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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Friday, May 7, 2010
10:20 a.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA

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COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL

COUNCILMAN DARRELL CLARKE

12

COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO

COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.

13

COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.

14

COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY

COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

15

COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ

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BILLS 100115, 100116, 100117, 100118 and
100131

18

RESOLUTION 100141

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Good

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morning, everyone. This is a continued

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public hearing of the Committee of the

5

Whole.

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It is my understanding that we

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know of 55 people that would like to

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testify. We definitely want to hear from

9

everyone, so what we thought we would do

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is give everyone three minutes to testify

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so that everybody would have the same

12

opportunity.

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So with that being said, our

14

first witnesses will be?

15

THE CLERK: From the

16

Philadelphia Parks Alliance, Bevin Parker

17

and Doris Gwaltney.

18

(Witnesses approached witness

19

table.)

20

COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Good

21

morning. Kindly identify yourself for

22

the record and proceed with your

23

testimony.

24

MS. GWALTNEY: Good morning.

25

I'm Doris Gwaltney. I'm the President of

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 the Carroll Park Neighbors Advisory
3 Council and I'm a Board member of the
4 Philadelphia Parks Alliance and I'm also
5 a part of the Pennsylvania Horticultural
6 Society. Thank you for allowing us to
7 testify.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
9 You're welcome.

10 MS. GWALTNEY: There is a parks
11 movement in Philadelphia. Residents of
12 Philadelphia are also embracing greening,
13 open space and environmental issues with
14 enthusiasm and dedication. Mayor Nutter
15 has boldly committed himself to making
16 Philadelphia the greenest city in the
17 country. Thanks to the support of City
18 Council, we now have a combined
19 Department of Parks and Recreation under
20 the leadership of Michael DiBerardinis.
21 Instead of playing our usual role of
22 catchup, City Council can lead the way to
23 a greener Philadelphia. We are asking
24 Council to support Mayor Nutter's
25 proposed increase in funding for parks

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 and recreation. This request is
3 reasonable when we consider that clean,
4 revitalized parks and fully staffed
5 recreation centers play a vital role in
6 the health and well-being of a
7 neighborhood.

8 The Redevelopment Authority is
9 now targeting abandoned houses on
10 otherwise stable blocks, rehabbing them
11 and selling them to qualified buyers. A
12 clean, safe park and the programs offered
13 at the nearby recreation center also
14 stabilize a neighborhood.

15 The value of green, open space
16 in a neighborhood cannot be measured. A
17 park is a homeowner's backyard. A park
18 is a place that Nana and PopPop can walk
19 to with the grands in tow. A park is a
20 place to go to meet friends, to eat
21 lunch, read a book or do nothing at all.

22 One summer there was a wedding
23 in Carroll Park. The couple was getting
24 married at the bride's nearby home when
25 someone suggested they move the nuptials

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 to the park. The minister and the
3 wedding party then walked down Girard
4 Avenue to the park.

5 The church across the street
6 held a wake in Carroll Park. These
7 events could not have taken place in
8 Carroll Park 15 years ago.

9 And I must remind Council that
10 park friends groups and the folks who run
11 the programs of recreation centers are
12 all volunteers. Park volunteers also
13 provide free programs and activities for
14 our communities, and we make sure that
15 our parks are clean and free of graffiti.
16 And we are not a burden to the City, nor
17 do we or will we add another layer to the
18 City's bureaucracy. To say this about us
19 is an insult. We are partnered with the
20 City of Philadelphia. We are all adults.
21 No one needs to speak to us slowly and
22 distinctly, and equal partners do not
23 supervise one another. Perhaps the
24 members of Council who have not
25 established a relationship with a park

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 friends group should select a revitalized
3 park and stop by for a visit this summer.
4 Council will learn what we do month after
5 month, year after year because we love
6 our neighborhood and we are committed to
7 helping Mayor Nutter make Philadelphia
8 the greenest city in the country.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
11 you very much. We do appreciate your
12 coming in to testify.

13 Good morning.

14 MS. PARKER: Good morning.

15 Thank you for having us. I'm Bevin
16 Parker from the Philadelphia Parks
17 Alliance.

18 Today is a new day. Thanks to
19 the support of City Council and citizens,
20 that is the sentiment that was felt when
21 voters approved the merger of the
22 Department of Recreation and the
23 Fairmount Park Commission. Now we stand
24 committed to make this new department the
25 best that it can be so that every citizen

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 can fully enjoy Philadelphia's parks and
3 recreation. Approving the Fiscal Year
4 2011 proposed budget for the Department
5 of Parks and Recreation is one of the
6 steps we can take to get there. This
7 budget will pay for the maintenance of
8 existing and new street and park trees;
9 the planting of roughly 5,800 new trees;
10 after-school programs; sports; camps;
11 cultural events and environmental
12 education; skill-building and youth
13 development programs; building ball
14 fields and play equipment improvements;
15 safety and security measures and much
16 more.

