETZEL: Yes, I did. If I
12 didn't, I am.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay.

14 MR. WETZEL: Do you want me to do it
15 formally?

16 PRESIDENT VERNA: That would be
17 fine.

18 MR. WETZEL: I request favorable
19 consideration of Bill No. 050370 and would ask
20 the suspension of Council Rules to allow first
21 reading on June 9, 2005.

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

23 Do we have anyone else to testify on
24 this bill?

25 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.

1 BILL NO. 050372 - 6/6/05
2 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
3 050372.

4 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050372, an
5 Ordinance approving the ninth amendment of the
6 redevelopment proposal for the Nicetown urban
7 renewal area, being the area beginning at the
8 intersection of the easterly side of Broad
9 Street and the northerly side of Wingohocking
10 Street, projected, including the ninth
11 amendment to the urban renewal plan and the
12 amended relocation plan, which provides, inter
13 alia, for the additional land acquisition of
14 approximately five properties for residential
15 and related uses; the provision of certain
16 relocation services as required by law; and
17 declaring that condemnation is not imminent
18 with respect to the project.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

20 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
21 afternoon, Madam Chairperson and members of
22 the committee. I am here to speak in support
23 of Bill No. 050372, the ninth amended
24 redevelopment proposal and the ninth amended
25 urban renewal plan for the Nicetown

1 BILL NO. 050372 - 6/6/05

2 redevelopment area.

3 Passage of this bill will allow the
4 Redevelopment Authority to acquire a total of
5 five vacant structures as part of the
6 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative.

7 It is anticipated that these five
8 structures will be conveyed to the Nicetown
9 Community Development Corporation to
10 rehabilitate and sell to first-time low- to
11 moderate-income home buyers.

12 This project was recommended to the
13 Redevelopment Authority by the city's Office
14 of Housing and Community Development, as it
15 was selected as part of the 2004 Homeownership
16 RFP.

17 Madam Chairperson and members of the
18 committee, I respectfully request favorable
19 consideration of Bill No. 050372 and would ask
20 for the suspension of Council Rules to allow
21 first reading on June 9, 2005.

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
23 much.

24 Mr. Wetzel, can you tell us if there
25 is a public subsidy for the development phase

1 BILL NO. 050372 - 6/6/05
2 of this project, and what the estimated
3 subsidy is?

4 MR. WETZEL: Council President, I
5 can't tell you the estimated amount, but these
6 properties are going to be rehabbed under the
7 Homeownership Rehabilitation Program which has
8 a maximum subsidy cap of \$50,000 per unit.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

10 Can you give us the estimated cost
11 for acquisition?

12 MR. WETZEL: \$129,375.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: For all five
14 properties?

15 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

16 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay.

17 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
18 Miller.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you,
20 Madam President. I don't know whether --
21 Majita Rashid is supposed to be here from
22 Nicetown CDC. I don't see her in the
23 audience.

24 But we have been working with this
25 community development corporation, and we are

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 very pleased to support this project because
3 it is the beginning of a much-needed rehab,
4 much-needed renovation work in the Nicetown
5 area. Thank you.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

7 Do we have anyone else to testify on
8 this bill?

9 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
10 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
11 050373.

12 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050373, an
13 Ordinance approving the redevelopment proposal
14 of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of
15 Philadelphia for the redevelopment of the
16 Southwest Germantown urban renewal area, being
17 the area generally bounded by Hansberry Street
18 on the north, Greene Street on the east,
19 Windrim Avenue and Roosevelt Boulevard on the
20 south, and Pulaski Avenue on the west;
21 approving the urban renewal plan and
22 determining that such plan and redevelopment
23 proposal conform to the general locality plan
24 and make adequate provisions for individuals,
25 business concerns, and families who are

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 displaced; determining the necessity for
3 changes in and for zoning, streets, alleys,
4 publicly ways, street patterns, location and
5 relocation of public utilities; determining
6 that the urban renewal plan and redevelopment
7 proposal meet all nondiscrimination
8 requirements of federal, state, and local laws
9 and the regulations and policies promulgated
10 with respect thereto; declaring that certain
11 expressly designated and provided for
12 condemnation is not imminent with respect to
13 the project; and declaring the redevelopment
14 undertakings in the project to be an important
15 part of the city's program to remove and
16 prevent the spread of urban blight.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

18 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
19 afternoon, Madam Chairperson and members of
20 the committee. I am here to speak in support
21 of Bill No. 050373, which would approve the
22 redevelopment proposal and the urban renewal
23 plan for the Southwest Germantown area.

24 Passage of this bill will allow the
25 Redevelopment Authority to acquire a total of

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 13 properties, 10 vacant lots and 3 vacant
3 structures, as part of the Neighborhood
4 Transformation Initiative.

5 Six properties, which include five
6 vacant lots and one structure, will be
7 acquired to support new construction of five
8 units of for-sale housing to low-income
9 families by Habitat for Humanity Germantown.

10 This phase of the acquisition was
11 recommended to the Redevelopment Authority by
12 the city's Office of Housing and Community
13 Development as it was a submission under the
14 2004 Homeownership RFP.

15 The remaining seven properties are
16 being acquired in support of Germantown
17 restaurant owner Adam Kim's plan to construct
18 a commercial strip.

19 Madam Chairperson and members of the
20 committee, I respectfully request favorable
21 consideration of Bill No. 050373 and would ask
22 for the suspension of Council Rules to allow
23 first reading on June 9, 2005.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

25 Mr. Wetzel, again, I am going to ask

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05

2 what is the estimated cost of this
3 acquisition?

4 MR. WETZEL: \$240,225.

5 PRESIDENT VERNA: Is there a public
6 subsidy for the development part of the
7 homeownership acquisition?

8 MR. WETZEL: No. Habitat doesn't
9 accept public subsidies. The only time we
10 have subsidized any Habitat development is
11 when we have put foundations in on properties.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: So Habitat is
13 going to do all of the development?

14 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Isn't there a
16 commercial acquisition involved?

17 MR. WETZEL: Yes. You asked -- with
18 regards to Habitat, there is no subsidy. With
19 regards to the seven properties that
20 ultimately could be conveyed to the gentleman
21 Adam Kim for a commercial strip, there is no
22 public subsidy in that.

23 And unless there is any jobs
24 generated as a result of that, the property
25 would have to be conveyed at fair market

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05

2 value.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you know if he
4 is going to be paying fair market value?

5 MR. WETZEL: At this point in time,
6 that determination has not been made.

7 COUNCILMAN COHEN: What was that
8 question?

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: I asked if Mr.
10 Kim, who is the restaurant owner, will be
11 paying fair market value for the property.
12 And, if so, how much would he be paying.

13 Any questions or comments from
14 members of the committee?

15 Seeing none.

16 Are there witnesses? Yes. And
17 Councilwoman Miller has a comment.

18 Councilwoman Miller.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you,
20 Madam President.

21 These properties have been an
22 eyesore, particularly the ones that Habitat
23 are taking, for a long, long time. In fact,
24 some of them have been demolished.

25 And the Wayne Avenue business strip,

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 Wayne Avenue is a major corridor in
3 Germantown. And we have been working with
4 many, many people to try to see what we can do
5 to bring some of these blocks in under NTI,
6 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, to see
7 what we can do to turn the community around.

8 So many of them are vacant lots and
9 some of them are vacant structures, and no one
10 will be relocated in any of this action.

11 Thank you.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

13 Good afternoon. Please identify
14 yourself for the record and proceed with your
15 testimony.

16 MS. PAMELA BRACI: Good afternoon.

17 I am Pamela Braci, a 25-year resident and
18 homeowner in the Southwest Germantown area,
19 and I would like to speak to the bill before
20 you today.

21 This bill appears to not be in the
22 best interests of the community for the
23 following reasons: A blight certification was
24 declared on December 17, 1998, but the
25 community at-large was not informed, and we

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 really would like to know why and how this was
3 done.

4 The community was not informed about
5 this bill, either. Had we not stumbled upon
6 it in the newspaper, our NAC office was not
7 informed of this bill. So, we really did not
8 find out about it.

9 The community is having some real
10 problems with the blight certification because
11 it is based on the following criteria:
12 Unsafe, unsanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded
13 conditions; economically or socially
14 undesirable land use; faulty street and lot
15 layout; and inadequate planning.

16 Southwest Germantown has been a
17 recipient in recent years of receiving large
18 quantities of Section 8 residents, group
19 homes, Narcotics Anonymous, Alcoholics
20 Anonymous facilities, absentee landlords,
21 abandoned properties that are oftentimes
22 abandoned due to absentee landlords, and some
23 of these properties are due to large
24 representatives of the community that rehab
25 them and then leave them sitting for several

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05

2 years.

3 The term "economically or socially
4 undesirable land use," do these terms mean
5 low-income persons, persons that someone has
6 declared are undesirable for the community and
7 must be moved out?

8 Is this some kind of criteria that's
9 been set up that the community at-large is not
10 aware of?

11 The faulty street and lot layout, is
12 this due to the large number of properties
13 that have been demolished, oftentimes over the
14 objections of neighbors? The streets were
15 laid out over 300 years ago, so what does the
16 faulty street statement really mean?

17 Inadequate planning. When research
18 was done regarding Germantown, Germantown
19 doesn't have a plan. According to the
20 Planning Commission, it is declared blighted
21 and a reclamation area. So where is the plan?

22 Southwest Germantown has been
23 included many times in the great grant-writing
24 process, but in many areas of Southwest
25 Germantown this does not reflect the written

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 projects. And many of these proposals are
3 written over ten years ago, where houses were
4 supposed to have been built ten years ago and
5 monies were allocated, and those pieces of
6 land are still waiting to be taken care of.

7 Southwest Germantown doesn't want
8 persons in the community displaced because
9 somewhere along the line someone is thinking
10 that Germantown is a great place, a right
11 place for gentrification and some of the
12 people living there now just don't fit.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me. You
14 are aware that the properties in question are
15 all vacant?

16 MS. BRACI: That's my next
17 statement, that they are vacant.

18 PRESIDENT VERNA: They are?

19 MS. BRACI: Yes. We are speaking to
20 the fact that Germantown historic area.

21 If this project is carried out, the
22 community must be consulted because it appears
23 as though we have individuals who come into
24 the community to make plans, and then we don't
25 hear about it anymore.

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05

2 It also appears as though there are
3 streets that are listed in this particular
4 bill today that are not listed anywhere else.
5 So it appears as though something is truly
6 missing from the bill, especially when we have
7 angle points here, center line there relating
8 to streets. What does that mean?

9 So we of the community, some of us,
10 many of us, are really demanding respect by
11 all persons, especially those in this Council
12 here today, to the developers, and anyone else
13 who is involved in Germantown.

14 Thank you very much for your time.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you for
16 coming in to testify.

17 May I ask, do you own any of the
18 properties that may be subject to eminent
19 domain?

20 MS. BRACI: No, ma'am.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

22 Good afternoon. Please identify
23 yourself for the record and proceed with your
24 testimony.

25 MS. FRANKLIN: My name is Catherine

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 Franklin. I am a long-time resident of
3 Germantown, since 1958, and a fifth-generation
4 Philadelphian, and we know each other by
5 sight.

6 But I am here to support Southwest
7 Germantown people. I was one of the people
8 who found the legal notice in very small print
9 in the paper and spread the news around the
10 neighborhood about it.

11 I called some people in Southwest
12 Germantown, all of whom were very, very
13 surprised at the bill and the news.

14 I moved to Germantown with my family
15 because I wanted an area that was historic and
16 had very different backgrounds for people,
17 that you couldn't just say, oh, you're from
18 Chestnut Hill and assume something.

19 Germantown is very interesting and
20 wonderful. What has been happening over the
21 last ten years is not so wonderful.

22 We have become impacted, absolutely,
23 with homes of every kind. It is not the same
24 as having neighborhoods. You just don't walk
25 up to another group home or something and say,

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05

2 "Can you watch my baby, I have to go and do
3 something? Can I have a cup of sugar,"
4 whatever. It is different. It is very, very
5 different. A certain number are welcome, but
6 we are impacted.

7 We do not need in a select area,
8 that has had a very fine study by Marianna
9 Thomas, took something like three years to do,
10 we do not need to have actions which are
11 against the historic nature of our area.

12 It is a beautiful community. Strip
13 malls do not help it. We need an emphasis on
14 tourism and jobs associated with tourism to
15 help our area, since we have lost our
16 manufacturing.

17 The people of Southwest
18 Germantown -- I have talked to some block
19 captains and I have talked to some
20 officials -- have no idea about this bill.
21 What meeting May 5? It is a surprise to them

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: I don't mean to
23 cut you short in any way. But I know if this
24 were in my district and people didn't know
25 about it and simply read it in the paper,

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 their first thought would have been to call
3 the District Councilperson.

4 Did you do that?

5 MS. FRANKLIN: We got copies of the
6 bill, if that's what you mean.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Did you call the
8 District Councilperson?

9 MS. BRACI: I did not call. I went
10 online to find out what the bill was, because
11 it was only last week that we found out about
12 it.

13 MS. FRANKLIN: There is a 5 foot set
14 of plans in the Planning Commission for the
15 Germantown area. 5 feet. Where is the Main
16 Street program?

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
18 recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you. I
20 want to thank you, Ms. Franklin, Ms. Braci,
21 for coming in to testify.

22 I don't see that what we're doing
23 today as relates to 13 properties that are
24 vacant and a couple of vacant lots goes
25 against any plan that Germantown has.

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05

2 This is actually a plan that will
3 help to restore and rehabilitate some of the
4 areas in Germantown.

5 This is giving Habitat for Humanity,
6 whom everybody knows and they are working with
7 us in other parts of Germantown, an
8 opportunity to renovate vacant homes and then
9 they actually give those homes to people that
10 fit in the very low income category. So
11 that's bringing some stability back to a
12 couple of blocks.

13 And with the commercial strip there,
14 or the former strip at Wayne and Berkley that
15 is now a tremendous eyesore, and I am glad --
16 I know that you would agree with that, at
17 Wayne and Berkley, would just begin to restore
18 some of the areas along Wayne Avenue that are
19 blighted. We are not trying to go against any
20 plan that Germantown already has.

21 I, too, I was born and raised in
22 Germantown, lived there all my life. Knew
23 what it looked like when I was a child, and
24 absolutely know the difference now. And have
25 been there through all the various changes.

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 Germantown, Southwest Germantown
3 urban renewal and blight certification
4 happened in 1998 through the Office of Housing
5 and Community Development.

6 There were many meetings at St.
7 Stephen's Church at Queen Lane and Germantown
8 Avenue. I'm sure -- I think it is St.
9 Stephen's, where many people from the
10 community

11 MS. BRACI: Trinity Church.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. But it
13 was right there on Queen Lane. And, so, I
14 know that probably some people in this room
15 were also invited to those meetings. So the
16 blight certification happened in 1998.

17 MS. BRACI: I recall attending those
18 meetings. There was nothing mentioned about
19 blight.

20 Someone came down from New York to
21 give us a plan. And one of our questions was
22 at that particular time, was the fact that
23 this really was not new information; that it
24 was information that anyone had seen in the
25 past. But I know we're going back over

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2 something.

3 I would just like to say, Madam
4 President, that I don't see, and Councilwoman
5 Miller, with all due respect, I don't see that
6 this is a plan for the area. I see it as
7 something -- excuse me, if I may. I see it --

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: This is not a
9 plan. We are just.

10 MS. BRACI: That's my point.

11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We are just
12 giving away 13 properties. We are just
13 talking about 13 properties, and certainly
14 that is not a plan for an entire area.

15 So that is all we are doing here
16 today.

17 MS. BRACI: If you would be kind
18 enough, Madam President and Mrs. Miller, that
19 when your office decides to put together a
20 plan -- because I think we will all agree, and
21 you just stated publicly, that we don't have a
22 plan, we really need one. Because our area is
23 really being deteriorated greatly.

24 And I think to put blight
25 certification on it really makes us feel

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2 extremely terrible about the fact that we are
3 trying very hard and we attend meetings, but
4 yet still it seems as though the more we
5 attend meetings, it seems as though the more
6 we are being dumped on.

7 So I know that is not going to be
8 addressed here today, but we are just saying
9 that we are really a little tired of receiving
10 just, it seems like, all the negative elements
11 that society has to offer. And we know that,
12 through God's grace, that we move forward.

13 But sometimes, even with God's
14 grace, you get a little tired. So we are a
15 little tired of just waiting and waiting and
16 waiting. And I think we have waited long
17 enough, and we really need to move forward.
18 So thank you again for your time.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
20 recognizes Councilman Cohen. Just a minute.

21 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is there a
22 developer, does anybody know, of anything? Is
23 there a developer currently in the picture?

24 MS. BRACI: I believe the proposal
25 says Habitat for Humanity and Mr. Kim. Is

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2 that correct, Ms. Miller?

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes. Habitat
4 for Humanity.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: It has been in
6 the papers about a Germantown community
7 organization having difficulties. And the
8 Redevelopment Authority, I think, has been
9 involved in that.

10 And I am wondering if that's tied to
11 the same group or is this a different
12 arrangement? I am trying to sort out where
13 this fits. Does Mr. Wetzel know?

14 MR. WETZEL: Yes. The proposed
15 developer -- and, for clarification purposes,
16 again, we have to come back to City Council in
17 order to dispose of any properties. So
18 whatever developer is selected must be
19 approved by this body.

20 The proposed developer for a portion
21 of this is Habitat for Humanity, and the
22 proposed developer for the commercial shopping
23 is Adam Kim, who owns a restaurant on Wayne
24 Avenue. Those are the two proposed
25 developers.

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2 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is it tied in
3 with anything that has appeared recently in
4 the press about Germantown community
5 organizations?

6 MR. WETZEL: I have no idea. I just
7 know that both Habitat and Adam Kim are
8 independent entities.

9 MR. COHEN: Because I think in view
10 of what has been occurring, it is very
11 important that we step carefully and the
12 people of Germantown feel that everything is
13 being done properly and in order and that
14 they're fully consulted.

15 And I speak also as a past District
16 Councilman to that area, and I feel very
17 strongly attached to that area. So I do think
18 it very important that we inform the city of
19 what's going to happen and that there be
20 complete community involvement.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: I think
22 Councilwoman Miller has already indicated that
23 she will be certainly be doing that, did you
24 not?

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We have always

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2 invited people. Many of people in this room
3 with signs on, it is my understanding, were a
4 part of some of the meetings when the area was
5 declared blighted.