17 We know that green, open spaces
18 are nice to look at, but they also hold
19 value. They're an asset that needs
20 investment. According to the Trust for
21 Public Land study, the economic value of
22 Philadelphia's parks and recreation
23 system is over \$1.2 billion annually,
24 through healthcare savings, increased
25 tourism and property values, and

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 beneficial environmental savings. For a
3 small investment in the parks and
4 recreation system, we get a large return.
5 The proposed capital and operating
6 budgets for the Department of Parks and
7 Recreation will be a small investment in
8 the very thing that helps our city
9 generate income, wealth and well-being.

10 Dollars aside, we know that
11 planting more trees will reduce air
12 pollution and help ameliorate respiratory
13 problems, which speaks volumes to those
14 suffering with asthma. Philadelphia
15 currently stands as the 8th most
16 challenging city in the U.S. to live in
17 with asthma. We know used and maintained
18 parks and recreation facilities are safe
19 places for us, our children and our
20 parents to congregate. We know parks and
21 trees help with storm water management
22 and keep our streets and basements from
23 flooding and sewage backup.

24 I also ask you to consider the
25 thousands of volunteers, the hundreds of

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 Recreation Advisory Councils, the 130
3 parks friends groups when making your
4 Fiscal Year 2011 capital and operating
5 budget decisions. Consider the hundreds
6 of thousands of hours they have spent
7 volunteering in their parks and
8 recreation spaces. Their time, efforts
9 and money have helped keep our parks and
10 recreation system in the condition it is
11 today, despite the serious lag in funding
12 over the last several decades and the
13 recent reductions that have cut the
14 departments to the bone.

15 In 2009 alone, volunteers
16 contributed over \$2 million in sweat
17 equity in caring for their parks and
18 recreation. Please show these volunteers
19 and parks and recreation supporters that
20 their work does matter and you will
21 continue to invest in it.

22 On behalf of the Philadelphia
23 Parks Alliance, I urge you to support the
24 Fiscal Year 2011 proposed capital and
25 operating budgets for Philadelphia's

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 parks and recreation system.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
4 you very much.

5 MS. PARKER: Thank you.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
7 Before we call our next witness, if
8 anyone is pressured for time, they feel
9 that they can't stay to testify, if you
10 have written testimony, we'll be very
11 happy to take it. We'll give it to the
12 stenographer and it will be transcribed
13 in full.

14 Thank you.

15 (Thank you.)

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our
17 next witness?

18 THE CLERK: Sue Rosenthal and
19 Walter Palmer.

20 MS. ROSENTHAL: Madam
21 President, Walter was held up this
22 morning. I'm willing to wait until
23 later, if you would be kind enough to
24 allow.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 would be fine. Thank you.

3 THE CLERK: The next group is a
4 panel. Susan White, Campaign for Healthy
5 Kids; Pat Sullivan, American Heart
6 Association; Jonathan Kirch, American
7 Heart Association; Brianna Sandoval, The
8 Food Trust.

9 (Witnesses approached witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
12 morning. Please identify yourself for
13 the record and proceed with your
14 testimony.

15 MS. WHITE: Good morning. I'm
16 Susan White with Save the Children's
17 Campaign for Healthy Kids.

18 The Campaign seeks to educate
19 the public about the childhood obesity
20 epidemic and advance policies designed to
21 address the problems. In Philadelphia,
22 we are supporting Mayor Nutter's 2011
23 operating budget proposal of a
24 two-cent-per-ounce tax on sugar-sweetened
25 beverages. The average child gets 175

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 calories a day from sugar-sweetened
3 beverages. Children gain weight and
4 their health suffers from increased
5 consumption of sugary drinks.

6 SSBs contain empty calories.

7 They have no nutritional value. Common
8 sense as well as science tells us the
9 consumption of empty calories leads to
10 weight gain. Research indicates that an
11 increase in SSB consumption is clearly
12 linked with diabetes, heart disease,
13 obesity and other health consequences
14 independent of weight.

15 Childhood obesity is a public
16 health crisis in Philadelphia. With more
17 than 50 percent of children ages 6 to 11
18 overweight or obese, this rate jumps to
19 almost 70 percent in some neighborhoods.
20 In reality, Mayor Nutter's soda tax
21 proposal is a healthy kids initiative.
22 It is a public health policy that reduces
23 consumption of sugary drinks and
24 generates revenue to fund health and
25 nutrition programs to address the City's

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 childhood obesity epidemic.

3 Our recent poll revealed that

4 87 percent of Philadelphia's voters are

5 concerned about the rates of obesity

6 among children. Fifty-three percent of

7 voters support a two-cent-per-ounce tax

8 on sugar-sweetened drinks to fund

9 childhood obesity programs. A

10 sugar-sweetened beverage tax is a

11 critical first step in the war against

12 childhood obesity. Mayor Nutter's soda

13 tax is a win for Philadelphia's children

14 and the majority of Philadelphians who

15 support this public health policy.

16 Thank you for consideration of

17 this sugar-sweetened beverage tax and for

18 allowing me to testify before you today.

19 I would be happy to answer any questions.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

21 you.

22 Next?

23 MS. SANDOVAL: Good morning.

24 My name is Brianna Almaguer Sandoval.

25 I'm with The Food Trust. I am here today

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 to speak in support of the proposed
3 sugar-sweetened beverage tax and to tell
4 you about the work I am doing as Project
5 Manager of The Food Trust's Healthy
6 Corner Store Initiative.

7 The goal of the Healthy Corner
8 Store Initiative is to improve access to
9 healthy food in low-income neighborhoods
10 and promote community health and
11 development by providing training and
12 technical assistance for corner stores to
13 sell healthy food, including fresh
14 produce and healthy beverages.

15 I am here to tell you today
16 that corner store owners are selling
17 healthier beverages and they are making a
18 profit doing so. The proposed tax on
19 soda and other sweetened beverages will
20 support these efforts by creating
21 additional incentive for corner store
22 operators to stock healthier beverages.

23 The children that The Food
24 Trust works with -- and we work with over
25 50,000 annually in Philadelphia -- need

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 these healthier beverages to improve
3 their health and actually want to buy
4 them. Unfortunately, not enough stores
5 carry them. The soda tax will raise
6 funds to help the City combat the obesity
7 epidemic. With over half our children
8 overweight or obese, we must take bold
9 action to reverse the epidemic of obesity
10 and diabetes. If we do not, image the
11 impact on our economy and our families
12 when these children reach adulthood and
13 are plagued with a host of medical
14 problems.

15 Over the next two years, thanks
16 to a federal stimulus grant from the
17 Centers for Disease Control, we will be
18 partnering with the Philadelphia
19 Department of Health to expand our corner
20 store program to 1,000 corner stores
21 across Philadelphia. Through this
22 innovative initiative, we will increase
23 access to healthy foods by working with
24 store owners to expand their inventory of
25 healthy food and beverages, increase

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 awareness of healthy options through an
3 in-store marketing campaign that helps
4 customers make healthy decisions at the
5 point of purchase and through
6 infrastructural changes to increase
7 corner stores' capacity to sell healthier
8 items. We will be working alongside
9 store owners to provide them with
10 one-on-one training and technical
11 assistance to introduce cost-effective
12 ways to increase the availability of
13 healthy foods. This includes shelving,
14 produce scales, refrigeration and
15 point-of-sale systems. Store owners have
16 eagerly embraced this initiative and they
17 have repeatedly recognized the economic
18 benefit of selling healthier products,
19 including beverages.

20 Developing high-quality fresh
21 food retail outlets improves health,
22 creates jobs, expands markets for farmers
23 and supports economic vitality in
24 underserved communities. In communities
25 that lack access to healthy food, corner

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 stores have the potential to become
3 valuable assets and community partners in
4 creating healthy communities while also
5 improving the economic viability of
6 corner stores in low-income Philadelphia
7 neighborhoods.

8 Philadelphia is currently on
9 the cutting edge of a public health
10 policy and is seen nationwide as a model
11 for combatting childhood obesity. That
12 is why this year Michelle Obama kicked
13 off her Let's Move initiative at the
14 Fairhill School in North Philadelphia.
15 She praised the innovative ways
16 Philadelphia is leading the nation in
17 improving access to healthy foods and
18 implementing nutrition education programs
19 that have been proven to reduce
20 overweight by 50 percent. A
21 sugar-sweetened beverage tax will
22 continue to keep Philadelphia ahead of
23 the pack in efforts to reverse the
24 obesity epidemic and will have real
25 impacts on the health of our children.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
4 you.

5 (Applause.)

6 MS. SULLIVAN: Council
7 President Verna, thank you very much for
8 allowing me to speak to you today in
9 support of the proposal before Council to
10 tax sugar-sweetened beverage at a rate of
11 two cents per ounce. My name is Pat
12 Sullivan and I serve as President of the
13 Board of the local American Heart
14 Association. I am a Vice-President in
15 the University of Pennsylvania health
16 system, and I'm a cardiac disease
17 survivor.

18 One of the most serious health
19 crises facing this city is obesity and
20 the chronic disease and illness that
21 results. The rates of obesity and
22 overweight in our city, especially among
23 our children, are astounding. In parts
24 of North Philly, as many as 70 percent of
25 kids are overweight or obese.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 The American Heart Association
3 recommends that most American women
4 should consume no more than 100 calories
5 of added sugar per day. And for men,
6 that recommendation is 150 calories.

7 Soft drinks and other
8 sugar-sweetened beverages are now the
9 number one source of added sugars in the
10 American diet. One individual can of
11 soda and most other sugar-sweetened
12 beverages contain significantly more
13 calories than the recommended daily
14 amount.