6 I called the director this morning
7 from the NAC to ask him who was a part of the
8 meetings when you had the meetings during the
9 blight certification.

10 And because I couldn't tell him
11 everybody that was here, I just named a few
12 people.

13 I have seen many of these
14 individuals at meetings prior to me becoming a
15 Councilmember, and I see them occasionally
16 now. But we are not doing anything in secret.
17 It is our goal to help revitalize the
18 Germantown community.

19 We expanded the Germantown
20 redevelopment plan from Sedgwick, down to
21 Berkley so that we could have easier access to
22 acquire buildings, vacant lots, and move
23 forward with development. And that's all we
24 are trying to do here. We are not trying to
25 do anything against anyone's back.

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2 The notice in the paper, big or
3 small, we have no control over. City Council
4 pays the various newspapers to publicize the
5 public hearings.

6 I did not know you were coming here
7 this morning until I showed up in this
8 chamber. If there were questions or
9 discussions that anybody wanted to have, we
10 could have had those without a problem.

11 We are not treating Germantown any
12 different than we have treated other parts of
13 our district as it relates to community
14 involvement.

15 We have people stop us all the time
16 wanting to know what's going to go on on Wayne
17 Avenue because it is such an eyesore. And
18 that's all we are trying to do here.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,
20 Councilwoman.

21 Excuse me. Did you want to testify?
22 Please approach the witness table. Thank you
23 both for coming in to testify.

24 Please identify yourself for the
25 record.

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2 MS. MARLENE PRYOR: Good afternoon,
3 my name is Marlene Pryor. I am the founder,
4 one of the founders, of the Concerned
5 Neighbors of Greater Germantown, Inc., for 26
6 years.

7 And I am real full because Mr.
8 Wetzel was part of us, with the Southwest
9 Germantown Development Corporation. Donna has
10 a communication problem with me. But as of
11 today I'm 70 now. I have been in that area
12 for 33 years getting beat on, pushed around,
13 trying to help the people. But I come here
14 today because I want better communication with
15 Donna for that area.

16 Our organization have a property on
17 Wayne Avenue, at 4809 Wayne Avenue. We have
18 one at 101 West Logan, which they tried to
19 take away from us for back taxes.

20 Because we tried to do this
21 community work volunteer. We have no money.
22 We get no funding from the city or no one
23 else. And I'm really sad here today.

24 So all I want to say is I want some
25 communication about all this from Herb Wetzel,

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2 because he lived right there.

3 I am still there, 70 years old,
4 trying to uphold the community with nothing,
5 and it is very unfair to me, and Donna know
6 it.

7 As of today I hope, with me
8 testifying, she give that community better
9 service. Because it is a war zone, and I am
10 very upset. I got 20 grands, 8 greats, and 5
11 great-greats in that community, trying to
12 serve them with food and whatever.

13 Councilman Cohen know me since 1970.
14 Majority of them know me. Blondell Reynolds,
15 I am a committeeperson. I did everything I
16 can. So help, help, help. Thank you.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
18 much.

19 Gentlemen, are you going to be
20 testifying on this bill? Please approach the
21 witness table. Kindly identify yourself for
22 the record.

23 MR. ROBERT MERIT: My name is Robert
24 Merit, and I do own one of the lots that --

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me, Robert.

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2 You are going to have to pull the microphone
3 closer to you.

4 MR. MERIT: Good afternoon, Council.
5 My name is Robert Merit, and I do own one of
6 the lots in question here.

7 I guess I can give you first a
8 little bit of background about myself. I grew
9 up in Germantown as a young person on Wayne
10 Avenue. And I raised -- after I moved out of
11 my home, I moved on to Coulter Street, which
12 is right next to Germantown, and I raised a
13 family of three there on Coulter Street.

14 So I will say that I love Germantown
15 first, so you will know my interest.

16 I am also currently a realtor who
17 services Germantown area for sales, along with
18 Mt. Airy and West Oak Lane being my prime
19 areas of location.

20 I have since built, what you call
21 it -- renovated quite a few homes in
22 Germantown, one being on 4711 Green Street,
23 4616 Pulaski Avenue, 30 East Coulter, 6126
24 Belfield Avenue, 557 East Locust Street, just
25 to inform you that I have a group of people

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2 who renovate properties.

3 My purpose in purchasing the
4 property, the lot on Pulaski Avenue, which is
5 on the corner of Pulaski and Berkley, was to
6 acquire the other lots next to them.

7 There are approximately four other
8 lots next to them, two of them are owned by
9 another individual and the other two are owned
10 by the City of Philadelphia.

11 Excuse my ignorance, Councilwoman
12 Miller. I was not aware that I should have
13 come, obviously, to Council to find out how to
14 go about getting these properties.

15 I was actually pushing for a
16 sheriff's sale of the other two properties
17 owned by the person who had just back taxes on
18 them. In fact, one of those properties are
19 pending sheriff's sale now, which I intend to
20 go and purchase that lot.

21 My overall goal -- I have already
22 had a developer look at the lot and give me a
23 plan and a cost associated with renovating
24 that particular lot that runs from Pulaski and
25 Berkley, to the next small street there. We

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2 intend to build approximately 11 homes there
3 and sell them to low- to moderate-income
4 people.

5 So I am not interested in selling my
6 lot or having someone take it away from me,
7 because my goal is to help continue to help
8 fix up Germantown Avenue.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: What's the
10 address of your lot?

11 MR. MERIT: The address is 4529
12 Pulaski Avenue. And the other two -- there
13 are other two lots, 4531 and 35 is owned by
14 another individual who will -- those
15 properties are going to a sheriff's sale. And
16 4533, 37, and 39 are owned by the City of
17 Philadelphia.

18 We really need to sit down and talk.
19 And I am not talking about a situation where
20 we would wait five to ten years to have this
21 project started.

22 If I had possession of those
23 properties, a project would be started within
24 six months to a year, we would start building.
25 Thank you.

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2 PRESIDENT VERNA: I would just like
3 to get it clear in my own mind. You own one
4 of the lots in question on this bill?

5 MR. MERIT: Yes. That would be the
6 largest lot there on the corner of Pulaski and
7 Berkley.

8 Now, I don't believe that the other
9 lots are included in this particular -- I
10 haven't received any notice, other than this
11 paper here telling me that there was a bill
12 where they would authorize the Redevelopment
13 Authority to acquire my property. And I have
14 been diligently trying --

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
16 recognizes Councilman Kelly.

17 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Sir, this lot, is
18 this where you intend to construct new homes?

19 MR. MERIT: Yes; along with the
20 other lots.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Which he doesn't
22 own.

23 COUNCILMAN KELLY: You don't know
24 the other lots.

25 MR. MERIT: Not yet. I am

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2 negotiating --

3 COUNCILMAN KELLY: You are
4 negotiating to purchase the lots so you can
5 construct new homes?

6 MR. MERIT: Right. Right now I can
7 build two homes. But it would be next to a
8 large lot, and that's just not a good way of
9 building.

10 We want to make sure that the
11 community is built up and not to just build
12 two new homes right there and not build up the
13 whole section.

14 COUNCILMAN KELLY: How did you
15 purchase the lots that you do own?

16 MR. MERIT: Again, this was from the
17 sheriff's sale.

18 COUNCILMAN KELLY: And now you are
19 trying to negotiate with the city to purchase
20 the other lots?

21 MR. MERIT: Yes.

22 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Now, when would
23 construction begin, or do you still intend to
24 construct on the property that you own?

25 MR. MERIT: Not unless I can get the

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2 other lots. It would just not be economical
3 and it would not look good for the community.

4 My goal is to make sure that there
5 are homes in that area. And just to put up
6 two new homes next to a large lot would
7 obviously indicate that I have not done my
8 homework to acquire those additional lots to
9 move with the full project.

10 COUNCILMAN KELLY: But, as far as I
11 know, the Redevelopment Authority, of course,
12 has an interest in also constructing homes on
13 those lots.

14 MR. MERIT: Well, I had no knowledge
15 of them at all until, again, I received this
16 notice May 17.

17 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Well, wouldn't
18 this be in your best interest to -- if they
19 did decide to put homes on those other lots,
20 wouldn't that also be a good selling point for
21 you in constructing two new homes on the lot
22 that you own?

23 MR. MERIT: That may be the case.
24 But I am not sure if they actually went out to
25 purchase the other lots, just as myself. I

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2 have been trying to get them, as well. And
3 they are not part of this.

4 COMMISSIONER KELLY: I would
5 certainly think that no matter what we do
6 here, we are going to see construction of new
7 homes, at least I would like to think that.

8 MR. MERIT: But I would hate for
9 someone to have to take mine to build, and I
10 am willing to build. And I have also
11 demonstrated that I have built in the past and
12 renovated homes in Germantown.

13 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Have you incurred
14 any expenses so far, as far as cleaning the
15 lots or doing anything of that nature?
16 Putting up fencing?

17 MR. MERIT: Yes, I have. Along with
18 costs of a development plan, as well.

19 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. MERIT: Thank you.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Let me ask you,
22 excuse me, sir, what would be the cost of
23 acquisition for this bill?

24 MR. WETZEL: May I have the bill
25 number again?

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2 PRESIDENT VERNA: We are still on
3 Bill No. 050373.

4 MR. WETZEL: 73?

5 PRESIDENT VERNA: And I would ask
6 the young man at the table who just testified,
7 would you be able to afford the acquisition?

8 MR. MERIT: Yes, I would be able to
9 afford the other lots in question.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you know how
11 much they are selling for?

12 MR. MERIT: No. They have not -- as
13 I indicated to you, Madam President, there are
14 one of those lots pending a sheriff's sale. I
15 intend to be there and to properly bid.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And you own
17 4925 Pulaski?

18 MR. MERIT: That would be 4529.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: And you would have
20 the wherewithal for both acquisition and for
21 construction?

22 MR. MERIT: Yes, Madam President.

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: You would not be
24 looking for any subsidies?

25 MR. MERIT: None.

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2 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Madam President.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair

4 recognizes Councilman Cohen.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. Wetzel, is
6 there a general feeling that if there is a
7 private venture, the government would stay out
8 and permit the private venture to take first
9 place?

10 MR. WETZEL: In general, that's the
11 theory that we operate under.

12 In this particular case the question
13 is, do you allow Habitat for Humanity to
14 develop properties that are going to be
15 affordable to low- and moderate-income
16 individuals versus a market-rate development.
17 And, so, it is a public policy question.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, it isn't as
19 if Philadelphia doesn't have properties.
20 Philadelphia abounds in properties that are
21 available for Habitat for Humanity and for
22 other well-meaning groups.

23 It seems to me we are moving
24 backwards here rather than forwards, if we
25 reject a private venture and, instead, have

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2 something done with government funding. I'm
3 confused by the different parties.

4 I would expect that I might be on
5 the side of government funding, and all the
6 others would be on the other side.

7 But I don't understand why we don't
8 want to support a private venture. I have
9 heard nothing except positive things about
10 this gentleman today, his willingness to
11 undertake the risk.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. MERIT: Thank you, Councilman
14 Cohen.

15 MR. WETZEL: Councilman, I think
16 that, again, is going to be a judgment call
17 made by this body.

18 And, you know, the question in some
19 cases, yes, there are lots of properties in
20 the City of Philadelphia. But you could be in
21 a neighborhood with rapidly escalating real
22 estate values in which you would want to
23 create some affordable units.

24 And that's going to be a public
25 policy decision that we will face more and

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 more as our real estate values are escalating
3 across the city.

4 And I don't disagree with you. It
5 is a good dilemma to have. Before we couldn't
6 giveaway properties in areas like this, so it
7 is a good dilemma to have.

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: It is a dilemma
9 we ought to be encouraging private industry
10 everywhere to build and rebuild our
11 communities. Government can't do it all by
12 itself, and we ought to use government funds
13 where no other funds are available. You
14 shouldn't use government funds where other
15 funding is available.

16 I don't know. I'm getting all
17 twisted here with different theories being
18 distorted. It seems to me if there is a
19 private venture that seems to work, and on
20 that I would bow to your expertise and would
21 want to know why this doesn't work, if it
22 doesn't work; but why it works, if you think
23 it does.

24 But assuming that it works, then I
25 think we want to give support to private

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2 initiatives all along. Because the force of
3 private initiatives will be far greater than
4 any general government force.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,
8 Councilman.

9 Councilwoman Miller, was your light
10 on?

11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Yes. Thank
12 you, Madam President.

13 I didn't really catch your name, but
14 we can get -- I can get it later.

15 MR. MERIT: Sure.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: But what I
17 would like to do is have this bill voted out
18 and ask RDA not to take any action until we
19 get back to you.

20 MR. MERIT: Thank you, Councilwoman.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You are
23 welcome.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon,
25 sir. Are you testifying? I think if you are

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 going to be testifying on part of this bill, I
3 think the Councilwoman has indicated her
4 willingness to meet.

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I have
6 willingness to meet. Did you hear what I
7 said? Would you please say, yes, on the
8 record.

9 MR. WETZEL: Yes, Councilwoman, we
10 will not take any action if this ordinance is
11 approved and signed by the Mayor until we hear
12 from you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.
14 Tim.

15 MR. BLOCK: Madam President, my name
16 is Tim Block. I am Executive Director of
17 Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia.

18 And I agree with the Councilwoman's
19 decision, if she wants to table this for now.
20 And I just want to say that Habitat is about
21 partnerships, and we are willing to sit down
22 with the residents of a community.

23 That's our policy going into any
24 project, is to work with the community as far
25 as design, as far as identifying partner

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2 families for our program. We do work with the
3 community and we are also looking to do some
4 joint ventures.

5 So if that young man is interested
6 in working with us, there may be an
7 opportunity for us to work together, too. So,
8 we will be back.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Thank
11 you very much.

12 Do we have anyone else to testify on
13 this bill?

14 Please come forward, identify
15 yourself for the record.

16 MR. RON DEVEREAUX: My name is Ron
17 Devereaux. I am block captain, 1500 block of
18 Green Street and a long-time resident.

19 And my concern is, I am supporting,
20 you know, my community. I am not opposed to
21 seeing, you know, the community being built up
22 as far as, you know, houses being redeveloped,
23 as long as we get, you know, good tenants.

24 My concern is that we don't get
25 red-lined as far as being blighted. Where in

1 BILL NO. 050373 - 6/6/05
2 the south side of Germantown, there was a time
3 when that district was red-lined. We had
4 Queen Lane above, just slightly above where we
5 live, was considered a high classification.

6 They were eligible to receive funds
7 to build their community so they could keep it
8 up and keep it as a historical society,
9 historical neighborhood. Our neighborhood is
10 just a little bit below.

11 Now, when I heard the blight
12 certification, and I just heard it, I was kind
13 of surprised, because we do have a lot of
14 homes that's being built up in that area,
15 people are investing in their homes.

16 We have a lot of concerned
17 neighbors, some of them who were just up here
18 talking, and people who want to keep
19 Germantown as a historical place.

20 So my main concern is that the
21 blight certification does not stop us from
22 getting funding so we can continue to build
23 our community up.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel is
25 sitting next to you and he is nodding his

1 BILL NO. 050414 - 6/6/05
2 head. So why don't you say something, Mr.
3 Wetzel, to assure this gentleman.

4 MR. WETZEL: The certification of
5 blight is not a deterrent to increasing
6 values.

7 All of Center City, from river to
8 river, from Vine down to South Street, is a
9 redevelopment area that was certified blighted
10 and areas within that have been recertified as
11 blighted over the years. It is not a
12 deterrent to value at all.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Thank
14 you for coming in to testify.

15 Did you want to testify, ma'am? I
16 understand you are here to testify on the next
17 bill.

18 Do we have anybody else to testify
19 on Bill 050373?

20 Seeing no one, I could ask Ms.
21 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
22 050414.

23 THE CLERK: An Ordinance approving
24 the second amendment of the redevelopment
25 proposal for the Tioga Urban Renewal Area,

1 BILL NO. 050414 - 6/6/05
2 being the area generally bounded by Hunting
3 Park Avenue on the north, Broad Street,
4 Germantown Avenue, Venango Street, 15th
5 Street, Allegheny Avenue, and Germantown
6 Avenue of the east, Glenwood Avenue and Lehigh
7 Avenue on the south and 23rd Street, Allegheny
8 avenue and 22nd Street on the west.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

10 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
11 afternoon, Madam Chairperson and members of
12 the committee. I am here to speak in support
13 of Bill No. 050414, the second amended
14 redevelopment proposal and the second amended
15 urban renewal plan for the Tioga redevelopment
16 area.

17 Passing of this bill will allow the
18 Redevelopment Authority to acquire a total of
19 30 properties, 21 vacant lots and 9 vacant
20 structures, as part of the Neighborhood
21 Transformation Initiative.

22 20 of the vacant lots will be
23 acquired to support the expansion of Kinderton
24 Recreation Center. The remaining vacant lot
25 is to be acquired for reuse as parking for the

1 BILL NO. 050414 - 6/6/05
2 adjacent Tioga Arms Apartment Building. 9
3 vacant structures, 7 of which are
4 architecturally significant, are being
5 acquired for the development of for-sale
6 housing to low- and moderate-income home
7 buyers.

8 This project was recommended to the
9 redevelopment authority by the city's Office
10 of Housing and Community Development, as it
11 was selected under the 2004 Homeownership RFP.

12 Madam Chairperson and members of the
13 committee, I respectfully request favorable
14 consideration of Bill No. 050414 and would ask
15 the suspension of Council Rules to allow first
16 reading on June the 9th, 2005. Thank you.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: So as we
18 understand it, it is the acquisition of 30
19 properties, 21 vacant lots and 9 vacant
20 structures?

21 MR. WETZEL: That is correct.

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: Will the Tioga
23 Arms Apartment Building be paying fair market
24 value cost of the acquisition?

25 MR. WETZEL: That determination has

1 BILL NO. 050414 - 6/6/05
2 not been made yet. But if this Tioga Arms is
3 not an affordable housing development, under
4 NTI the disposition would be at fair market
5 value.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: What is the
7 estimated cost of the entire acquisition?

8 MR. WETZEL: \$374,950.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: Is there a public
10 subsidy already committed to the development
11 of the affordable homeownership?

12 MR. WETZEL: To my knowledge,
13 Council President, the public subsidy for this
14 is the HRP program.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

16 Any questions or comments from
17 members of the committee?

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I would like
19 to make a comment.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilwoman
21 Miller.