15 A report from the Robert Wood
16 Johnson Foundation concluded that the
17 preponderance of research shows that
18 sugar-sweetened beverage consumption
19 leads to excess caloric intake and weight
20 gain, as well as increased obesity rates
21 among children and adolescents. There is
22 a significant correlation between added
23 sugar intake and blood lipids that was
24 discovered just last month among U.S.
25 adults in the Journal of the American

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 Medical Association.

3 The cost of obesity problems in
4 Philadelphia far exceeds the \$147 billion
5 that was in obesity-related medical
6 expenditures that was documented in the
7 year 2008.

8 So the science is clear.

9 Sugar-sweetened beverages are having a
10 tremendous negative impact on the health
11 of our city, our region and our nation.

12 I'm a mother of an 11-year-old
13 daughter. Her health and well-being are
14 my number one concern, as they are for
15 just about all parents. We have to
16 decide that now is the time to
17 collectively address the serious health
18 crisis that is facing our city.

19 So as a leader of the American
20 Heart Association, the University of Penn
21 health system, a mom, a survivor, I urge
22 you to pass the two-cent-per-ounce tax on
23 sugar-sweetened beverages and use a
24 percentage of these revenues to fund the
25 Healthy Philadelphia Initiative. This

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 will enable Philadelphia to make fresh
3 and healthy fruits and vegetables
4 available in every neighborhood and park
5 and school of the City.

6 We can create physical activity
7 standards and resources for after-school
8 programs, and we can expand walking and
9 biking networks all over Philadelphia.

10 Thank you very much.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
12 you.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
15 Jonathan, are you going to testify?

16 MR. KIRCH: No.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
18 you all very much.

19 Our next witness.

20 THE CLERK: Christine Knapp
21 from Penn Future.

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is
24 Christine Knapp here?

25 (No response.)

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

3 Christine Knapp?

4 (No response.)

5 THE CLERK: Sue Rosenthal and

6 Walter Palmer.

7 (Witnesses approached witness
8 table.)

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
10 morning.

11 MS. ROSENTHAL: Good morning.

12 DR. PALMER: Good morning.

13 MS. ROSENTHAL: My name is Sue
14 Rosenthal. I serve as Chair of the
15 Community Board for Public Health in
16 Health Center 10. Thank you for
17 listening to my testimony about the
18 Health Department budget for Fiscal Year
19 2011.

20 Health Commissioner Donald
21 Schwarz clearly defines the purpose of
22 our health centers, which exist to
23 protect and promote the health of all
24 Philadelphians and to provide a safety
25 net for the most at risk. Never has the

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 need for that safety net been greater.
3 Our terrible economy has increased by
4 thousands those who have lost their jobs
5 and health insurance. They have nowhere
6 to go but to public health centers for
7 medical treatment.

8 In the first six months of
9 FY10, our eight centers handled 190,000
10 patient visits, 15,000 more than in the
11 same period of the previous year. This
12 is a 12 and a half percent increase,
13 which is expected to grow. By the end of
14 FY10, we probably will have 30,000 extra
15 or additional visits.

16 Last year, City Council raised
17 health center funding so that the time
18 from need for medical services to first
19 treatment could be cut significantly. We
20 thank you for this. That was before this
21 disaster to our economy. Now, waiting
22 time has increased beyond what you were
23 able to accomplish last year. At Health
24 Center 10, with which I am most familiar,
25 waiting time has increased to ten months.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 That is, if you call for a first
3 appointment, it will take ten months
4 before you can visit Health Center 10.

5 We expect it to get worse. Can you
6 imagine your child and you having to wait
7 ten months for medical treatment?

8 You, City Council, an essential
9 part of our government, are now the last
10 resort for medical services to many, many
11 Philadelphians.

12 Others have come here asking
13 you to maintain the funding for vital
14 City services. I am asking you to
15 increase funding for what is and will be
16 a growing and desperate need for medical
17 services.

18 I am not an employee of the
19 Health Department but merely a volunteer
20 who has chaired a public health center
21 for 40 years.

22 The Health Department, at your
23 request, can project the additional
24 funding that it needs to meet this
25 increasing need for medical services by

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 those unable to afford it.

3 Thank you very much again for
4 this opportunity to speak with you.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
6 you.

7 DR. PALMER: Good morning --

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
9 morning.

10 DR. PALMER: -- Council
11 President Verna and City Council members.
12 I'm Dr. Walter Palmer. I'm Chairman of
13 the Palmer Foundation and I'm a Professor
14 at the University of Pennsylvania, and
15 I'm here to speak on behalf -- I'm also
16 the Chairman of the Health Center 2,
17 which I've been Chairman for 15 years,
18 and this will probably be the last time I
19 appear before you to testify on behalf of
20 the health centers, because I resigned
21 effective June 30. But I will be back
22 again to support healthcare, because I
23 believe there are two real entitlements
24 that people are entitled to in our
25 society, and one is education, the other

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 is healthcare. And I don't think there's
3 any expense that is too great in order to
4 make sure those two entitlements take
5 place.

6 I grew up poor in the lower end
7 of West Philadelphia and found out what
8 it was like with a mother who had 13
9 children. My mother and my father were
10 married out of wedlock. They had 13
11 subsequent children. We lived in two
12 rooms at 3645 Market Street. Healthcare
13 for us was really going to PGH Hospital,
14 Philadelphia General Hospital, which was
15 a thousand-bed hospital for the poor in
16 Philadelphia, and I'm sad to say it no
17 longer exists. We oftentimes were not
18 allowed to go into Presbyterian Hospital,
19 the University of Pennsylvania Hospital,
20 where I now teach. University of
21 Pennsylvania Hospital discriminated
22 against us based on race and on poverty.
23 During that period of time, the '50s and
24 '60s, Penn blood was segregated between
25 white and colored. The cafeterias were

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 segregated between the professionals,
3 white, who ate upstairs and the poor
4 people who worked in the laundry,
5 housekeeping, kitchen went downstairs.
6 There were no beds or no private rooms
7 for African American people.

8 And consequently, a lot has
9 happened since then. We did not have
10 health centers at that point in time, but
11 since then, I'm here to tell you that
12 probably we have some of the finest
13 health centers in the country.
14 Philadelphia really is able to take care
15 of those 200,000 more visits, but I think
16 it needs to be expanded. And I think
17 that not only do we have to service those
18 eight, but we need to try to find a way
19 to even get expanded even more.

20 I think also the fact that
21 we've been able to put a surcharge for
22 patients who happen to be poor is a good
23 thing, because with regard to the paying
24 for some of the medical services, no
25 matter how nominal it is -- sometimes a

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 dollar, sometimes \$5, sometimes \$20 --
3 poor people also need dignity. They need
4 to have privacy and they need to have
5 dignity, and consequently I think that's
6 what that represents for us.

7 You can imagine what it was
8 like for my great grandmother, who was
9 born as a slave here in American society,
10 and my grandmother, who was out of
11 Baltimore and who, for the most part,
12 never knew what it was like to be
13 educated. My mother never went beyond
14 the 8th grade, and my father out of
15 Delaware never went beyond the 4th grade.
16 You can imagine what education and
17 healthcare were like for them.

18 But here I am a product of
19 those people, and I tell you this, that
20 what I've learned is that almost all I've
21 ever learned, I've learned from the poor.
22 And I've dedicated my life trying hard to
23 become a transformative figure in terms
24 of providing those two essential parts of
25 our society that are oftentimes absent;

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 that is, education and healthcare. And I
3 join Sue Rosenthal, who is one of my
4 co-chairs, in the healthcare movement
5 asking that you not only maintain the
6 level of funding levels we have, but that
7 you absolutely increase them, because you
8 cannot do enough to serve the people who
9 need it the most within our society when
10 it comes to healthcare.

11 Thank you so much.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

13 Doctor, I certainly want to thank you for
14 your years of service.

15 DR. PALMER: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And,
17 Ms. Rosenthal, I know you come in just
18 about every year. So nice seeing you
19 again.

20 MS. ROSENTHAL: Same.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Keep
22 up the good work.

23 DR. PALMER: Thank you.

24 MS. ROSENTHAL: If you'll help.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 certainly try.

3 Our next witness.

4 THE CLERK: David Broida.

5 (Witnesses approached witness
6 table.)

7 MR. BROIDA: Good morning,
8 Council President Verna, Councilwoman
9 Quinones-Sanchez. I'm David Broida, the
10 guy who brought the contractor and the
11 money for Eric Casiano Memorial Field.
12 I'm very happy to report also we put the
13 rubber surface under the swings at Nelson
14 Playground. The City Parks and
15 Recreation Department just put up those
16 swings. So we're back in action there.

17 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
18 you.

19 MR. BROIDA: And Councilman
20 Goode and other members of Council, it's
21 my pleasure to be here. I represent
22 Arthur Ashe Youth Tennis and Education
23 where I'm a Board member, but at the same
24 time, I'm a major consumer of recreation
25 services in the City of Philadelphia, ran

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 the Broad Street Run, put my kayak in,
3 and I love the City.

4 Councilwoman, you probably had
5 something to do with getting those tennis
6 courts renovated at Franklin Roosevelt
7 Park in South Philadelphia.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes,
9 I did.

10 MR. BROIDA: I love those
11 courts. I love the courts at Water
12 Tower. I love the courts at Mander. And
13 all we're asking today is that the City
14 consider increasing the Park and
15 Recreation budget so that Piccolo
16 Playground in Northeast, at 52nd and
17 Wyalusing, in West Philadelphia at 10th
18 and Montgomery, so that those courts can
19 look like the courts that we've
20 renovated. Even Cecil B. Moore on Lehigh
21 Avenue, those net posts, instead of
22 standing straight up to hold the net,
23 they look like this, 45-degree angle.