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: This is a part
23 of our district that's been blighted and
24 actually fallen down for the last 20 or 30
25 years. And we have been working very hard

1 BILL NO. 050414 - 6/6/05

2 with the community.

3 And the community group that we have
4 been working pretty much with in this area is
5 Tioga United. And that group has come a long
6 way. We have Miss Alberta here today to
7 testify in support. And I just want to say
8 that our office strongly supports this
9 proposal. Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,
11 Councilwoman. Good afternoon. Please
12 identify yourself for the record.

13 MS. ALBERTA HALL: Good afternoon.
14 My name is Alberta Hall. I am a Board member
15 of Tioga United. And I would like to say good
16 afternoon to each and every one of you.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.

18 MS. HALL: Now you would like me to
19 tell you something about Tioga and then
20 something about the land?

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Well, it is my
22 understanding that if you just said, "I fully
23 support this bill," it would be fine.

24 MS. HALL: I fully support this
25 bill.

1 BILL NO. 050414 - 6/6/05

2 PRESIDENT VERNA: Fine. Thank you.

3 MS. HALL: 100 percent.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
5 much. We appreciate your coming in to
6 testify.

7 We do have a number of bills yet,
8 and a number of witnesses, and we have a 2
9 o'clock Public Hearing scheduled for the
10 Committee of the Whole. One moment, please.

11 The Chair recognizes Councilman
12 Kelly.

13 COMMISSIONER KELLY: I just had a
14 quick question. I just wanted to know where
15 that Kinderton Recreation Center is located?

16 MS. HALL: It is Jerome Brown
17 Recreation Center at 20th and Ontario.

18 COUNCILMAN KELLY: As far as I know,
19 this is going to -- 20 of these vacant lots
20 will be acquired to support the expansion of
21 this recreation center.

22 MS. HALL: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Do you know if
24 there is adequate funding for the city to
25 expand? This as a recreation center, is it

1 BILL NO. 050414 - 6/6/05

2 not?

3 MS. HALL: Well, I am not sure. But
4 I do know --

5 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Maybe the
6 Councilwoman would know that.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We have
8 actually been -- this playground has existed
9 forever. I used to pass it on the train,
10 taking the Chestnut Hill local into Center
11 City. And it was closed for quite some time.

12 And each year that we have been
13 here, we have been able to add a little bit
14 more. This will give us an opportunity to
15 expand the acreage, and I'm not sure what we
16 want to do with the building.

17 The play equipment was actually just
18 rebuilt by the community and by Kaboom. And
19 that's the same company that helped us rebuild
20 the playground when they had the presidential
21 summit. So this is just all a part of an
22 overall expansion, but I cannot tell you every
23 exact plan.

24 But we are able to use the city
25 funds to leverage resources from other folks.

1 BILL NO. 050380 - 6/6/05

2 So I can't answer whether the city
3 can afford to do the expansion at this time.
4 It depends on what we want to expand. Will we
5 expand the building? I'm not sure.

6 COMMISSIONER KELLY: I just wanted
7 to know if the appropriations were in this
8 year's budgets or next year's, or do you have
9 any plans for it.

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: No, we don't
11 really know.

12 We have actually been talking about
13 using the lots to expand the playground for a
14 number of years prior to the deficit and the
15 city funds. So we are just going to move
16 forward with the expansion.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
18 much for your patience. Thank you for coming
19 in to testify.

20 Do we have anyone else to testify on
21 this bill?

22 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
23 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
24 050380.

25 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050380, an

1 BILL NO. 050380 - 6/6/05
2 Ordinance approving the fifth amendment of the
3 redevelopment proposal for the Independence
4 Mall Urban Renewal Area, Unit No. 4, being the
5 area beginning at the intersection of the
6 southerly side of Arch Street and the westerly
7 side of 9th Street, including the fifth
8 amendment to the urban renewal plan and the
9 relocation plan, which provides, inter alia,
10 for the additional land acquisition of certain
11 parcels located within the bed of ground
12 formerly known as Ridge Avenue and generally
13 situated between the northwest intersection of
14 north 8th Street and Race Street and the
15 southeast section of North 9th Street and Vine
16 Street.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

18 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
19 afternoon, Madam Chairperson and members of
20 the committee. I am here to speak in support
21 of Bill No. 050380, the fifth amended plan for
22 the Center City Redevelopment Area and the
23 Independence Mall Urban Renewal Area.

24 This bill would authorize the
25 Redevelopment Authority to acquire ten

1 BILL NO. 050380 - 6/6/05
2 properties located within the bed of a portion
3 of ground formerly known as Ridge Avenue.

4 The acquisition of these properties
5 will enable the Redevelopment Authority to
6 consolidate a number of underlying properties
7 into one disposition parcel bounded generally
8 by 8th, 9th, Race, and Vine, and facilitate
9 the disposition of land for future commercial
10 and residential mixed-use development.
11 Acquisition costs will be paid for by the
12 Redevelopment Authority.

13 Madam Chairperson and members of the
14 committee, I respectfully request favorable
15 consideration of Bill No. 050380 and would ask
16 the suspension of Council Rules to allow a
17 first reading on June 9, 2005.

18 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Mr.
19 Wetzel, what do you mean that the
20 Redevelopment Authority will pay the cost of
21 acquisition? Isn't this normally done with
22 NTA funding?

23 MR. WETZEL: Yes. If I could
24 explain this. This was an acquisition that
25 was done well over 30 years ago. And the bed

1 BILL NO. 050380 - 6/6/05
2 of Ridge Avenue actually is on the city map
3 going through this particular parcel. And as
4 the Ridge Avenue gets stricken from the city's
5 map, little pie-shaped pieces of land will
6 revert back to owners who formerly owned these
7 properties in the 1920s. Their land -- I
8 know. These are land-locked parcels.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: How are you going
10 to have those delivered?

11 MR. WETZEL: I am going to be
12 speaking to a higher authority for some of
13 them, I have a feeling.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: I would think you
15 have to.

16 MR. WETZEL: That's the last known
17 purchase dates on these.

18 And that's because we took the land
19 that the house was on, but the streets still
20 stayed on there. And then when the street got
21 struck, and because Ridge runs through at an
22 angle, little pie-shaped pieces of land revert
23 back to the former owner.

24 And, so, this is about an \$18,000
25 acquisition that the authority is just

1 BILL NO. 050380 - 6/6/05
2 undertaking to clean up the site and make it
3 available.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: You also say that
5 the Redevelopment Authority is assembling this
6 for future commercial and mixed-use
7 development.

8 Have you been approached by any
9 developer to develop these parcels?

10 MR. WETZEL: Yes. The Redevelopment
11 Authority Board has selected a developer. The
12 exact name of the entity I will have to get to
13 you. It will be coming over here as part of a
14 redevelopment proposal.

15 It includes -- and the developers
16 have worked closely with the existing tenant
17 on the site, which is -- I am trying to get
18 the name of the parking vendor. I know it is
19 Harvey Speers, I don't know particularly the
20 name of his company.

21 He has leased this land for many
22 years from us as a parking lot. Speers, Bill
23 Wilson of Suntara, another gentleman from
24 Campus Apartments, and the Chinatown CDC have
25 been working together.

1 BILL NO. 050380 - 6/6/05

2 They designed a program that would
3 include condominiums, retail space, and about
4 a thousand parking spaces on that particular
5 site. And it would be done in two phases over
6 four years.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: What is the
8 estimated cost for the acquisition?

9 MR. WETZEL: Only about \$18,000.
10 These are land-locked parcels of land that
11 have no real value whatsoever. You can't get
12 to them legally.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: When the
14 Redevelopment Authority conveys this parcel to
15 a future developer, do you expect to have the
16 acquisition money repaid by the developer to
17 the RDA?

18 MR. WETZEL: That is correct.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: Very good.

20 Councilman DiCicco, this is your
21 bill, it is Bill No. 050380. I don't know if
22 you want to, if you have any comments.

23 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: No. Thank you.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have any
25 witnesses on this bill to testify?

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 Seeing none.

3 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Excuse me.

4 Again, this is the Siritski project?

5 MR. WETZEL: No; this is cleaning up
6 the bed of Ridge Avenue between 8th and 9th
7 and Race and Vine where the parcels reverted
8 back to the owners from the 1920s.

9 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Since we have no
11 witnesses, I would ask Ms. Murray to please
12 read the title of Bill No. 050381.

13 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050381, an
14 Ordinance approving the fifth amendment of the
15 redevelopment proposal for the New Kensington
16 Fishtown Urban Renewal Area, being the area
17 generally bounded by the rear property lines
18 on the northerly side of Lehigh Avenue on the
19 north, the center line of Delaware Avenue and
20 I-95 on the east, the southerly side of Laurel
21 Street on the south, and the rear property
22 lines on the westerly side of Front Street and
23 Kensington Avenue on the west, including the
24 fifth amendment to the urban renewal plan and
25 the second amendment to the relocation plan,

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 which provides, inter alia, for the additional
3 land acquisition of approximately 35
4 properties for residential and related uses,
5 the additional acquisition of one property for
6 institutional and related uses; the provision
7 of certain relocation services as required by
8 law; and declaring that condemnation is not
9 imminent with respect to the project.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.
11 Councilman Clarke, I know that Councilman
12 DiCicco introduced this bill, he is the
13 sponsor, but is part of this also in your
14 district?

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: No.

16 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: I don't think
17 so. I think it is all me. Fishtown may be
18 confusing you. Because I used to have most of
19 Fishtown, which now I only have one division.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: We did receive a
21 letter.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I think it is
23 two bills down, there is a parcel that's in
24 Fishtown/Juneco is the new term used, just
25 west of Front Street, that's in my Council

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 district. But this one is not.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. I just
4 wanted to make certain for the record.

5 Mr. Wetzel, what is the estimated
6 cost of this acquisition? I think from here
7 on in, we ought to have that information.

8 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: As part of the
9 testimony, that would be good.

10 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: It is
11 \$162,025.

12 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Madam
13 President, for a point of information, I had
14 asked the same question earlier, and I just
15 received a copy of the condemnation budget.
16 So the \$162,025 is all the costs, including
17 legal, advertising, et cetera.

18 PRESIDENT VERNA: Right.

19 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: It is not just
20 what they are paying to the owner for the
21 acquisition. The acquisition is \$100,425.

22 MR. WETZEL: That's the estimated
23 budget until formal appraisals are done.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel, so the
25 record is clear, these are all vacant lots and

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 vacant structures; is that correct?

3 MR. WETZEL: That is the information
4 that was delivered to us and confirmed by the
5 other entities, yes. Vacant structures and
6 vacant lots.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: On the 12 vacant
8 lots that will be acquired for the New
9 Kensington CDC for reuse as gardens, who is
10 gardening those lots? Who is holding title to
11 the lots?

12 MR. WETZEL: New Kensington is here.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.
14 Please identify yourself for the record.

15 MS. SANDY SALZMAN: Good afternoon,
16 Madam President. My name is Sandy Salzman. I
17 am the Executive Director of New Kensington
18 Community Development Corporation.

19 The vacant land, New Kensington has
20 been stabilizing this land since 1997, and we
21 will hold title to the land and keep it as
22 stabilized land, which means it will be
23 cleaned and greened and have trees around the
24 perimeter until such time that we come up with
25 a development plan for the land.

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 PRESIDENT VERNA: What happens if
3 for some reason in the future the lots are no
4 longer maintained as garden space?

5 Is there some kind of deed
6 restricken that says that the owners, whoever
7 they may be, that they can't just make money
8 selling the land?

9 MS. SALZMAN: No, there isn't.
10 However, this here land is part of an overall
11 plan that New Kensington has for the
12 community. The land is on Frankford Avenue,
13 and also on Kern Street. Kern street backs on
14 to Frankford Avenue.

15 Ultimately we hope to have this
16 developed into commercial space on the first
17 floor, with residential space on the second
18 and third floor.

19 We have had Frankford Avenue named
20 as an arts corridor by the Department of
21 Commerce. And we have been in the process of
22 doing a number of renovations of properties on
23 that block -- I mean, on that street.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you tell me
25 what the difference is between New Kensington

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 CDC and the South Kensington NAC?

3 MS. SALZMAN: Sure.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: Tell us which
5 entity will actually be developing these
6 properties.

7 MS. SALZMAN: New Kensington CDC
8 will be doing these properties. Kensington
9 South NAC abuts us at Front Street. I believe
10 they go down to Norris Street. So they really
11 are not in our area at all.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

13 Are there any questions from members
14 of the committee?

15 The Chair recognizes Councilman
16 DiCicco.

17 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Thank you,
18 Madam President. Good afternoon. Sandy,
19 currently are all the parcels being used as
20 gardens now?

21 MS. SALZMAN: They are, Councilman.

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: They are.

23 MS. SALZMAN: The ones on Frankford
24 Avenue and the ones on Kern Street.

25 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: The parcels

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 that are reflected in this bill.

3 MS. SALZMAN: There are lots that
4 are reflected in this bill that are on Abigail
5 Street that we do not know who put in for.

6 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: They are the
7 ones owned by the gentleman that's sitting
8 next to you?

9 MS. SALZMAN: I assume.

10 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Are they used
11 as gardens.

12 MS. SALZMAN: Abigail is vacant.
13 Front and Kern Street are being used as
14 gardens. And there is a lot on Hagert Street
15 that is being acquired with the help of the
16 Commerce Department for two businesses.

17 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Is that the lot
18 that has trees planted on Hagert?

19 MS. SALZMAN: 1922-44 Hagert Street.
20 And it is being acquired for Peretta Truck
21 Services and Kafco. And I have a letter from
22 each of these people for you for the
23 acquisition.

24 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: The lots that
25 are being used for gardening, you said they

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 had been used since '97?

3 MS. SALZMAN: We have been doing
4 this since '97. Those lots have not been in
5 the package since '97.

6 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Were they being
7 done with the owner's permission? I am
8 familiar with what goes on up there. I am
9 just trying to establish for the record many
10 lots in the Frankford Avenue corridor, I will
11 refer to it from personal experience, I know
12 we are not kept up, and we would go out there
13 literally and clean them. So a lot of these
14 were just blighted, deteriorated properties
15 that the CDC and the NAC and others took the
16 initiative to clean up, because they were,
17 basically, abandoned.

18 MS. SALZMAN: Correct. And we tried
19 to get in touch with the owners. When we do
20 stabilize land, we generally send out a letter
21 to the last known address, which is usually
22 the lot. It comes back to us, and we just
23 keep it in the file.

24 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Were you ever
25 successful in getting a response from any of

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 the owners for any of these?

3 MS. SALZMAN: Once or twice. Yes,
4 we have been. In fact, the rose garden that
5 is at Belgrade and Frankford Avenue, we have
6 an agreement with the owner to do that garden
7 there.

8 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Okay. For the
9 moment, I have no more questions for this
10 lady.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
12 much.

13 Are there any questions or comments
14 from members of the committee of this witness?
15 Thank you.

16 Good afternoon, sir. Would you
17 identify yourself, for the record, please.

18 MR. FORSAN AMIDI: Good afternoon.
19 My name is Forsan Amidi. I am the owner of
20 the property on Abigail Street, 2035 to 2045.

21 And I am here to testify today, this
22 is -- I only received this letter about a
23 week, two weeks ago, May 17. And I never know
24 anything about this, so I am here today.

25 Never again talk to -- never got

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 call from anybody, from the community, or from
3 the city. I never receive anything. And I am
4 here today, I am working right now with the
5 office of DiCicco, Councilman DiCicco and
6 Councilman Juan Ramos.

7 And I am trying for the next couple
8 of weeks, I am going to talk to them, see what
9 we could come up with with a plan for the
10 properties.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman
12 DiCicco.

13 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Just for the
14 record, I have never met this gentleman
15 until -- actually, I wasn't even formally
16 introduced until today.

17 I did receive a call that he was
18 concerned that there would be a taking of his
19 properties and wanted some time, which we are
20 going to engage in that conversation either
21 today or going forward.

22 I just have a few questions for you,
23 sir. How long have you owned this property?

24 MR. AMIDI: Since 1985.

25 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: What is its

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 current use?

3 MR. AMIDI: It is vacant now.

4 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Vacant. What
5 is the condition of that property?

6 MR. AMIDI: It is not in excellent
7 condition, but I am willing to -- right now I
8 am willing to clean it up and fence it.

9 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Have you
10 received any violations in the past from the
11 city, whether it be Health Department or L&I,
12 as to any of the violations that may have been
13 there?

14 MR. AMIDI: No, sir.

15 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: None.

16 MR. AMIDI: No.

17 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Is the mailing
18 address for that property the mailing address
19 in which one can find you at?

20 MR. AMIDI: Yes.

21 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: I don't know
22 what the title reads on there. Is it your
23 business?

24 MR. AMIDI: Yes.

25 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: So if in fact

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 someone needed to contact you, they would be
3 able to find you through that business
4 address?

5 MR. AMIDI: I also own a business
6 right across the street from it.

7 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: What kind of
8 business is it?

9 MR. AMIDI: It is a warehouse for my
10 stores.

11 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Warehouse for
12 your stores.

13 MR. AMIDI: Yes. And I have people
14 there all the time.

15 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: From what I am
16 told, you are opposed to this taking today.
17 Could you tell us the reason why? Besides the
18 fact that it is your land, but what are your
19 future plans for this land? Do you have any
20 future plans?

21 Would you like to sell it? Would
22 you like to develop it? If you would like to
23 develop it, what kind of development would you
24 like to see happen there?

25 MR. AMIDI: If the everybody around

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 me is going to develop, I am going to develop,
3 too. You know, but right now I'm not in good
4 financial condition to do it right now.

5 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: So if the
6 properties around it, surrounding it, were to
7 be developed, then you would find the money to
8 develop it?

9 MR. AMIDI: I would seek, yes. I
10 would seek some financial.

11 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: You don't want
12 to take the initiative to start the
13 development on your own?

14 MR. AMIDI: For right now, I can't
15 afford it.

16 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Is there a
17 question about what you think the value -- do
18 you dispute the value that the Redevelopment
19 Authority has put in this land? Do you think
20 it is worth more in its present condition?

21 MR. AMIDI: Yes.

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Have you made
23 that known to the Redevelopment Authority?

24 MR. AMIDI: No. I haven't had --
25 you know, I only received this letter two

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 weeks ago.

3 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Well, you
4 understand if the surrounding properties were
5 to be developed, it certainly would increase
6 the value of your property. And you have not
7 done anything since 1985 to maintain that
8 property.