24 So all I can say is that you've
25 got the best parks and recreation

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 administrator in the United States in
3 Michael DiBerardinis. With Susan
4 Slawson, Jim Marino, Leo Paul Dignam and
5 others, you've got a great staff. All
6 they need is more money.

7 So we appreciate whatever you
8 can do, and we want you to know that
9 Arthur Ashe, which has a two and a half
10 million dollar budget for tennis in the
11 City, we put our money on the line to be
12 partners with the City. And Councilwoman
13 Quinones-Sanchez and her district and
14 elsewhere in the City, we'll raise extra
15 money and we'll help match whatever the
16 City can do.

17 I want to introduce my partner,
18 Greg Williams, who is on staff of Arthur
19 Ash, and he's going to tell you a few
20 things about what we do and what we need.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
23 you.

24 MR. WILLIAMS: Good morning to
25 all. My name is Greg Williams. I am the

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 Director of Neighborhood-Based
3 Programming for Arthur Ashe Youth Tennis
4 and Education Center. Our mission is to
5 create and promote opportunities to
6 improve the quality of life of young
7 people through tennis and education. We
8 will achieve this mission by instilling
9 the values of leadership, academic
10 excellence, social skills,
11 self-discipline and self-confidence.

12 The National Junior Tennis
13 League is our largest neighborhood-based
14 program initiative, which operates for
15 seven weeks during the summer. The
16 program has 47 sites in parks and
17 recreation centers throughout the
18 Philadelphia region. We also have two
19 sites in Camden, New Jersey. It is a
20 network of community organizations
21 dedicated to introducing as many
22 youngsters as possible to the sport of
23 tennis. Regardless of race, gender or
24 other disadvantages or income, we provide
25 a unique on-court program that offers

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 educational and life skill components.
3 These educational components are diverse
4 in nature, but can vary from things like
5 behavior counseling, mentoring, drug and
6 alcohol counseling to computer skills
7 training, health/nutrition, and college
8 preparation. This program is a great way
9 for kids to stay physically fit, mentally
10 fit as well, make friends, learn good
11 sportsmanship in a fun and safe
12 environment.

13 So the point I'm trying to make
14 today is that the parks and rec centers
15 are utilized each year by our programs
16 that offer kids opportunities to improve
17 themselves and to improve their life. So
18 whatever it takes to repair or
19 maintenance, if it's going to cost a
20 little more to upgrade, we appreciate it.
21 Whatever we can do to make a difference
22 in the kids' life, as you can see,
23 there's a lot going on in the City with
24 kids being bored and getting into risky
25 behaviors. We try to divert that by

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 getting them involved into a sport of
3 tennis, which is not probably the most
4 popular sport in the City, but a lot of
5 kids are embracing it and it is making a
6 difference in their life as far as
7 finishing school, high school, possibly
8 going to college and coming out to be
9 better citizens.

10 Also, we also run other
11 programs as far as with tennis. There's
12 after-school programs that we're involved
13 in. We have 16 sites in the parks and
14 recs throughout the cities, as well as
15 our Quick Start programs as well. So
16 whatever it takes to improve the quality
17 of life of children, we're involved.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
20 you very much. Keep up the good work.

21 MR. BROIDA: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our
23 next witness.

24 THE CLERK: Tony West and Frank
25 Chance.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
5 morning, gentlemen. Please identify
6 yourself for the record and proceed with
7 your testimony.

8 MR. CHANCE: Good morning. My
9 name is Frank Chance. I'm the President
10 of the Friends of Clark Park. I work at
11 the University of Pennsylvania and have
12 been involved in the Philadelphia park
13 system in a variety of different ways for
14 the past 20 years.

15 MR. WEST: Good morning. I'm
16 Tony West. I'm on the Board of Directors
17 of Friends of Clark Park. Madam
18 President and Councilwomen Blackwell,
19 Quinones-Sanchez, Reed Miller, Councilmen
20 Goode and Greenlee, it's an honor to be
21 on your side of the rail today.

22 Thank you.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
24 you.

25 MR. CHANCE: Thank you for

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 allowing us to testify on behalf of the
3 funding increase proposed by Mayor Nutter
4 for the park system.

5 Over the last 20 years, I've
6 been a volunteer in parks. I've been a
7 paid employee of a non-profit
8 organization working in parks, the
9 Friends of Japanese House and Garden,
10 where I was the Director for six years,
11 and briefly I was actually a City
12 employee working as a summer employee in
13 the Japanese House and Garden. Now I'm a
14 volunteer at Clark Park. I'm also a
15 volunteer at the Japanese House and
16 Garden. So I've worked both within the
17 Fairmount Park system and within the
18 Recreation Department's park system.