9 So we, basically, would be rewarding
10 you for letting your property sit there
11 blighted. And I am going to take all these
12 things into consideration.

13 I will ask this committee to vote
14 this bill out favorably, but I will ask
15 them -- I will not move on second and final
16 approval until such time as we have had a time
17 to discuss.

18 If you dispute the value of the
19 land, then the Redevelopment Authority, there
20 is a mechanism for that dispute. And I think
21 Mr. Wetzel would like to answer that now.

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: I am just a little
23 curious, sir. Are you current in your real
24 estate taxes --

25 MR. AMIDI: Yes.

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 PRESIDENT VERNA: -- on that
3 property?

4 MR. AMIDI: Yes. For 20 years.

5 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

6 MR. WETZEL: I just want to make a
7 correction. An offer letter does not happen
8 until this body approves this, the Mayor signs
9 it, we order an appraisal, the appraiser
10 contacts the owner so the owner has a right to
11 be there when the appraiser is there. Only
12 when we get that appraisal back do we do an
13 offer letter.

14 So he has not yet received an offer.

15 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: How soon do you
16 think that will -- we have to do this first?

17 MR. WETZEL: Yes. Council has to
18 approve this, the Mayor has to sign it, we
19 have to engage an appraiser who contacts the
20 owner and meets.

21 The owner has the right to be
22 present while the appraisal is done. Once we
23 get the appraisal back and it is reviewed and
24 approved, then we do an offer letter.

25 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: What is the

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 owner's recourse? If they dispute it, they do
3 have, I believe, if I am not mistaken, they
4 have the right to hire an outside appraiser,
5 and there is a certain contribution towards
6 that?

7 MR. WETZEL: Yes. The owner has a
8 right to hire and engage their own appraiser.
9 It is up to \$500 per property that we have to
10 make available to the owner.

11 And, again, if the appraisals are
12 relatively close, you could have a negotiated
13 settlement. If there is a wide gap, the owner
14 has the right to go petition for a Board of U
15 hearing.

16 And if the owner doesn't like the
17 Board of U's determination, they have a right
18 to go to Common Pleas Court.

19 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Do you
20 understand that, sir, what your options are
21 and your rights are?

22 MR. AMIDI: Yes. But I also like to
23 say, if the CDC of New Kensington cleaning up
24 lots and making them green, I have a right
25 probably to do the same thing.

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2 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: They only do
3 that because they have landlords who aren't
4 maintaining their properties. They don't do
5 that because that's just something that they
6 are hired to do.

7 They do it because they are trying
8 to create a better environment in that
9 community. And oftentimes, many times,
10 throughout this city we have absentee
11 landlords who don't maintain their properties.

12 And but for the people who live in
13 those communities and organizations like CDCs,
14 we just would have a worse situation than we
15 already have.

16 I mean, you are a property owner.
17 It is your responsibility to maintain that
18 property, even if you are not using it.

19 MR. AMIDI: I am willing to do that.

20 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Well, I
21 understand. I think this pink sheet of paper
22 got you a little bit excited and the letter
23 you received. And, no disrespect, that's why
24 you are motivated.

25 If we didn't do this, I would assume

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 that it would be in the same condition that it
3 has been for the last 20 years for the next 20
4 years.

5 I am not badgering. I am just
6 trying to tell you that, unfortunately, we
7 have to do these things to clean up
8 neighborhoods.

9 It is really -- it would be great if
10 people who owned these properties took the
11 initiative on themselves to do what government
12 is doing, and then we look like the bad guys
13 because we are taking your property.

14 But what do we tell the people who
15 live in your neighborhood, people who live
16 there, who have to look at these vacant lots
17 and the weeds and all the garbage and the
18 short dumping that goes there? It is not fair
19 to them.

20 And there are a number of people who
21 have profited, quite handsomely, over the
22 years in this city by just letting properties
23 sit there, development occurs, and there is a
24 windfall.

25 What we are trying to do is minimize

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 our cost and do something that will enhance
3 the quality of life in this community.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: So we are going
6 to vote this bill out. I am going to ask the
7 committee to vote this bill out favorably, but
8 we will continue to talk, along with the New
9 Kensington CDC and yourself, sir, and maybe --
10 and the Redevelopment Authority, and hopefully
11 we can come to a resolution.

12 The last thing -- and I made a
13 commitment to work with you -- but the last
14 thing I will let happen is the condition to
15 continue to remain that way. I am not going
16 to allow that to happen. I am giving you fair
17 warning. That's the way it is going to be

18 Something positive will happen with
19 that property either through your initiative
20 or joint venture with the CDC or some
21 combination thereof, but we are not going to
22 allow that to continue.

23 MR. AMIDI: Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Any other

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 testimony?

3 MS. SALZMAN: Councilman, I actually
4 have some neighbors here in support of this
5 bill. But in the interest of time, I mean,
6 they don't need to speak.

7 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Could you please
8 ask them to stand up so we can see who they
9 are.

10 (Audience members stand.)

11 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: If I may, you
12 obviously heard what I said. We are going to
13 work on this thing, and we will hopefully come
14 to some reasonable accommodation for everyone.

15 If not, as I said, if all else
16 fails, we will take it, CDC will get it, and
17 we will get something going there in a
18 positive fashion.

19 So if you want to testify, that's
20 fine, but I know what you are going through.
21 I literally cleaned some lots back there a few
22 years back on Saturday afternoons, in my other
23 life.

24 But, thank you. And thank you all
25 for coming in. Thank you.

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
3 Councilman.

4 MR. JIM MASON: My name is Jim
5 Mason. I own a property on Kern Street that's
6 scheduled to be acquired here. I am mostly
7 here for information.

8 The Redevelopment Authority says
9 they have an acquisition cost estimate of
10 \$162,025. It would appear to me that they
11 already have some kind of appraisal on these
12 properties to -- how are they coming to this
13 figure, if they don't have an appraisal
14 already?

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Based on Mr.
16 Wetzel shaking his head, I am assuming that
17 that was an internal estimate and not a real
18 appraisal.

19 MR. WETZEL: Yes. We do not engage
20 a formal appraiser unless and until this body
21 approves the legislation and the Mayor signs
22 it.

23 I can explain very quickly to the
24 gentleman. If this body approves this, the
25 Mayor signs it, we will then engage an

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 appraiser who will contact you. You have a
3 right to be present while the appraisal is
4 done. When we get the appraisal back, we
5 issue what's call an offer letter to you.

6 MR. MASON: I have another question
7 about the criteria for the choosing of these
8 properties.

9 There's several properties on the
10 block that are exactly the same as mine that
11 there not on this list.

12 MS. SALZMAN: This is an area that's
13 near our office. We have been cleaning the
14 land both on Kern Street and on Frankford
15 Avenue.

16 And we put in for this land because
17 it was not fenced off, it has not been taken
18 care of by anybody except by New Kensington,
19 and so, therefore, we felt that it was in the
20 best interest of the community that we acquire
21 this land.

22 MR. MASON: What about the other
23 properties that aren't on your list that are
24 adjacent to this property?

25 MS. SALZMAN: Some of those

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 properties have already been acquired by New
3 Kensington CDC and some of them are in the
4 process of also going for acquisition.

5 MR. MASON: I would like to state
6 that I have never been contacted by this
7 office or any other representative.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You have never
9 been contacted by the CDC?

10 MR. MASON: Kensington CDC? Yes, I
11 have never been contacted.

12 They have easily contacted me for
13 this. I have responded to it. I would have
14 responded to anything else that they had sent
15 me.

16 When I go by the property now, the
17 neighbors are using it for a parking lot over
18 there. Now, I don't know how much maintaining
19 is going on over there.

20 I see a lot behind my property
21 that's over -- it is fenced in and it is very
22 much overgrown. Nothing is being taken care
23 of here.

24 I am not saying it is a trash dump,
25 but I don't see any maintenance going on with

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 this or any kind of protection going on here.

3 Now, for them to just come in and
4 say they want to acquire my property, that's
5 easily said here, it is very easily said.

6 As we all know, timing is a factor
7 in real estate. And I do pay the taxes on
8 this property here faithfully, yearly.

9 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Councilman
10 DiCicco.

11 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: I am sorry,
12 sir. I had a sidebar going on. I didn't get
13 your last name.

14 MR. MASON: My name is Jim Mason.

15 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Mr. Mason, I
16 will ask you some of the similar questions I
17 asked the previous witness.

18 How long have you owned this
19 property?

20 MR. MASON: I have owned it since
21 the early '90s. I don't know exactly the
22 date, Mr. DiCicco.

23 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: And you
24 acquired them for what purpose?

25 MR. MASON: At the time there were

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 buildings standing on the lots that I had
3 started to rehab. The city came in and
4 started to tear down houses that were
5 adjacent, damaged the property that was there,
6 and I had to tear the buildings down.

7 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: What was your
8 intention before the city demolished?

9 MR. MASON: I am rehabbing the
10 buildings.

11 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: You are saying
12 that the city damaged your property to the
13 extent that they had to --

14 MR. MASON: The city damaged my
15 property and did not inform me that they were
16 condemning the property, and just went ahead
17 and tore it down. I was unaware that anything
18 was being done at all.

19 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: When was that?

20 MR. MASON: That was, once again, I
21 will say in the '90s.

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Early '90s.
23 10, 12 years. So for ten years, then.

24 Is that when you demolished your
25 properties, about ten years ago?

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2 MR. MASON: Yes.

3 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: And they

4 remained vacant land since then?

5 MR. MASON: Yes.

6 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Why are you

7 keeping it vacant? Is there something else

8 you had in mind? What's the purpose of

9 keeping it vacant?

10 MR. MASON: Once again I will refer

11 to, in real estate, timing is a factor.

12 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: You can't get a

13 better time in Philadelphia to develop than it

14 is now. This is boon time in this town.

15 Value of land is going through the roof in

16 every neighborhood.

17 MR. MASON: What's going on here is

18 not going to be something that I am --

19 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Money is cheap

20 now, mortgages are cheap. They are throwing

21 money at people in Philadelphia today.

22 MR. MASON: You are right, this is

23 the time. And I am not going to have my

24 opportunity, am I?

25 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: No; you had it.

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2 MR. MASON: Oh, I had it.

3 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: This didn't
4 start last week. This boon started a good
5 six, seven years ago. And I am asking --

6 MR. MASON: Not in this area, it
7 didn't.

8 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Oh, well, it
9 has happened.

10 So you have no intentions at the
11 moment. Do you have any plans to develop it?
12 Have you made --

13 MR. MASON: I do have plans to
14 develop it.

15 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: What kind of
16 development?

17 MR. MASON: I would like to build
18 some housing there. I am a contractor. I
19 would like to be involved in something like
20 this.

21 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Where do you
22 live, sir?

23 MR. MASON: I live in Frankford.

24 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: So this is the
25 first time you had an opportunity to hear from

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 the New Kensington CDC?

3 MR. MASON: Just now.

4 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Again, I will
5 repeat what I said before. I am going to move
6 for these bills to come out favorably. I
7 would suggest that you all come together and
8 start talking. And maybe there is an
9 opportunity to do some joint venture,
10 development.

11 Look, if New Kensington CDC develops
12 houses, whether it is on your parcels or not,
13 let's assume for a moment we move yours from
14 this list, it is going to benefit you.

15 What we don't want to see happen is
16 that you just sit on the land, not maintain
17 it, so that a year or two down the road, after
18 New Kensington builds, then we are going to
19 move to condemn and you have another windfall.

20 And I am not suggesting that that's
21 your plan.

22 MR. MASON: Mr. DiCicco, I agree
23 with you --

24 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Let me finish.
25 That's something that I am not going to allow

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 to happen.

3 So I think the best thing is, work
4 with Redevelopment Authority, CDC. Maybe
5 there is a way you can develop housing that is
6 going to be complementary to what they are
7 doing, and it is a win/win for everybody.

8 MR. MASON: I agree. And as the
9 other gentleman was saying from the Germantown
10 area, on Wayne and Pulaski Avenue, who wants
11 to build a house on two lots, when you've got
12 seven lots beside them and you can't do
13 anything with them?

14 You can't talk to the city about
15 getting those lots because you can't find out
16 who owns them.

17 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: We could have,
18 the same way the CDC did.

19 But everything starts at a place.
20 You can't always wait for the other person to
21 do it and then follow. Somebody has to take
22 the initiative.

23 And in this case the CDC, with the
24 community support, have taken the initiative.
25 And there is an opportunity here I think, if

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 you can work through these terms, that you can
3 develop the property, along with your
4 properties, along with the CDC.

5 Their only objective here is to
6 remove the blight, clean up the condition so
7 that the quality of life of the people who
8 live in this nearby community is improved.
9 That's all my mission is.

10 I don't get anything out of it,
11 other than trying to help everyone get a
12 better life for their community and clean
13 things up and get rid of this blight.

14 There is an opportunity, it is a
15 good time in this history of Philadelphia,
16 mortgage rates are still low, developing,
17 people are looking to move, the pressure from
18 Center City is all the way up. Fishtown, a
19 shell, \$200,000 in Fishtown.

20 MR. MASON: Exactly. You can't buy
21 a house for \$160,000 down there.

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: That's not a
23 house. We are talking about empty, vacant
24 lots.

25 MR. MASON: That's correct. But I

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 know of a vacant lot in the area recently
3 going for \$60,000.

4 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Then you are
5 telling me that the value of land there --

6 MR. MASON: What is the value of
7 this land, then?

8 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Well, you are
9 saying you think it is worth more. That's
10 what you are saying.

11 MR. MASON: I think it could be.

12 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: But, on the
13 other hand, you are telling me, who wants to
14 build there because it is not ready for
15 development. You can't have it both ways.

16 MR. MASON: I am not telling you
17 that.

18 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: You are saying
19 you didn't develop it because nobody wanted to
20 develop there.

21 MR. MASON: I can't develop this
22 much land on my own.

23 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Then you need
24 to do something. You either sell it or you
25 work in partnership with the CDC, if you can

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 come up with a plan that works.

3 MR. MASON: I will see what we can
4 work out.

5 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: There is no
6 other alternative.

7 MS. SALZMAN: What lot do you own?

8 MR. MASON: I own 2555. And I also
9 own 2557, which I got no notice on at all.

10 MS. SALZMAN: That's not included in
11 this package.

12 MR. MASON: Obviously. But --

13 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Look, you
14 understand there are opportunities here. I
15 think there can be a win/win all the way
16 around.

17 But I am going to move these bills
18 out to keep everybody's attention on getting
19 this done. I am not going to delay it and ask
20 this committee to delay it. Because if I
21 delay it, another six months will go by and we
22 will be back where we were in six months where
23 we are today. I am going to keep the ball
24 rolling.

25 (Applause.)

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2 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
3 recognizes Councilman Kelly.

4 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Mr. Mason, I just
5 want to follow up on Councilman DiCicco on
6 what he was saying -- and he spoke about this
7 issue very thoroughly -- that we have to do
8 something with vacant lots in this city.

9 Now, as your testimony, you said
10 that this lot has been vacant for over ten
11 years. Nothing has happened with that lot.
12 And I think it is either going to be up to you
13 or the community or the city to do something
14 with it.

15 And I think that, as Councilman
16 DiCicco said, he would be willing to work with
17 you, the city is willing to work with you, and
18 so is the community.

19 But the one thing I want to
20 emphasize -- and I think the Councilman did it
21 thoroughly -- is that it will not remain the
22 way it is. That's what we have to do.

23 We have to take these lots, they are
24 in great demand right now, we have to do
25 something with them.

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2 And I am hoping that you would also
3 be interested in doing this and working with
4 the city and the community to do it. Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Let me also
7 add, if I can, is this property on Kern
8 Street?

9 MS. SALZMAN: Yes.

10 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: My staff, which
11 is always on the ball, just e-mailed me.

12 Do you know what you are paying in
13 real estate taxes? Would \$27 a year be
14 accurate?

15 MR. MASON: Yes.

16 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: All right. \$27
17 a year. That's why we are in the trouble we
18 are in in this city. Because not just this
19 guy, anybody, they can sit on this for 20
20 years, and at that rate they will owe us 500
21 bucks in 20 years.

22 There is no incentive to develop it.
23 They wait for the windfall. And I don't mean
24 that for you personally. It is nuts.

25 MR. MASON: I am not allowed to get

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 a windfall. I am not allowed to be in a lucky
3 position. I am not allowed to be in a good
4 position.

5 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: No; you are
6 allowed to be in that position. But what you
7 are not supposed to do is let a property sit
8 there blighted and not maintained, that's what
9 you are not allowed to do.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Ma'am, did you
11 want to testify? Please identify yourself for
12 the record.

13 MS. VICKI DONATO: My name is Vicki
14 Donato, and my address is 2545 Kern Street.
15 And we purchased it. My husband and I took a
16 long time for us to get it together, and we
17 purchased that house six years ago. Okay?
18 And we lived in it with our children for the
19 last five years.

20 Now, we moved out a year ago. And,
21 well, he got cancer and a whole lot of things,
22 we were having financial problems. And I
23 am -- I go to the house all the time, but I
24 don't stay in it. Okay?

25 And we are right on the edge. I

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2 know what they are all talking about, because
3 the three houses that were next to me when we
4 moved in were abandoned, and the kids kept
5 starting fires. We -- anyway, we ended up --
6 or I ended up being part of the help of
7 getting them torn down when the city was
8 tearing the houses down.

9 And CDC came in, and they did a
10 beautiful job on taking care on the land
11 that's over there. They put, like, a parking
12 lot next to my house.

13 And my problem is, it took us so
14 long to get it. We were trying to get that
15 for my children, you know. And, I mean, we
16 are behind and it doesn't look all that great
17 right now, but it has only been in the last
18 year that it has been like that, you know.

19 And I just -- I agree with the bill,
20 I agree with the thing that they want to do.
21 I just kind of wish that you could just go one
22 over, you know. I don't know.

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: You do understand
24 that the Redevelopment Authority would pay the
25 fair market value for the property?

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2 MS. DONATO: Well, my husband -- I
3 don't even know how to say it. I wish he was
4 here, but he was too sick to come today.

5 Yes; but at the moment we happen to
6 owe a little bit on it. I mean, I have paid a
7 thousand on it in the last year, but I still
8 owe --

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: You what, dear?

10 MS. DONATO: I owe some money on it
11 over the last couple of years, and I have paid
12 some in the last year.

13 But I guess he wants to keep it for
14 our children, because we have nothing else to
15 be able to give them, you know. So, I don't
16 know.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you presently
18 renting where you live?