19 In the 20 years I've been here,
20 we've seen park usage increase, and in
21 the last year and a half since the
22 economic crisis hit, we've seen an
23 increase of about 20 percent of visitors
24 to Clark Park itself.

25 But at the same time, budgets

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 have stayed the same or in some cases
3 even declined. The staff of the Parks
4 and Recreation Department does a
5 wonderful job with the resources they
6 have, but they need more. Please let me
7 remind you that parks are a vital asset
8 for our city, but they are one that if
9 unsupported and not maintained will decay
10 and become a liability. In order to
11 prevent that from happening, I urge you
12 to support the full funding increase
13 proposed by Mayor Nutter.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
16 you.

17 Please proceed.

18 MR. WEST: Councilmembers,
19 investment in park capital infrastructure
20 has lagged in recent years, if not
21 decades. In part, I think this is due to
22 a belief held by some that trees don't
23 vote. Of course, park users do vote, and
24 they value highly the public functions
25 provided by them. However, park users

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 suffer from underrepresentation when
3 budget time rolls around. That's because
4 they aren't organized, they don't form an
5 economic entity, so no one counts their
6 money. In fact, little effort is made
7 even to count the users. There is no
8 gate at a park, no attendance record.

9 In 2006, I endeavored to make
10 such a count. In a five-week study of my
11 community park, Clark Park, halfway
12 between mid-winter and mid-summer, I
13 estimated ordinary, unorganized,
14 non-programmatic users of the park
15 averaged 1,656 persons per day.
16 Extrapolated over the year, this figure
17 amounts to 604,440 user days annually,
18 and that doesn't even count the numerous
19 markets, festivals, sports leagues,
20 concerts, plays and other organized
21 events, often drawing thousands, which
22 take place here as well.

23 This is a highly intensive,
24 highly productive public capital facility
25 and one that receives a lot of wear and

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 tear as a result.

3 At nine acres, Clark Park is
4 one of the largest parks in Recreation's
5 community park system. Still, it is but
6 one of 70 other community parks. These
7 in turn are but one-half of
8 Philadelphia's public green space, the
9 other half being the Fairmount Park
10 system.

11 So you're looking at a large
12 number of people who are being served by
13 our city's parks. This vital government
14 service has been starved of capital
15 investment for too long. Just a little
16 extra will go a long way.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
19 you very much. Thank you.

20 Our next witness.

21 THE CLERK: Jane Swartz from
22 Parks and Recreation Committee.

23 (Witness approached witness
24 table.)

25 THE CLERK: And the next

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 witness will be Karen Brown.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:

4 Ms. Swartz, please identify yourself for
5 the record.

6 MS. SWARTZ: Good morning,
7 Council President Verna and members of
8 Council. I am actually a cleanup
9 coordinator in my small neighborhood
10 park.

11 I grew up across a tree-lined
12 street from the city park in a small
13 Indiana town. It was the meeting ground
14 for families and children from all over,
15 the picnic ground for family gatherings.
16 Across the street from it were the high
17 school track and football field, the
18 county fair grounds and then another city
19 park area with a bandstand, baseball
20 diamond and plenty of places to run, hide
21 and explore.

22 Today, not coincidentally, I
23 live across a tree-lined street from a
24 small pocket park in Bella Vista. It is
25 the meeting ground for families and

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 children from all over. There are many
3 parks in Philadelphia, which is one of
4 the reasons I love living here.
5 Neighbors and visitors gather from
6 Fairmount Park to Valley Green, from the
7 Delaware Valley to the Schuylkill
8 enjoying our parks and recreation areas.

9 But our parks need support. I
10 belong to a volunteer group for our
11 little park. Like all of the other
12 parks, large and small in our city, we
13 depend on funding from the City, as well
14 as a helping hand from various non-profit
15 organizations to help keep our benches in
16 repair, our infrastructure in good shape,
17 and make sure that we have living trees
18 and plants and beautiful things in our
19 parks and recreation facilities so that
20 all of our families and our visitors will
21 continue to have safe, beautiful places
22 of retreat and outdoor activity, and so
23 that every child in the City of
24 Philadelphia and every child who visits
25 one of our parks has access to wonderful

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 memories like mine of the parks they knew
3 and loved.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
6 you. We do appreciate all of you coming
7 in to testify.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: I can
10 see many of you are so passionate about
11 your parks, which is wonderful.

12 Is Karen Brown here?

13 THE CLERK: And our next
14 witness after Ms. Brown will be Charles
15 Kooch.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: If
17 Charles Kooch is here, maybe he could
18 also come to the witness table.

19 (Witnesses approached witness
20 table.)

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Good
22 morning.

23 MS. BROWN: Good morning, Madam
24 President and the Councilmembers that are
25 present here today. I am Karen Brown. I

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 represent Southwark Civic Association and
3 YSO. YSO is Youth Senior Outreach. That
4 encompasses the area of 11th and
5 Wharton -- from, I'm sorry, 11th and
6 Wharton to 11th and Jackson and from 11th
7 Street to 6th in South Philly.