19 MS. DONATO: What?

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you presently
21 renting where you live?

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Do you own
23 where you live now or do you rent?

24 MS. DONATO: The house on Kern
25 Street, we own. The house I live now, I am

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 renting. I am still in Philly; my husband is
3 living with my mom. I mean, he is really
4 sick, so he is not in Philly most of the time.

5 I am there, like, every two days
6 checking the mail. I know all the neighbors.
7 I don't understand how I didn't know anything
8 that was going on.

9 They don't even know what the
10 project is. Everybody on our street, nobody
11 knew. We didn't know anything until ten days
12 ago, when I got the letter. And all I got was
13 a thing saying they wanted to acquire the
14 property. So, you know, we are kind of in the
15 dark here.

16 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Did you ever
17 consider rehabilitating the property,
18 rehabbing it?

19 MS. DONATO: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: And the reason
21 you can't, because your husband is unemployed?

22 MS. DONATO: Well, no. We were
23 living in it until a year ago. I mean, we put
24 a new roof on it, we put -- before we moved
25 into it, they put a new front on it. We put a

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05

2 new roof on it on the top and on the back.

3 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Then you moved
4 into a house that you are now renting?

5 MS. DONATO: Yes. Well, we went
6 through some problems because he got cancer
7 and we were having marital problems. So he
8 took --

9 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: I understand
10 marital problems, I have been there.

11 MS. DONATO: And then the
12 neighborhood is, sometimes bad kids in the
13 block, they kind of bust out windows. And
14 that's what most of my house only looks bad
15 because of the windows.

16 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: That's what
17 this project plan is about, is making that
18 neighborhood a better place.

19 MS. DONATO: Yes. I knew that. But
20 at the time -- it gets personal from there,
21 you know what I mean?

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: I understand
23 that. And certainly I am not going to get in
24 the middle of any marital issues.

25 MS. DONATO: The windows all got

1 BILL NO. 050381 - 6/6/05
2 busted up because my daughter wouldn't go out
3 with the kids in the neighborhood, and we had
4 to wait for them to either move or -- you
5 replace it, they got done again.

6 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: There may be
7 some financial opportunities. If you would
8 meet with Sandy, there are some homeowner
9 low-interest loans and things you might want
10 to look at maybe to improve the property and
11 make it a better place. Because when they get
12 done with their project, it is going to be a
13 better place.

14 MS. DONATO: That's -- I know. We
15 have been getting things asking us if we
16 wanted to get another -- you know, more money
17 to improve it.

18 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Work with Sandy
19 Salzman, they are a good organization and they
20 will try to help you out.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone
22 else to testify on this bill?

23 MS. DONATO: Thank you.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone
25 else to testify on this bill?

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
3 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
4 050382.

5 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050382, an
6 Ordinance approving the thirteenth amendment
7 of the redevelopment proposal for the Cecil B.
8 Moore Avenue Urban Renewal Area, being the
9 area generally bounded by 15th Street on the
10 east, Jefferson Street on the south, 19th
11 Street on the west, and Montgomery Avenue on
12 the north, including the thirteenth amendment
13 to the urban renewal plan and the ninth
14 amendment to the relocation plan which
15 provides, inter alia, for the additional land
16 acquisition of approximately three properties
17 for commercial and related uses, two
18 properties for institutional and related uses,
19 and four properties for residential and
20 related uses.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

22 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
23 afternoon, Madam Chairperson and members of
24 the committee. I am here to speak in support
25 of Bill No. 050382, which is the thirteenth

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 amendment of the redevelopment proposal and
3 the thirteenth amendment of the urban renewal
4 plan for the North Philadelphia Redevelopment
5 Area and the Cecil B. Moore Avenue Urban
6 Renewal Area.

7 This bill would authorize the
8 Redevelopment Authority to acquire three
9 properties for commercial and related use, two
10 properties for institutional and related use,
11 and four properties for residential and
12 related use.

13 Cecil B. Moore Acquisition Zone.
14 This area of North Philadelphia is bordered by
15 North Broad Street on the east, North 21st
16 Street on the west, Montgomery Avenue on the
17 north, and Master Street on the south.

18 It is an area that has been
19 strategically selected due to the high vacancy
20 rate and redevelopment potential.

21 Previously in October 2002,
22 approximately 700 lots within the acquisition
23 loan were approved for acquisition. A total
24 of one additional lot is being acquired by
25 this request.

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 The acquisition costs for that lot
3 is estimated at \$54,000.

4 There are a total of two properties,
5 one vacant structure and one occupied
6 structure, that will be acquired for
7 commercial development. The parcels are to be
8 acquired and land banked for future commercial
9 development.

10 The acquisition cost is estimated to
11 be \$170,050. The disposition price for this
12 parcel would be at fair market value.

13 There are two properties, one
14 occupied structure and one vacant lot, that
15 will be acquired on behalf of the Seventh Day
16 Adventist Church for use as parking for their
17 adjacent church facilities. The acquisition
18 cost is estimated at \$106,050, and the
19 disposition will be at fair market value.

20 Sydenham Phase II, there are a total
21 of two properties, one vacant structure and
22 one vacant lot, that will be acquired and land
23 banked for future housing development. The
24 acquisition cost is estimated at 75,800. The
25 disposition price will be at fair market

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 value.

3 Additionally, the Redevelopment
4 Authority, at the request of Councilman Clark,
5 has decided not to acquire 1512 and 1514
6 Montgomery Avenue, which were part of the
7 original proposal.

8 Madam Chairperson and members of the
9 committee, I respectfully request favorable
10 consideration of Bill No. 050382 and would ask
11 the suspension of Council Rules to allow first
12 reading on June 9, 2005.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Mr.
14 Wetzel, you state that the acquisitions of
15 three properties for the commercial
16 development will be land banked?

17 MR. WETZEL: Yes. These are being
18 acquired for the Commerce Department and to be
19 offered for future development.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: So, in fact, there
21 is not a developer at this point?

22 MR. WETZEL: Not to our knowledge,
23 Council President.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: Will the church
25 have to pay the fair market value for the lots

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 that they are interested in?

3 MR. WETZEL: Yes, they are.

4 AUDIENCE MEMBERS: That is not a
5 lot.

6 MR. WETZEL: There is one occupied
7 structure and one vacant lot.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry. And
9 the acquisition cost is estimated to be
10 \$106,000?

11 MR. WETZEL: Approximately.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: And that includes
13 relocation?

14 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. May we hear
16 from the witnesses at the table, please.
17 Kindly identify yourself.

18 MS. TOOMER: My name is Carol
19 Toomer. I reside at 1610 West Cecil B. Moore
20 Avenue.

21 I need to know which -- because he
22 mentioned them in a parcel, and not
23 individually, and I was served an individual
24 notice.

25 And he said the reason for it, I

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 believe, was that these areas were targeted
3 mainly because they were vacant properties.

4 We have owned the property for
5 several decades and have lived there since
6 1987.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: And what is the
8 address?

9 MS. TOOMER: 1610 West Cecil B.
10 Moore Avenue.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel, is
12 that included?

13 MR. WETZEL: Yes, 1608 and 1610
14 Cecil B. Moore Avenue are in this ordinance.

15 MS. TOOMER: Now, I am not concerned
16 about 1608. I reside at 1610 West Cecil B.
17 Moore Avenue. We live there, we pay taxes
18 there. To move would be injurious to us.

19 We are willing to work with the city
20 once we determine what it is that they need
21 from us. Other than being a resident and
22 tax-paying, I didn't know we had any other
23 obligation.

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: And how long have
25 you owned this property?

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 MS. TOOMER: We have owned it since
3 the late 1970s, and we moved in in 1987.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: And what is the
5 condition of the property?

6 MS. TOOMER: The condition is
7 continually being upgraded.

8 What has happened to that area is
9 that it has become very financially viable.
10 And, so, you have people now who are
11 speculators and investors even approaching us
12 to buy our property.

13 We did have an appraisal on our
14 property. We are not interested in fair
15 market value because we know we would be
16 deprived of what the going rate would be for
17 that current real estate.

18 Temple has made a major investment
19 in that area. And it just seems that now that
20 the area is becoming economically viable, now
21 they are looking to displace the people who
22 have made the environment stable for the past
23 20 years, when no one was interested in it
24 other than collecting taxes.

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. May we

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 hear from the other witness, please.

3 MS. VIRGINIA TAYLOR: Yes. My name
4 is Virginia Taylor, and I have a house at 1862
5 North 23rd Street.

6 Now, I heard him mention that this
7 thing went up to 21st Street. That's what he
8 said. It went from one street to 21st. But
9 this is 23rd Street that they sent me a letter
10 for.

11 MR. WETZEL: That could be a
12 different ordinance today.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Is that the
14 Project Home?

15 MS. TAYLOR: Yes, they have Project
16 Home in that area.

17 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I don't think
18 that's in this ordinance.

19 MR. WETZEL: Right.

20 MS. TAYLOR: I am seeing they have
21 Project Homes in that area. My home is not a
22 Project Home.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: There was a
24 development targeted for the 1800 block of
25 North 23rd Street, but that's not a part of

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 this particular ordinance. So I don't know if
3 you got a notice.

4 MS. TAYLOR: That's the number
5 they gave me.

6 MS. TOOMER: Also I would like to
7 note, how was my property selected? It is not
8 a vacant property.

9 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I was actually
10 going to ask you that. Good afternoon.

11 1610. First of all, let me ask the
12 Redevelopment Authority. That they indicated
13 that the property is occupied on the fax sheet
14 that I got.

15 MR. WETZEL: Yes, it is occupied.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And that was
17 determined by what?

18 MR. WETZEL: A survey indicated
19 that -- evidenced that there was somebody
20 living there.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So somebody does
22 live there?

23 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

24 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: It was always my
25 understanding that the property was vacant.

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2 I mean, do we have utility bills?

3 MR. MICHAEL KOONCE: My name is
4 Michael Koonce, Deputy Executive Director of
5 Real Estate Services for the Redevelopment
6 Authority.

7 The reason it was listed on your
8 sheets as occupied was because there is
9 evidence -- it looked like it could have been
10 occupied. We had no way -- we still don't
11 know whether it was occupied.

12 MS. TOOMER: You could always knock
13 on the door, sir, or send us a letter.

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me. Let
15 the gentleman speak, and then you can address
16 him.

17 MR. KOONCE: And yesterday I was
18 actually out there at the property, and I did
19 knock on the door.

20 There was a gentleman sitting in
21 front at a card table, I believe, and looked
22 like there were products for sale or something
23 out front, around 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

24 And no one indicated to me that this
25 was occupied, but we still listed it as

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 occupied because it looked like there may have
3 been -- there was a chance. And whenever
4 that's the case, that's the way we list them.

5 MS. TOOMER: May I respond?
6 Just because you live at a property
7 does not mean that you are there 24 hours. We
8 were out shopping at the mall, if that's
9 permissible.

10 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Let me ask the
11 question.

12 When we look at a property and then
13 there is some question about whether or not it
14 is occupied, do we pull utility bills? I
15 mean, there has to be some, I am assuming,
16 electric, gas, water, some evidence of
17 utilities. Do we do that?

18 MR. WETZEL: No. We rely on our own
19 surveys, the surveys of other public entities.
20 And especially if it is a neighborhood-based
21 organization that is working with us, we make
22 an assumption.

23 And maybe we have to go further into
24 this. We make an assumption that the
25 neighborhood group is probably the best eyes

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2 and ears of anybody.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: How difficult
4 would it be to pull up on the computer the
5 utilities?

6 MR. WETZEL: The ones that would
7 make sense would be if there is gas and
8 electric usage. Water and sewer bills just
9 keep flowing whether it is vacant or not
10 vacant.

11 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: But there is
12 usage. I mean, you get a bill regardless of
13 whether or not you are using the water. But
14 if there is certain usage associated with the
15 water bill, you have some sense.

16 MR. WETZEL: Broken pipes sometimes.

17 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: What about
18 electric and gas?

19 MR. WETZEL: Are we able to pull up
20 electric? Michael has indicated to me that --

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I have that in
22 my office. I am kind of surprised that you
23 don't have that at the RDA.

24 MR. WETZEL: That's probably because
25 you are a part of city government, and we are

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2 not.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Gas, we can pull
4 gas. We have access to the University of
5 Pennsylvania's system that you can pull gas
6 up.

7 MR. WETZEL: We can check into that.

8 MS. TOOMER: Would you need me to
9 present you with gas and electric bills?
10 Because we can do that.

11 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Not now.

12 Because of the uncertainty
13 associated with this property, because I was
14 told that it was vacant early on by the
15 neighborhood, there is obviously some
16 question.

17 This lady here is saying she has
18 occupied, that should be easy enough to prove.
19 So why don't we agree to hold that particular
20 bill, if that's okay with everyone. We want
21 to hold 10.

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: Just the 10.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yes.

24 MS. TOOMER: Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: 1610.

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2 MR. WETZEL: What were you going to
3 do?

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I am going to
5 ask that we hold 1610, given the uncertainty
6 of the condition of the property.

7 MR. WETZEL: Yes. And my assumption
8 then is, this doesn't get passed until the
9 fall, then?

10 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Correct.

11 MR. WETZEL: That's fine with us, if
12 that's fine with you.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone
14 else to testify on this bill?

15 Please approach the witness table.
16 Kindly identify yourself for the record.

17 MR. HOWARD PALMER: Howard Palmer,
18 homeowner or property owner of 1621 West
19 Oxford Street. And I understand that the
20 Redevelopment Authority wants to acquire my
21 property, and right now I am in the process of
22 renovating it.

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you doing the
24 work yourself or do you have a contractor
25 doing it?

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2 MR. PALMER: I contract work out, I
3 do a lot of work myself. It is not much that
4 needs to be done. I have a contractor doing
5 the electric work, whatever it is I can't do.

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: And records would
7 show that you have the necessary permits?

8 MR. PALMER: Yes, if I need permits,
9 I will.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you have the
11 necessary permits presently?

12 MR. PALMER: No, I don't have any
13 permits for whatever it is I need done. I
14 mean, I didn't need any permits as of right
15 now.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: This is what I
17 would like to do, because I actually did see
18 some evidence. And I may not want to say, I
19 don't actually want to say what I have seen
20 you do, since there is some question as to
21 whether or not you have permits. So we will
22 not put that on the record today.

23 Because of the nature of this
24 particular acquisition, and there is an
25 interested party, Seventh Day Adventist Church

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 needs some parking in your area, and I believe
3 that particular property is the only one in
4 question on that entire block face, there is
5 one other property on Oxford Street that is
6 vacant, it is actually in somewhat disrepair,
7 I think that's owned by the Housing Authority,
8 and the rest of the parcel is vacant land,
9 what I would like to do is to report the bill
10 out of committee and then have you sit down
11 with the Redevelopment Authority and some
12 representatives from Seventh Day Adventist as
13 your neighbors and find out where we are first
14 of all as relates to the renovation of your
15 property, and secondly what ultimately if we
16 can come to some sort of an agreement as it
17 relates to what we end up doing on that block.

18 But I did see some evidence of some
19 movement in there, but I don't want to talk
20 about the specifics of it today, if that's
21 okay with you.

22 MR. PALMER: No problem.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So I guess a
24 member of the Redevelopment Authority will
25 be -- if you can leave your information with

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 the Redevelopment Authority, we can contact
3 you after the proceedings and set up a
4 meeting. Okay?

5 MR. PALMER: Yes.

6 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: All right, sir.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.
8 Please identify yourself for the record and
9 proceed with your testimony.

10 MS. ROSALIE HAMILTON: My name is
11 Rosalie Hamilton, and I am here in reference
12 to the property located at 1736 North Sydenham
13 Street.

14 I am here on behalf of nine other
15 sisters and brothers. That property has been
16 in our family in excess of 45 years. My dad
17 bought it roughly 40-some years ago. He is
18 deceased now. My mom has since been deceased.
19 The property is in a brother and a
20 sister-in-law's name.

21 And the main reason I am here is
22 just to let the Council know that our entire
23 family, ten children that remain from my dad,
24 we are interested in that property.

25 They did -- the property has been

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 vacant for, I am going to say, approximately
3 two years. And at that time, when the
4 property became vacant, they did start
5 renovations in the property.

6 We do intend to pay back taxes, like
7 300-some-odd dollars for 199 -- I mean, excuse
8 me, 2003 and 2004, I believe it is.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

10 The Chair recognizes Councilman
11 Clarke.

12 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Ma'am, let me
13 get, my understanding is that the property is
14 family property, it is owned by the family,
15 you are saying?

16 MS. HAMILTON: The deed, is that
17 what you are referring to?

18 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yes.

19 MS. HAMILTON: Is in a brother and
20 his wife's name, so it is my brother and my
21 sister-in-law.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And the property
23 has been vacant for two years?

24 MS. HAMILTON: Roughly two years. I
25 don't have an exact date on it.

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2 Unfortunately, I tried to prepare
3 myself as well as I could with the short time
4 frame that I had to come down here. So I'm
5 going to try to answer your questions as best
6 to my knowledge.

7 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: That's okay.

8 MS. HAMILTON: It is approximately
9 two years.

10 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. All
11 right. If it is okay with the committee, what
12 we would like to do, also, is agree to report
13 the bill out, but we would ask that before any
14 action be taken by the Redevelopment
15 Authority, that we will have a sit-down.

16 You probably need to get in touch
17 with your brother, if his name is listed on
18 the deed, because he would be the individual
19 that would have to discuss the property.

20 MS. HAMILTON: Actually, and I
21 brought, too, I actually have the authority to
22 speak for my brother, I have it in writing. I
23 have the authority to speak for my brother's
24 behalf in reference to 1736 North Sydenham
25 Street.

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2 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. Whoever.
3 It will probably be good if your brother is
4 available.

5 MS. HAMILTON: That's fine. It is
6 not a problem.

7 The only issue, the only reason that
8 one sibling sits here today is because we have
9 to go through six states to gather nine other
10 siblings to come to City Hall courtroom, you
11 know, No. 400 at 10:00 a.m. today.

12 So I am the closest to this
13 location, this is the reason I am here to
14 speak for this property.

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. That's
16 fine. We will pass it out. I will ask RDA
17 not to act on it until we get some -- have
18 some discussion with either your brother or
19 his power of attorney.

20 MS. HAMILTON: Not a problem. And
21 one other issue, it is not an issue, it is
22 just a point.

23 The mail that comes from, say, for
24 instance, the City of Philadelphia comes to my
25 address. I live in Philadelphia, so it comes

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 to my address, so I receive everything in
3 reference to 1756 North Sydenham Street.

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. So you
5 got the notice?

6 MS. HAMILTON: Yes, I received the
7 notice at my address.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: That's fine.
9 Before you leave, make sure that the
10 representative of the Redevelopment Authority
11 has a phone number.

12 MS. HAMILTON: And that would be
13 who?

14 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Mr. Koonce.

15 MS. HAMILTON: Thank you very much,
16 sir.

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

18 Do we have anyone else to testify on
19 this bill? Please approach the witness table.
20 Kindly identify yourself for the record.

21 MR. ROBERT SMITH: My name is Robert
22 Smith, two properties, 1608 and 1610. Those
23 are the two properties that were requested for
24 the institutional use. Four years ago Beach
25 Interplex built a 9,000 square foot daycare

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 center on 16th Street. And the properties on
3 Cecil B. Moore are -- basically, front the
4 daycare center.

5 So this was an opportunity to look
6 at a vacant property and what we also thought
7 was a second vacant property in order to take
8 those properties down and expand the play area
9 for the daycare center.

10 It seems to be -- I don't know what
11 happened in terms of the addresses or the
12 mistake. It is quite possible that when we
13 looked at the properties, we were looking at
14 them from the rear, and from the rear of the
15 property it seems evident that the property is
16 vacant.

17 When you go in the front of 1610,
18 there are windows, it is closed most of the
19 time during the day, so a mistake -- I would
20 say the mistake is on the community's part in
21 terms of identifying that property as vacant.
22 So, I would just like to say that.

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

24 Good afternoon. Please identify
25 yourself.

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 MS. JUDITH ROBINSON: My name is
3 Judith Robinson, and I am here to testify on
4 Bill No. 050382.

5 I want to preface my testimony by
6 reading just briefly, I wish I could get each
7 one of you Councilpeople a copy of this book
8 called the Federal Bulldozer by Martin
9 Anderson.

10 "Virtually all urban renewal
11 projects now in existence got there without
12 the local citizens knowing very much about it,
13 dimly aware that the proposed urban renewal
14 program was somehow going to get rid of ugly
15 old buildings and create new ones in their
16 place. And being very busy with their own
17 affairs, they casually condoned it.

18 "Look, some people are always going
19 to be hurt. That's just the way it is. The
20 fact is that every intelligent, knowledgeable
21 proponent of urban renewal is willing to
22 deliberately hurt innocent people, most of
23 them Negroes and poor, for the sake of
24 contemplating and enjoying a few new bricks, a
25 little grass, and some shiny glass."

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2 I read this book that was written in
3 1964 because I am just saddened as I listened
4 to several testimony about how, with all of
5 that being said, we are in Year 2004 -- 2005,
6 and we seem to not get it right. It almost
7 seems as though that book was written today.
8 So I am going to try to work on getting all of
9 you all a copy of it, because this is not
10 something that's brand-new.

11 In that regard, I want to say that
12 this is a public forum. No citizens should
13 feel intimidated by coming to this forum and
14 speaking. It is the law. Community
15 participation is the law.

16 You all are obligated as
17 Councilpeople to hear testimony, so nobody
18 should fear coming here and speaking --

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. ROBINSON: -- whatever it is
21 about related to their property.

22 I am a real estate broker for 20
23 years. Property rights are very important in
24 America, and I just would encourage every
25 citizen to stand up for your right.

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. ROBINSON: I would first like to
4 ask, where are the list of properties to be
5 taken? Were every property that is proposed
6 to be taken in the newspaper?

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

8 MR. WETZEL: The advertisements in
9 the newspaper should contain all the
10 properties that are in the ordinance.

11 MS. BRACI: And which date was that
12 published, please?

13 MR. WETZEL: It was published three
14 times prior to this hearing.

15 MS. ROBINSON: I can surely find
16 that.

17 But I just want to be clear that
18 community participation is the law per the
19 Charter.

20 Make sure, citizens, you know that
21 you have every right to ask any question of
22 your representative; that we're not in some
23 foreign country where you don't have rights.
24 And I just think, I want to encourage people
25 to be clear on that.

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05

2 Taking of property, especially in
3 this very robust market that we are in, should
4 be considered very carefully. So there is no
5 reason why a citizen should feel that they
6 don't have rights.

7 I really think it is not enough for
8 Councilpeople to vote these ordinances out of
9 committee and then not look at what happens
10 when it get to Redevelopment Authority.

11 Mr. Wetzel, I respect him very much.
12 But it is a process with taking of people's
13 property, that's the implementation process.

14 I do go to Redevelopment Authority
15 every second and fourth Tuesday, and I would
16 encourage the citizens to come down to 1234
17 North Market Street -- 1234 Market Street
18 every second and fourth Tuesday to watch how
19 this process is implemented after this is
20 voted on, then you will see all the juicy or
21 gory details.

22 People are not getting fair market
23 value for their property. They have a right
24 to get independent appraisals. That's not
25 being done to the level that I think it should

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 be, even though we are prodding them along and
3 they are listening. We are encouraged by
4 that.

5 But we should be real clear. In
6 this market, I would encourage you to let the
7 market work. I think it was a few testimony
8 here today where people want to do their own
9 market projects, they are not asking for any
10 money.

11 Let's try to save some money from
12 these little resources that we have that are
13 so limited. Let the market work. And when it
14 does, you will include citizens, you will take
15 on the best practices for real.

16 For instance, I heard something
17 about commercial corridors. There is a
18 project that they want to put on a commercial
19 corridor.

20 New urbanism for those that are
21 about the latest and best, is about making
22 sure on a commercial corridor that you have
23 commercial at the lower level facing the
24 street, even if whatever you are going to
25 build on top.

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2 On a commercial corridor you should
3 stick to that because that's what best
4 practices is all about. It is about making
5 sure that you have mixed use to make for the
6 best use of the land.

7 I hear, also, some questions about
8 zoning. I think that definitely should be
9 taken into consideration because zoning is
10 about land use.

11 When Councilpeople who are the
12 end-all and the be-all about these projects,
13 when they make decisions, what criterias are
14 they using to make these decisions? Are they
15 using cost/benefit analyses as businesspeople
16 would? Are they using the best interest of
17 the community for real? Are they using zoning
18 land issues for real? Or what other criterias
19 are they using, who's the person or entity
20 that will give them the biggest campaign
21 contribution?

22 I ask you respectfully, what
23 criterias are being used and are they
24 transparent so that the citizens can
25 understand too how this is going?

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 As I have attended Redevelopment
3 Authority, I see something very strange
4 happening. It appears that the average
5 citizen cannot get land for projects that they
6 want to do when they are not asking for
7 subsidies.

8 However, when there is money being
9 asked for for a project that is requesting
10 subsidy, is requesting payment for acquiring
11 the land, then they seem to breeze through
12 real quickly. We are monitoring that very
13 closely.

14 And we think there may be even some
15 racism and bias in how this land is being
16 distributed, and we are very much concerned
17 about that.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. ROBINSON: In conclusion --
20 because I do come back to speak on the next
21 ordinance -- I would just respectfully request
22 that citizens get the opportunity to be
23 included in this process from being able to
24 get respect when they speak about keeping
25 their homes, when there's neighborhood benefit

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 around the development that's being proposed,
3 and that we have inclusion of African-American
4 business and workers in these projects which 9
5 times out of 10 are right in the heart of some
6 of the poorest communities.

7 Thank you very much.

8 (Applause.)

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

10 Do we have anyone else to testify on
11 this bill? Please approach the witness table.
12 Kindly identify yourself for the record and
13 proceed with your testimony.

14 MR. DAVID FELDMAN: David Feldman, I
15 am a Project Manager for VDP Encore, which is
16 requesting redeveloper for the Redevelopment
17 Authority for the property at 1736 Sydenham
18 and 1508 Oxford.

19 And I do want to say, actually, I
20 appreciate that the woman, the owner of 1736,
21 came here today because I have personally been
22 trying for two years to contact the owner.

23 I have actually gone to the house,
24 the address in Mt. Airy that's listed, which
25 happens to be around the corner from where I

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 lived as a kid and my grandparents lived for
3 25 years. And I have gone there several times
4 because I am in that neighborhood a lot. I
5 have written letters, tried to contact her, be
6 very willing to work with her directly.

7 But I respectfully request that this
8 stay on the list because we have been trying
9 for two years. Down the block, this was
10 called Phase II.

11 Phase I is a building that's
12 currently under construction on nine lots that
13 were acquired at fair market value from the
14 Redevelopment Authority last year, I believe,
15 last October, and the building is currently
16 under construction that's going to provide
17 housing for 90 people.

18 We are going to be doing Phase II of
19 that, which will have onsite management on the
20 block. And it is a collection of lots. Some
21 of them have been privately acquired from
22 owners when we have been able to contact them,
23 a few are PHA properties.

24 The property in question, from what
25 I saw from city records and BRT, has been tax

1 BILL NO. 050382 - 6/6/05
2 delinquent approximately 10 or 11 years, but I
3 am not exactly sure. I haven't checked in the
4 last few months the records. According to the
5 BRT record, last transferred about 11 years
6 ago.

7 And the property in November was
8 cited at imminently dangerous. Last month it
9 was upgraded to dangerous status. And in the
10 wintertime when I have been there, because I
11 am onsite frequently, have seen footprints and
12 dog prints to the back windows of the house.
13 It is completely exposed and unsecured.

14 So I would be happy to meet with the
15 owner, and hopefully we can actually do this
16 without it going through Council. But in the
17 absence of that, I would respectfully request
18 it that it stay on the list in this current
19 bill.

20 Thank you, Madam Chair.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.
22 Councilman Clarke? Thank you.

23 Do we have anyone else to testify on
24 this bill?

25 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05
2 Murray to please read the title of Bill No.
3 050385.

4 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050385, an
5 Ordinance approving the thirty-third amendment
6 of the redevelopment proposal for the Model
7 Cities Urban Renewal Area, being the area
8 beginning at the northwest corner of Front
9 Street and Spring Garden Street, including the
10 twenty-fifth amendment to the urban renewal
11 plan and the twenty-fourth amendment to the
12 relocation plan, which provides, inter alia,
13 for the additional land acquisition of
14 approximately 29 properties for residential
15 and related uses; the additional land
16 acquisition of approximately two properties
17 for commercial and related uses; the provision
18 of certain relocation services as required by
19 law; and declaring that condemnation is not
20 imminent with respect to the project.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

22 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
23 afternoon, Madam Chairperson and members of
24 the committee.

25 I am here to speak in support of

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05
2 Bill No. 050385, which is the thirty-third
3 amendment of the redevelopment proposal and
4 the twenty-fifth amendment of the urban
5 renewal plan for the North Philadelphia
6 Redevelopment Area and the Model Cities Urban
7 Renewal Area.

8 This bill would authorize the
9 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 29
10 properties, 17 vacant lots, 10 vacant
11 structures, and 2 occupied structures, for
12 future residential development and two vacant
13 lots for future commercial development.

14 Madam Chairperson and members of the
15 committee, I respectfully request favorable
16 consideration of Bill No. 050385 and would ask
17 for the suspension of Council Rules to allow
18 first reading on June 9, 2005.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzels, why
20 would we take occupied residential properties
21 for future residential development?

22 MR. WETZEL: Council President, let
23 me consult with staff and I will be right with
24 you.

25 It is for the Sharswood Home

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05
2 Ownership, it is a new construction project.
3 There are substantial other properties that
4 are already in or could be in the public
5 inventory as a result of previous ordinances
6 that will be assembled. This is all new
7 construction.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
9 recognizes Councilman Clarke.

10 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam
11 President.

12 Madam President and interested
13 parties, this is a particular development, the
14 second and third phases of which we have --
15 the first phase we have already built 72 units
16 for low/moderate income individuals.

17 The second and third phase, which
18 will be both rental and home ownership, will
19 incorporate, I think it will end up
20 developing, approximately 82 properties.

21 These two properties that are
22 occupied are, frankly, I think they are
23 actually the only occupied properties in the
24 entire square block.

25 And my understanding is that we

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05
2 would be working on a relocation strategy. We
3 have been pretty successful in our relocation.
4 As a matter of fact, in the Homeownership Zone
5 relocation, an overwhelming number of those
6 individuals who chose to live in the same
7 community actually ended up with a new house
8 in Phase I of the home ownership zone.

9 So we anticipate that these two
10 individuals will be relocated, if they so
11 choose, in this particular community in a
12 reasonable condition.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. Good
14 afternoon. Please identify yourself for the
15 record.

16 MS. DAWN TANCREDI: Good afternoon,
17 Madam Chairperson and committee members. My
18 name is Dawn Tancredi, and I represent 413
19 Hope Mission.

20 413 Hope Mission's ministries is a
21 nonprofit, faith-based organization that's
22 committed to bringing development to the urban
23 communities of Philadelphia.

24 413 Hope Missions is the current
25 owner of 127 through 37 and also 139 Jefferson

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05
2 Street; and 1505 through 15 Mascher Street,
3 which is in this bill.

4 413 Hope Mission acquired these
5 properties in March of 2003 with plans to
6 develop the property. Prior to 413 Hope
7 Mission acquiring this property, it had been
8 vacant for probably 20 years.

9 Once my client acquired the
10 property, they obtained a survey, they went
11 out and obtained environmental, they retained
12 Mr. Livingston, who is here, he is the
13 architect that had made plans for this
14 development.

15 And he can also show the panel a
16 copy of the plans which have City Planning
17 approval and color photos which are up on the
18 easel before everyone.

19 The first set of plans in this
20 project contained 40 houses which were going
21 to be sold at market rate.

22 The plans on this property, which
23 also included a new street -- the property
24 location makes up pretty much an entire city
25 block, except for one small corner where there

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05
2 is a house. And it is vacant, it is fenced
3 up, and it is being maintained. Taxes are
4 also being paid on it.

5 Mr. Livingston, the architect, came
6 in and developed plans which also had a new
7 street on it and a couple of easements.

8 The first set of plans were approved
9 by City Planning. The street, the proposed
10 street, named Redner Street, was approved by
11 the Streets Department.

12 This project also needs the support
13 of City Council because there is a new street.
14 This had to go before Council as a whole, and
15 we were hoping to gain Councilman Clarke's
16 support for this project.

17 My clients went to the CDC to gain
18 their support. My clients met with L&I, they
19 met with City Planning, they met with the
20 Streets Department, they met with community
21 groups, they have been working on this project
22 since 2003.

23 They have provided plans, they have
24 provided color pictures to the community
25 group. We have kept in continuous contact

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2 through letters and phone calls with the
3 community group trying to gain their support
4 for this project.

5 It is our understanding that the
6 changes the CDC wanted in this project were
7 immaterial; for example, they wanted changes
8 in window designs, which would not be a
9 problem.

10 In November of 2004, 413 Hope
11 Mission entered into an agreement of sale to
12 sell this property and have this property
13 developed by others. Council for the buyer is
14 here; they have got an equitable interest in
15 this property, as well.

16 You can see that this project has
17 been ongoing, there has been plenty of work
18 being done, meetings with multiple
19 departments, L&I, City Planning, Streets
20 Department, the community group. There is
21 private money that is developing this project.
22 There is no need for this project, this land,
23 to be condemned.

24 We would respectfully request the
25 removal of these properties from the

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2 condemnation bill. Obviously no taxpayer
3 money is needed for this project.

4 The architect is here to answer any
5 questions about the plans and also counsel for
6 the buyer is here to answer any questions, as
7 well. And Reverend John Wallace is here. He
8 represents 413 Hope Mission. Thank you.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.
10 Please identify yourself for the record.

11 MR. STEVEN BARRETT: My name is
12 Steven Barrett. I represent the equitable
13 owner in the agreement of sale which Council
14 referenced which was entered into in November
15 of 2004.

16 The equitable owner is a well-known
17 developer in the city. In fact, the office,
18 the longstanding office of this developer, is
19 in this community, on the 1200 block of Front
20 Street. The principals of this developer live
21 in this community. These are not outside
22 interests.

23 The equitable owner is Silica
24 Builders or Silica Investments. They actually
25 not too far from this site, to show evidence

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2 of their ability financially, as well with the
3 wherewithal in the building and trade
4 industry, recently purchased Mr. Joe Hand's,
5 the boxing promoter's, gym on Howard Street.

6 By way of a pattern, not too far
7 from this site, the same principals and the
8 same backing and financing, they settled on
9 that property on April 1 and within two weeks
10 they broke ground, and that project is well
11 underway.

12 For purposes of this Council's
13 consideration of this plan, the equitable
14 owner, as well as the title owner as of today,
15 wants to assure Council and the RDA that this
16 property is not sitting idly by on some plans
17 that have been collecting dust. There has
18 been active involvement throughout the entire
19 process.

20 This is strictly private money.
21 Taxpayers' money is not at issue here. There
22 is ample financing. And the plans and the
23 development is clearly underway, as evidenced
24 by this developer's standing and other
25 projects within his very own community and

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2 within Councilman Clarke's district.

3 So the equitable owner just wishes
4 to have this Council be aware that, unlike
5 other situations you have heard here today,
6 this property is not a blight, nor will it be,
7 because it is actively under the process to
8 beautify that area and these parcels that laid
9 vacant for over 20 years, enhance the
10 financial integrity and the aesthetic
11 integrity of this community which is well in
12 keeping with the public purpose for
13 acquisition publicly through condemnation.
14 Thank you.

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Our
16 next witness. Excuse me. I think that woman
17 has been up and down at least three times. I
18 think she should be next to testify.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: What is the
20 property in question that you are concerned
21 about?

22 MS. VIRGINIA TAYLOR: I am concerned
23 about the property that I have at 1862 North
24 23rd Street.

25 I had received this letter, you

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2 know, from this department. So I am here to
3 find out, you know, just what is it all about.
4 PRESIDENT VERNA: When did you
5 receive the letter?
6 MS. TAYLOR: Probably around the --
7 some time last week.
8 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel, are
9 you familiar with this?
10 MR. WETZEL: This is a property that
11 was -- it is in the ordinance, and it is being
12 acquired for a Project Home project called St.
13 Elizabeth's. It is homeownership. And it is
14 listed as vacant.
15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Is it in this
16 ordinance?
17 MR. WETZEL: Yes.
18 MS. TAYLOR: I have heard about
19 Project Homes and I know about St. Elizabeth
20 and all of them. I have been asked before
21 from them to give them this property.
22 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you occupy the
23 property, ma'am?
24 MS. TAYLOR: Beg your pardon?
25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you occupy the

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2 property?

3 THE WITNESS: No, I don't.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: Is it vacant?

5 MS. TAYLOR: It is vacant right now,

6 yes. And I chose at that time not to do it.

7 So I just kept the property and I paid the

8 taxes and all, you know.

9 And this is the point that, as long
10 as about a year ago, the people start tearing
11 up the building and caused the building to go
12 down.

13 And what happened is that, once I
14 had the building cleaned up, boarded up, and
15 fixed up, now I get a letter from this
16 department that, you know, they want the place
17 for redevelopment.

18 As long as that place a year it
19 stayed being torn up, nobody said a word. But
20 soon as it gets cleaned up and fixed up and
21 boarded up and everything, then that was about
22 four months ago, and now I hear from the city.

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
24 recognizes Councilman Clarke.

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam

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2 President. Mr. Wetzel, my understanding, this
3 is a part of a Homeownership Choice
4 Development, it was funded by PHFA and the
5 City of Philadelphia? Phase I.

6 MR. WETZEL: Yes, it is.

7 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: For
8 homeownership for low/mod income?

9 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

10 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I just wanted to
11 make sure. All right.

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Good
13 afternoon, sir. Please identify yourself for
14 the record. Are you going to testify, sir?

15 MR. LIVINGSTON: I am the architect
16 and I am here to answer any questions that you
17 may have. If I can make a comment.

18 As you notice, this presentation is
19 totally unrehearsed, it is strictly from the
20 heart. We are here and I am here to represent
21 the client because we have been working on
22 this site for the last four years.

23 And it is a site that's zoned
24 presently as G-2, industrial, and of course it
25 has to go before the Zoning Board.

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2 And in going before the Zoning
3 Board, because of the system that we have
4 here, we have to go before the CDC and get
5 their approval.

6 We have gone before the CDC a number
7 of times. And, to our surprise, the CDC has
8 been seeking us -- all the information that
9 they could get from us regarding this site and
10 the development, and now we find out they want
11 to buy it, they want to take it. And that's
12 the disturbing thing.

13 And we are putting a lot of time.
14 My firm has put in a lot of time and effort in
15 the development of this site, as you can see
16 the renderings there now.

17 And I would be glad to answer any
18 questions that you may have regarding that.

19 PRESIDENT VERNA: Members of the
20 committee have any questions of this
21 gentleman?

22 Apparently not. Thank you. Thank
23 you, sir.

24 Do we have anyone else to testify on
25 this bill?

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2 MS. TAYLOR: Could I just ask you a
3 question? I want to know, I mean, I want to
4 know just what you intend to do with this
5 letter that you sent me. You know, I mean, I
6 am in here talking and nobody is saying
7 anything to me.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Ma'am, what we
9 are going to do, there is some concern because
10 that particular property was submitted to
11 Pennsylvania Housing & Finance Agency, along
12 with a number of other properties, and it was
13 funded based on the understanding that the
14 city -- ma'am, let me finish, please -- that
15 the city was going to acquire that property.
16 It was funded as a result of the belief that
17 that property would be a part of this
18 development.

19 Now, what I will do is to contact
20 Project Home and get yourself involved in the
21 talk about -- and I'm not sure if this can
22 even be done -- if there can be potentially a
23 replacement property for that property, if in
24 fact you are going to proceed with developing
25 that property.

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2 But as of now, that property was a
3 part of a package that was submitted for
4 funding to both the city and the state. We
5 were successful in getting the funding.

6 And my understanding is that they
7 are prepared to proceed with the
8 rehabilitation of all properties in that first
9 phase.

10 So I am assuming -- and somebody can
11 correct me if I am wrong -- in order to secure
12 the funding, there would have to be a
13 replacement property in order to satisfy the
14 requirements based on the Pennsylvania Housing
15 & Finance Agency and the City of Philadelphia.

16 What I will do is make sure that we
17 have some discussion with the developer, who
18 is basically on 23rd Street, Project Home, and
19 see if there can be some sort of arrangement
20 worked out between the two of you.

21 Ma'am, could you do me a favor,
22 also, make sure Mr. Koonce has a phone number
23 where we can contact you, please, before you
24 leave.

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone

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2 else to testify on this bill?

3 Please approach the witness table,
4 identify yourself for the record, and proceed
5 with your testimony.

6 MS. WINIFRED BROOKS: Good
7 afternoon. My name is Winifred Brooks. I am
8 here about the property 2351 Harlan Street. I
9 don't know whether it is listed as unoccupied,
10 but it is occupied.

11 MR. WETZEL: It is listed as
12 occupied.

13 MS. BROOKS: We have lived there for
14 a number of years, it has been passed down in
15 the family. And I don't live there, but my
16 children live there. And they want to remain
17 there.

18 We have done some work on the house.
19 It is a corner house. And they have more of
20 an emotional tie to it than I do. It is only
21 a building. But we want to keep it in the
22 family.

23 They like the neighborhood, the
24 neighborhood has been good to us, and we want
25 to stay there. My daughter has some things to

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2 say about it, because she is the present
3 occupant.

4 MS. BONITA BROOKS: Good afternoon,
5 City Council. I am Bonita Brooks.

6 I am not against the bill as far as
7 redeveloping the neighborhood of North
8 Philadelphia. I am all for that.

9 I myself have been one of the ones
10 outside cleaning since I was the age of 13, so
11 I have seen the neighborhood transform, and
12 now I see it being revitalized.

13 Now, my only request is, I am
14 interested in staying in the neighborhood. I
15 have already done research. I am interested
16 in Cecil B. Moore Phase III. I have already
17 talked to the developer.

18 I am just wondering if condemning
19 the home or what-have-you can be delayed at
20 this time.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Let me
22 understand. I want to make sure I am clear.

23 You are potentially interested in
24 purchasing a new unit in one of the new
25 developments in this Homeownership Zone?

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2 MS. B. BROOKS: Yes.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You are
4 currently in one of the properties that is on
5 the list today to be acquired?

6 MS. B. BROOKS: Yes. I would like
7 to stay in the neighborhood, because right now
8 location is very important to me.

9 Working at 6th and Arch, I am going
10 to school at Community, plan to transfer to
11 Temple. I am also a frequent patient of
12 University of Pennsylvania hospital, just
13 being diagnosed with lupus.

14 So coming, traveling into the city,
15 would just be a hardship for me. And I
16 understand individuals moving back into the
17 city so they won't have to travel in and out,
18 that's the reason mainly I want to stay in
19 that part of the city.

20 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I understand.
21 Are you only interested in Phase Three?

22 MS. B. BROOKS: It looks like that's
23 the last phase. I went. Missed Phase I,
24 Phase II. So recently I see Phase III is
25 under NTI.

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2 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Let me ask the
3 RDA. Are there still units available in Phase
4 II?

5 MR. WETZEL: I don't believe so,
6 Councilperson. We will check. I think they
7 are all sold.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: All right.

9 Ma'am, I am not sure where we are.
10 This is the Homeownership portion on Harlan
11 Street?

12 Is the developer ready to proceed?
13 Because it was my understanding that Phase II
14 was going to be done first, the rental
15 development, then the Homeownership at a
16 subsequent date. Okay. So, okay.

17 I am hearing you. All right. I
18 don't think that, based on my understanding of
19 the schedule of the Homeownership portion of
20 the development, it will not happen in the
21 very near future, so there probably will not
22 be any need for you to be relocated in the
23 near future to accommodate that development.

24 So, again, I would like for you all
25 to talk with -- frankly speaking, I would like

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2 to see you all in one of those new houses that
3 we are going to build, similar to some of the
4 other individuals who were in the
5 Homeownership Zone. If we can get your name
6 and number before you leave today.

7 MS. B. BROOKS: That's fine. Thank
8 you, Councilman.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
10 much.

11 Do we have anyone else to testify on
12 this bill?

13 MR. SCOTT KRISANDA: Good afternoon,
14 Madam President, Council. My name is Scott
15 Krisanda. I am the Executive Director of
16 Kensington South CDC, Community Development
17 Corporation, and I am very pleased to be here
18 today to support this bill.

19 It represents a four-year pursuit by
20 our organization, since our very beginning of
21 our organization in 2001, to acquire and to
22 redevelop this large industrial property
23 centered in our service area.

24 For many reasons, the climate at the
25 time, the city did not have funding to help

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2 CDCs like ours acquire through assisted
3 condemnation model, a nonassisted model was
4 not viable because we didn't have the bond
5 money to post.

6 And also four years ago, as I have
7 heard testified earlier today, it was hard to
8 give away a property in our area.

9 Kensington South, or Junogi as it
10 has been termed, just north of Girard, is now
11 a burgeoning area, it is a burgeoning real
12 estate market; but four years ago, it was not.

13 This neighborhood is unique because
14 of its diversity, and diversity in many
15 respects. One in particular relative to this
16 bill is the diversity in its industrial and
17 residential nature.

18 Kensington South is interspersed
19 with large parcels of G-2 industrial property;
20 whereas, smaller scattered sites could be
21 rehabbed not only by our organization, but by
22 private investors.

23 Those properties being developed,
24 you know, straightaway, even in poor economic
25 conditions, these larger abandoned, vacant,

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2 blighted sites remained as hulking remnants of
3 the former industrial age.

4 We were committed from our
5 orientation, our origination, to change that,
6 to change the community in a big way, to plant
7 the seed. So then our project, Howard's End,
8 came into being.

9 It was forged out of the community,
10 just as our CDC was forged out of the
11 community.

12 And, as I have said, there was no
13 funding. We didn't have the funds at the
14 time. But along came NTI bonds, and we were
15 now funded -- had the possibility of being
16 funded, rather, for our development.

17 We did respond to a Request for
18 Proposals put out by the Office of Housing and
19 Community Development, and were awarded
20 acquisition and development funding to build
21 24 houses, 10 of which would be available to
22 moderate-income homeowners.

23 This is an important factor. But
24 because our diversity in our neighborhood is a
25 strong point, it is what makes Kensington

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05
2 South Kensington South, our strong motivation,
3 our mission, and our development projects is
4 to offer a diverse product in our development.

5 Also with less density, with the
6 subsidy, we are able to offer more green
7 space, off-street parking, et cetera.

8 However, there is a group here in
9 opposition, the current owners. We are aware
10 of who they are. We have met with them.

11 We were approached to gain community
12 support and to entertain the idea of a
13 partnership in development, which we did not
14 cast off readily.

15 We did notify the group that they
16 would have to talk to the Kensington South
17 Neighborhood Advisory Council in order to
18 arrange for a zoning committee meeting to get
19 the public support.

20 However, those meetings did end up
21 being fruitless, and we weren't able to get
22 the information to entertain any type of
23 partnership; and, therefore, pursued the
24 project that I have explained to you.

25 So, again, I would like to offer my

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2 support for this bill and thank you very much.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
4 much. Thank you.

5 Do we have anyone else to testify on
6 this bill?

7 MS. JUDITH ROBINSON: Yes, I am
8 here. My name is Judith Robinson.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: Ms. Robinson, I
10 know you testified earlier.

11 MS. ROBINSON: It is a different
12 bill.

13 PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me, please.
14 I am going to ask you to be as brief as
15 possible. Because we do have other bills that
16 are scheduled, and at 2 o'clock we were
17 supposed to have a Committee of the Whole
18 Public Hearing.

19 So if you would be as brief as
20 possible, I would permit you to again testify.

21 MS. ROBINSON: Yes. I am here to
22 testify on Bill 050385. And, again, I want to
23 refer to this book, if I can briefly, because
24 it is very important.

25 The key point to note in this data

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05
2 is, the data that's used by federal government
3 is that the termination of whether or not a
4 dwelling is standard or substandard is left
5 entirely in the hands of the local government.

6 And I think sometimes there may even
7 be a conflict of interest here, if we look
8 closely.

9 When people have to be relocated, I
10 am very much concerned that, because I have
11 watched the relocation process. So in this
12 bill I am very much concerned about
13 relocation.

14 There is 29 properties. I want to
15 know how many of them are occupied. Because I
16 have watched them do relocation. They have
17 left senior citizens' clothes and belongings
18 still in the property.

19 I don't know how many times has it
20 happened before. But one in particular that I
21 was very much involved with concerned me.

22 So before you all run ahead and push
23 to vote on this bill, I want you all to
24 consider, when people have to be relocated,
25 that they are treated with respect and

1 BILL NO. 050385 - 6/6/05

2 dignity.

3 In addition, there is some myth that
4 there is increase in taxes. When you are
5 getting a ten-year tax abatement for all of
6 this new development, I think this is really a
7 misnomer.

8 And if you were to really do
9 cost/benefit analysis, you will see that in
10 fact maybe there is no real increase in
11 development. Once you consider -- in taxes, I
12 should say.

13 Once you consider the whole
14 development, the cost of the land, the cost of
15 relocating people, et cetera, et cetera, I
16 just wonder, you know, how effective and
17 cost-effective it truly is.

18 I just want to say this in closing,
19 because I respect all of you, but half of the
20 time when we have these hearings, the public
21 doesn't even come down here to participate
22 because either the time of the hearings.

23 So when those of us that come down
24 here, I would respect if you all would respect
25 us as we do you all. Because you all

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2 represent us, and we want to make sure you
3 understand what we want so you can represent
4 us properly.

5 I appreciate the time. Thank you
6 very much.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

8 MS. ROBINSON: And in closing, I
9 would like to just have this --

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: I think every
11 particular member has respected every witness.
12 And we have been sitting here since 10 o'clock
13 this morning listening to testimony, very
14 patiently.

15 Do we have anyone else to testify on
16 this bill?

17 Kindly identify yourself for the
18 record.

19 MR. ABDUL BROOKS: My name is Abdul
20 Brooks, my mother and sister was just up here
21 for the property 2351 Harlan Street.

22 My sister wishes to relocate with
23 the Phase III program. I wish to keep the
24 property, that's why I am here.

25 PRESIDENT VERNA: You wish to what?

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2 MS. BROOKS: Keep the property at
3 2351 Harlan Street.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. You are
5 going to have to work with the Redevelopment
6 Authority and the District Councilperson.

7 MR. WETZEL: Madam President, if the
8 property is not acquired, then there is no
9 relocation.

10 PRESIDENT VERNA: He said he wants
11 to keep the property.

12 MR. WETZEL: What triggers the
13 relocation benefit is the acquisition of the
14 property.

15 MR. BROOKS: You haven't decided to
16 acquire it yet?

17 MR. WETZEL: The City Council has to
18 approve this ordinance, the Mayor has to sign
19 it, and the RDA Board has to make a
20 determination to proceed with the acquisition.

21 MR. BROOKS: The property is not
22 vacant; it is lived in, it has been lived in.
23 Still lived in to this day. Been there for
24 30-plus years.

25 MR. WETZEL: I understand. I am

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05

2 trying to answer his question.

3 If his sister wants to relocate and
4 he wants to stay, and if we don't acquire it,
5 then she is not entitled to any relocation
6 benefits. That's what I was trying to
7 explain.

8 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very
9 much.

10 Do we have anyone else to testify on
11 this bill?

12 Seeing no one, I would ask Ms.
13 Murray to please read the title of the final
14 bill to be called, 050386.

15 THE CLERK: Bill No. 050386, an
16 Ordinance approving the third amendment of the
17 redevelopment proposal for the Brewerytown
18 Urban Renewal Area, being the area generally
19 bounded by Oxford Avenue on the north, 30th
20 Street on the east, Girard Avenue on the
21 south, 33rd Street on the west, and the Amtrak
22 railroad right-of-way on the northwest;
23 including the third amendment to the urban
24 renewal plan and the second amendment to the
25 relocation plan, which provides, inter alia,

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05
2 for the expansion of the eastern boundary from
3 30th Street to Dover Street and 29th Street.

4 PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Wetzel.

5 MR. HERBERT E. WETZEL: Good
6 afternoon, Madam Chairperson and members of
7 the committee. I am here to speak in support
8 of Bill No. 050386, which is the third
9 amendment to the redevelopment proposal and
10 the third urban renewal plan for the North
11 Philadelphia Redevelopment Area and the
12 Brewerytown Urban Renewal Area.

13 This bill would authorize the
14 redevelopment to acquire 13 properties, 12
15 vacant structures and 1 vacant lot, to be
16 acquired in the Brewerytown section of North
17 Philadelphia.

18 The parcels will be acquired and
19 land banked for future affordable housing
20 development. Acquisition costs for this
21 project is estimated to be \$187,075.

22 This planned amendment also includes
23 the expansion of the eastern boundary at the
24 Brewerytown Urban Renewal Area from 30th
25 Street to Dover Street and 29th Street, and

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05
2 the expansion of the southern boundary from
3 Girard Avenue to Harper Street and Poplar
4 Street.

5 Madam Chairperson and members of the
6 committee, I respectfully request favorable
7 consideration of Bill No. 050386 and would
8 also ask for a suspension of Council Rules to
9 allow first reading on June 9, 2005. Thank
10 you.

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
12 Wetzel. How would this acquisition support
13 other renewal going on in this area?

14 MR. WETZEL: My understanding is
15 that the intention is that these properties
16 are going to be rehabilitated either under the
17 Home Start Program or under HRP.

18 PRESIDENT VERNA: And there are 12
19 vacant structures and 1 vacant lot?

20 MR. WETZEL: That is correct,
21 Council President.

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

23 Do we have anyone to testify on
24 this? Please approach the witness table.

25 Identify yourself for the record,

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05

2 please.

3 MS. JENNY PARKER: My name is Jenny
4 Parker and I own the property at 1519 North
5 Myrtlewood Street. I also live at 29th and
6 Oxford. I have a home there and I have a
7 triplex across the street from me.

8 The property in question, 1519 North
9 Myrtlewood Street, is next-door to a
10 redevelopment house that has been vacant for a
11 number of years.

12 The reason why my property is
13 boarded up is because it was a nuisance to my
14 family who was living next-door.

15 For the past 10, 12 years, I have
16 been contacting the Redevelopment Department,
17 try to find out what they were going to do
18 with that property so that I could rehab mine.
19 I never got an answer.

20 It was in such a bad state that
21 military police had to come and board up the
22 Redevelopment Housing Authority house. So,
23 therefore, I never rehabbed mine.

24 What good would it have done for me
25 to rehab mine, when the one next-door was in

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05

2 such disarray?

3 So I am here today to find out
4 what's going to happen to both of the
5 properties, mine and the Redevelopment
6 Department.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Who is going to
8 respond?

9 Councilman Clarke.

10 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I will respond.
11 Thank you, Madam President.

12 Hello again. This was a part of a
13 commitment to the community, the Brewerytown
14 community, as a result of several meetings
15 that were had for the new development at 31st
16 and Master, the Western Development.

17 There was a proposal to build 144
18 market-rate houses on a former industrial
19 site.

20 A part of the concern that was
21 raised -- one of the concerns that were raised
22 by the community is that the affordability of
23 those proposed units at 31st and Master was
24 not there.

25 There was a commitment made by the

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05
2 city that we would rehab or possibly construct
3 new units in the existing neighborhood that
4 would be affordable. There is going to be
5 approximately 28 properties acquired, they
6 will either be done through PHDC Home Start or
7 they will be done through the HRP program
8 using the Brewerytown Community Development.

9 One of the things that we wanted to
10 ensure, that the vacant properties,
11 particularly on the stable blocks, were
12 acquired, not be subject to speculation;
13 people purchase them and sit on them and wait
14 until the values drive up extremely high.

15 So we actually had a neighborhood
16 tour with all the CDC and some of the
17 residents, and selected every vacant property
18 on every stable block.

19 We have a commitment from the
20 Housing Authority to rehab the properties or
21 turn them over to the local CDC for
22 rehabilitation.

23 At the time when we selected that
24 particular property, we didn't know what the
25 circumstances of that property were.

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05

2 As a resident of that community, if
3 it is your intention to proceed with the
4 renovation of the property, it is clear that
5 that's something that we will be supportive
6 of.

7 So we did not intend to take your
8 property just for purposes of not giving you
9 the opportunity. So we, obviously, will have
10 some conversation with you. If you agree to
11 proceed, it is clear that we will back off of
12 that.

13 Basically what we wanted to do was
14 create a stable environment for the existing
15 residents, you being one of them in that
16 particular community.

17 So as we proceed, we will be able to
18 be in discussions with you and maybe even be
19 of assistance to you, if you are interested in
20 renovating that property.

21 MS. PARKER: I am maintaining two
22 other properties at this particular time.
23 Back then, I would have.

24 But, like I said, this has been
25 going on for, like, 10, 12 years. And I had

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05
2 brand new windows, window guards. They broke
3 in they took all that, they trashed it. They
4 were sleeping in there and doing everything
5 possible that they could do in there.

6 So I just got distressed, you know,
7 and I just kept it boarded up. But I do pay
8 the taxes.

9 I was paying the water bill up until
10 three or four years ago. But then the city
11 told me, why are you paying the water bill,
12 nobody is there. So they shoed me how to fill
13 out the forms so that they could cut the water
14 off so that I wouldn't be charged water.

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Make sure we
16 have your name and phone number, ma'am, so we
17 can get in touch with you.

18 PRESIDENT VERNA: I would just ask
19 that the members of the Rules Committee please
20 come down to the chambers.

21 The Chair would like to recognize
22 any other witnesses that want to testify on
23 this bill.

24 Good afternoon. Please identify
25 yourself for the record and proceed with your

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05

2 testimony.

3 MR. JAMES KERN: Good afternoon,
4 ma'am. My name is James Kern. I am the
5 homeowner of 1545 South Hollywood Street.
6 And --

7 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: South Hollywood?

8 MR. KERN: North Hollywood. And I
9 am here today to see if I could get the house
10 excluded from the RDA's list of acquisition.

11 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You said you are
12 the homeowner. Do you mean you are the
13 property owner?

14 MR. KERN: Property owner.

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So you don't
16 live in the house?

17 MR. KERN: No, sir.

18 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: All right.

19 Again, I ask that you give your name -- I am
20 sorry. Did you want to have some additional
21 testimony?

22 MR. KERN: No. I'm fine.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Can you make
24 sure that you give your name to Mr. Koonce
25 before we leave so we can have similar

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05
2 discussion as I indicated to the lady.

3 MR. KERN: I purchased the property
4 in January from the sheriff, and I am
5 currently in the middle of doing some
6 renovations there. It is vacant, like you
7 said.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: What's your
9 intention?

10 MR. KERN: Either a rental or
11 resale.

12 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Because this
13 particular development was for the purpose of
14 creating homeownership opportunities,
15 affordable homeownership opportunity, because
16 we were concerned of purchases of property,
17 and then renting them out or selling them at
18 values that are not affordable.

19 MR. KERN: I was just going to
20 evaluate everything at the end of the
21 renovations. But if it is totally for resale,
22 that's not a problem. If you wanted a
23 homeowner in there, I wouldn't be opposed to
24 it.

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: We purposely

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05
2 proceeded with this acquisition because we
3 want to create a stable environment.
4 MR. KERN: That wouldn't be an issue
5 with me.
6 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Please make sure
7 Mr. Koonce gets your numbers.
8 PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair
9 recognizes Councilman Kelly.
10 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Mr. Kern, when
11 did you purchase this property?
12 MR. KERN: In January of 2005.
13 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Through the
14 sheriff's office?
15 MR. KERN: Yes, sir.
16 COUNCILMAN KELLY: You have been
17 renovating the property?
18 MR. KERN: Yes, sir.
19 COUNCILMAN KELLY: How much would
20 you say you have invested so far, ballpark
21 figure?
22 MR. KERN: Probably under 10,000.
23 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Under 10,000?
24 MR. KERN: Yes, sir.
25 COUNCILMAN KELLY: And you would

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05

2 like it excluded from the program.

3 I would like to ask Mr. Wetzel, is
4 this scattered site mostly the properties in
5 this area?

6 MR. WETZEL: For the Brewerytown?

7 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Yes.

8 MR. WETZEL: Yes; but there is a
9 concentration on Myrtlewood Street.

10 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Actually, 30th
11 Street, Myrtlewood, Hollywood, Oxford.

12 COMMISSIONER KELLY: I understand
13 that.

14 But I would like to ask Mr. Kern,
15 your neighbors, the properties on each side of
16 you, are they vacant or are they occupied?

17 MR. KERN: They appear to be
18 occupied.

19 COUNCILMAN KELLY: They are
20 occupied?

21 MR. KERN: Yes, sir.

22 COUNCILMAN KELLY: So, in other
23 words, this would be right in the middle of
24 two occupied buildings?

25 I don't know. Are they on the list?

1 BILL NO. 050386 - 6/6/05

2 Do you know if they are on the list?

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: No. No other
4 properties are being acquired.

5 COUNCILMAN KELLY: So, in other
6 words, those two properties are not on the
7 list, but yours is.

8 MR. KERN: Yes, sir.

9 COMMISSIONER KELLY: I would like to
10 say that I would like to ask the Councilman if
11 we could actually pass this bill, I would like
12 to see it passed, but I would like to see
13 something happen with Mr. Wetzel, if I have
14 his approval, to work with Mr. Kern to see if
15 we can possibly either delete that from the
16 program.

17 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Just give your
18 name. We will work with you.

19 MR. KERN: Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you.

21 PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

22 Do we have anyone else to testify on
23 this bill?

24 Seeing none. I believe this will
25 conclude our Public Hearing. I would ask

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Councilman Mariano and Councilwoman Brown.

(Public Hearing adjourned.)

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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PUBLIC MEETING

of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES

- - -

Monday, June 6, 2005

- - -

Public Meeting conducted by the
Committee on Rules, held in Room 400, City
Hall, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the above
date, to consider action on the following:

- BILLS 050302, 050346, 050363, 050364, 050365,
- 050366, 050367, 050368, 050370, 050372,
- 050373, 050380, 050381, 050382, 050385,
- 050386, 050414

- - -

PRESENT:

- COUNCILWOMAN ANNA C. VERNA, President
- COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
- COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY
- COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
- COUNCILMAN RICHARD T. MARIANO
- COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

- - -

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 PRESIDENT VERNA: We will now go
3 into our public meeting.

4 And the Chair recognizes Councilman
5 Clarke regarding Bill No. 050302.

6 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam
7 President.

8 Madam President, I move that Bill
9 No. 050302 be reported out of committee with a
10 favorable recommendation and request for Rules
11 suspension as to allow reading at the next
12 second of Council.

13 (Duly seconded.)

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
15 and seconded that Bill No. 050302 be reported
16 out of committee with a favorable
17 recommendation, also a recommendation that the
18 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit
19 first reading at our next session of Council.

20 All in favor will indicate by saying
21 aye.

22 Those opposed?

23 The ayes have it and the motion
24 carries.

25 The Chair again recognizes

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 Councilman Clarke regarding Bill No. 050346.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Madam President,

4 there is actually an amendment for this

5 particular bill. It defines the corrected

6 boundaries. It is being circulated now.

7 PRESIDENT VERNA: Would you please

8 read the amendment for the record.

9 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You want me to

10 read the actual amendment, or read it --

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: What the amendment

12 would do, so it is on record.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: The actual

14 amendment, what we did in this particular

15 amendment, it changes the definition from F to

16 G, the area bounded on North Broad, north by

17 Cecil B. Moore and south by Master Street, on

18 the east by 9th, and the west by 11th. And

19 that is adding Section G.

20 Madam President, I move the adoption

21 of the amendments of Bill No. 050346.

22 (Duly seconded.)

23 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved

24 add seconded that the amendment be adopted.

25 All in favor will signify by saying

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 aye.

3 Those opposed?

4 The ayes have it, and the motion
5 carries.

6 Again, the Chair recognizes
7 Councilman Clarke.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Madam President,
9 I move that Bill No. 050346 as amended be
10 reported out of committee with a favorable
11 recommendation and a request for Rules
12 suspension.

13 (Duly seconded.)

14 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
15 and seconded that Bill No. 050346 be reported
16 out of committee with a favorable
17 recommendation as amended, and that the Rules
18 of Council be suspended so as to permit first
19 reading at our next session of Council.

20 All in favor will please indicate by
21 saying aye.

22 Those opposed?

23 The ayes have it, and the motion
24 carries.

25 The Chair again recognizes

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PUBLIC MEETING

Councilman Clarke regarding Bill No. 050363.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Make a motion that Bill 050363 be reported out of committee with a favorable recommendation and request for suspension of the Rules.

(Duly seconded.)

PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved and seconded that Bill No. 050363 be reported out of committee with a favorable recommendation, also a recommendation that the Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit first reading at our next session of Council.

All in favor will indicate by saying aye.

Those opposed?

The ayes have it, and the motion carries.

Councilman Clarke, what is your position on Bill No. 050364.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Move that Bill No. 050364 be reported out of committee with a favorable recommendation and request for Rules suspension as to allow for reading at the next session of Council.

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 (Duly seconded.)

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
4 and seconded that Bill No. 050364 be reported
5 out of committee with a favorable
6 recommendation, also a recommendation that the
7 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit
8 first reading at our next session of Council.

9 All in favor will indicate by saying
10 aye.

11 Those opposed?

12 The ayes have it, and the motion
13 carries.

14 The Chair recognizes Councilman
15 Clarke regarding Bill No. 050365.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I move that Bill
17 No. 050365 be reported out of committee with a
18 favorable recommendation, and request for
19 Rules suspension as to allow first reading at
20 the next session of Council.

21 (Duly seconded.)

22 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
23 and seconded that Bill No. 050365 be reported
24 out of committee with a favorable
25 recommendation, also a recommendation that the

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit

3 first reading at our next session of Council.

4 All in favor will indicate by saying

5 aye.

6 Those opposed?

7 The ayes have it, and the motion

8 carries.

9 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman

10 Brown regarding Bill No. 050366.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I move that

12 Bill No. 050366 be reported out of committee

13 with a favorable recommendation, suspension of

14 Rules.

15 (Duly seconded.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And request for

17 Rules suspension so as to allow hearing at the

18 next regularly scheduled session of Council.

19 (Duly seconded.)

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved

21 and seconded that Bill No. 050366 be reported

22 out of committee with a favorable

23 recommendation, also a recommendation that the

24 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit

25 first reading at our next session of Council.

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 All in favor will say aye.

3 Those opposed?

4 The ayes have it, and the motion
5 carries.

6 The Chair recognizes Councilman
7 Kelly regarding Bill No. 050367.

8 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Madam President,
9 I move that Bill No. 050367 be reported out of
10 this committee with a favorable
11 recommendation, also ask for the suspension of
12 the Rules so this may be heard at the next
13 session of Council.

14 (Duly seconded.)

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
16 and seconded that Bill No. 050367 be reported
17 out of committee with a favorable
18 recommendation, also a recommendation that the
19 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit
20 first reading at our next session of Council.

21 All in favor will indicate by saying
22 aye.

23 Though opposed?

24 The ayes have it, and the motion
25 carries.

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
3 Miller regarding Bill No. 050368.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you,
5 Madam President.

6 I move that Bill No. 050368 be
7 reported out of this committee with a
8 favorable recommendation, and further move
9 that the Rules of Council be suspended so as
10 to permit first reading at our next session.

11 (Duly seconded.)

12 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
13 and properly seconded that Bill No. 050368 be
14 reported out of committee with a favorable
15 recommendation, also a recommendation that the
16 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit
17 first reading at our next session of Council.

18 All in favor will please say aye.

19 Those opposed?

20 The ayes have it, and the motion
21 carries.

22 The Chair recognizes Councilman
23 Mariano regarding Bill No. 050370.

24 COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Madam
25 President, I move that Bill No. 050370 be

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 reported out of committee with a favorable
3 recommendation and suspension the Rules of
4 Council for first reading.

5 (Duly seconded.)

6 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
7 and seconded that Bill No. 050370 be reported
8 out of committee with a favorable
9 recommendation, also a recommendation that the
10 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit
11 first reading at our next session of Council.

12 All in favor will please say aye.

13 Those opposed?

14 The ayes have it, and the motion
15 carries.

16 The Chair recognizes Councilman
17 Clarke regarding Bill No. 050372.

18 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I move that Bill
19 No. 050372 be reported out of committee with a
20 favorable recommendation and request a
21 suspension of the Rules to allow first reading
22 at the next session of Council.

23 (Duly seconded.)

24 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
25 and seconded that Bill No. 050372 be reported

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 out of committee with a favorable

3 recommendation, also a recommendation that the

4 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit

5 first reading at our next session of Council.

6 All in favor will please say aye.

7 Those opposed?

8 The ayes have it, and the motion

9 carries.

10 The Chair recognizes Councilman

11 Clarke regarding Bill No. 050373.

12 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I move that Bill

13 No. 050373 be reported out of committee with a

14 favorable recommendation and a request for

15 Rules suspension.

16 (Duly seconded.)

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been --

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I would like to

19 move to table.

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: Is there a second

21 to table?

22 There is not a second to table.

23 It has been moved and seconded that

24 Bill No. 050373 be reported out of committee

25 with a favorable recommendation, also a

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 recommendation that the Rules of Council be

3 suspended so as to permit first reading at our

4 next session of Council.

5 All in favor will please indicate by

6 saying aye.

7 Those opposed?

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Nay.

9 PRESIDENT VERNA: The ayes have it,

10 the motion carries.

11 The record will reflect that

12 Councilman Cohen voted in the negative.

13 The Chair recognizes Councilman

14 Clarke regarding Bill No. 050380.

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I move that Bill

16 No. 050380 be reported out of committee with a

17 favorable recommendation and request for

18 suspension of the Rules.

19 (Duly seconded.)

20 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved

21 and seconded that Bill No. 050380 be reported

22 out of committee with a favorable

23 recommendation, also a recommendation that the

24 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit

25 first reading at our next session of Council.

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 All in favor will please indicate by
3 saying aye.

4 Those opposed?

5 The ayes have it, and the motion
6 carries.

7 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
8 Brown regarding Bill No. 050381.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
10 Madam President.

11 I move that Bill No. 050381 be
12 reported out of committee with a favorable
13 recommendation and suspension of the Rules so
14 as to allow hearing at the next scheduled
15 session of Council.

16 (Duly seconded.)

17 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
18 and seconded that Bill No. 050381 be reported
19 out of committee with a favorable
20 recommendation, also a recommendation that the
21 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit
22 first reading at the next session of Council.

23 All in favor will please say aye.

24 Those opposed?

25 The ayes have it, and the motion

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 carries.

3 PRESIDENT VERNA: David, do you want
4 to be recognized for a report out of
5 committee?

6 The Chair recognizes Councilman
7 Kelly regarding Bill No. 050382.

8 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Madam President,
9 I move that Bill No. 050382 be reported out of
10 this committee with a favorable
11 recommendation, and will ask for a suspension
12 of the Rules in order that this bill may be
13 heard at our next session of Council.

14 (Duly seconded.)

15 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
16 and seconded that Bill No. 050382 be reported
17 out of committee with a favorable
18 recommendation, also a recommendation that the
19 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit
20 first reading at our next Council session.

21 All in favor will indicate by saying
22 aye.

23 Those opposed?

24 The ayes have it and the motion
25 carries.

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 The Chair recognizes Councilman
3 Kelly regarding Bill No. 050386.

4 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Madam President,
5 I move that Bill No. 050386 be reported out of
6 committee with a favorable recommendation and
7 also ask for the suspension of the Rules in
8 order that this bill may be heard at our next
9 session of Council.

10 (Duly seconded.)

11 PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved
12 and seconded that Bill No. 050386 be reported
13 out of committee with a favorable
14 recommendation, also a recommendation that the
15 Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit
16 first reading at our next session of Council.

17 All in favor will please say aye.

18 Those opposed?

19 The ayes have it, and the motion
20 carries.

21 The Chair recognizes Councilman
22 Clarke regarding Bill No. 050414.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I move that Bill
24 No. 050414 be reported out of committee with a
25 favorable recommendation, and request for

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PUBLIC MEETING

suspension of the Rules as to allow reading at our next session of Council.

(Duly seconded.)

PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been moved and seconded that Bill No. 050414 be reported out of committee with a favorable recommendation, also a recommendation that the Rules of Council be suspended so as to permit first reading at our next session of Council.

All in favor will please indicate by saying aye.

Those opposed?

The ayes have it, and the motion carries.

That concludes our Public Hearing and Public Meeting of the Committee on Rules.

(Public Meeting concluded at 3:40 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
foregoing proceedings of the Council of the
City of Philadelphia of Monday, June 6, 2005,
were reported fully and accurately by me, and
that this is a correct transcript of same.

RE: COMMITTEE ON RULES

DEBRA A. WHITEHEAD