8 More than half of the
9 population in our community, our civic
10 community, are seniors. They have asked
11 me to come in front of you today to plead
12 with the Mayor to please reconsider the
13 tax you're proposing on them. Though the
14 tax was not aimed directly towards them,
15 they will feel the heaviest burden.
16 Whether it be sanitation, real estate or
17 even the soda tax, these seniors are not
18 prepared to withstand any more tax on
19 them. They are trying to get by in a
20 recession, that we are all feeling the
21 crunch, but them the most. We will
22 eventually come out of this crunch and
23 make more money to cover the taxes that
24 are proposed in front of us. They will
25 not.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 They have asked me to plead
3 with you to make some provision for the
4 seniors in this. I know there are
5 provisions for seniors for lower-class
6 individuals, but not for the middle class
7 that holds onto their family home. These
8 seniors have lived in these homes for
9 years, raised their families, had
10 weddings, holidays, birthdays, shared it
11 with their spouse, and now they're given
12 the option of either paying this tax and
13 not having food or paying this tax and
14 moving into a senior citizen facility or
15 an apartment and leaving the home that
16 they've come to love. They are asking
17 the Mayor to reconsider the tax in
18 respect to them, to make a provision for
19 all seniors, not just a portion of the
20 seniors, and to consider the fact that
21 these seniors are in their golden years,
22 years where they shouldn't be burdened
23 and have to worry about a tax, just
24 another tax on them. They're still
25 paying school tax and their kids are long

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 since grown.

3 They've sustained any City tax,
4 any tax thrown at them and manage to get
5 by and still hold onto their home, but
6 this proposed tax, whether it be the \$300
7 sanitation tax or the 12, five, nine,
8 three percent real estate tax is more
9 than they can burden.

10 So if you would ask the Mayor,
11 and they're asking me to plead with you
12 to ask the Mayor, to please consider some
13 kind of adjustment for the seniors,
14 whether it be an exception, a flat fee,
15 something where they don't need to pay
16 the total amount. They can't stand any
17 more taxes on them.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
20 you.

21 Good morning.

22 MR. KOOCH: Good morning, Madam
23 President.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:
25 Please identify yourself for the record.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 MR. KOOCH: I'm Charles Kooch.

3 I live -- my wife and I live at 1326
4 Spruce Street. We've lived there since
5 December 1974 in Unit 1604.

6 I'm here to ask you to consider
7 the fact that in terms of a sanitation
8 assessment or, alternatively, an increase
9 in our real estate tax, that you and
10 Councilmembers be aware that since 1974
11 December when we moved in, we have always
12 paid for our own trash removal. We have
13 never received sanitation services from
14 the City of Philadelphia.

15 The current budget and the most
16 recent figure I have for 2010 is \$16,536.
17 This does remove our trash. It is
18 separated by the residents before it goes
19 down the chute, and then it is again
20 separated by our contractor, who hauls it
21 away. We do have seven-day-a-week
22 collection and that, of course, excepts
23 snow days and/or mechanical failures.

24 It's my hope that in the budget
25 deliberations, that we somehow or other

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 deserve some sort of credit for paying
3 for our own trash, and I believe, Madam
4 President, that it is unfair that we
5 would be singled out for a tax increase
6 or a sanitation fee in lieu of the fact
7 that we do not use those services.

8 Thank you for listening to me.
9 My wife was unable to be here today. We
10 represent no group except ourselves and
11 Unit 1604.

12 The \$16,000 fee is apportioned
13 by unit. We have 1,140 square feet, and
14 it's included in our maintenance fee.
15 The commercial buildings -- or businesses
16 that you see on the Spruce Street level,
17 a convenience store, a dry cleaning store
18 and currently a restaurant, are
19 responsible for their own trash removal.

20 Thank you, Madam President and
21 Councilmembers.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We do
23 appreciate your coming in to testify.

24 MR. KOOCH: Are there any
25 questions, please?

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: I

3 don't think so.

4 Are there any questions of this
5 witness?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: No.

8 Thank you.

9 MR. KOOCH: Thank you, Madam
10 President.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Our
12 next witness?

13 THE CLERK: Amy Miller, and
14 following Amy Miller is Cindy Masiejczuk.

15 (Witness approached witness
16 table.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Good
18 morning.

19 MS. MILLER: Good morning,
20 members of City Council. My name is Amy
21 Miller. I am an environmental planner
22 with the Delaware Valley Regional
23 Planning Commission and a resident of
24 East Kensington.

25 I respectfully ask you to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 support an increase in the budget for the
3 Department of Parks and Recreation in
4 order to better maintain and enhance our
5 existing city parks and to help create
6 new parks where they are desperately
7 needed. A city park is a calm oasis from
8 the stress, deadlines, noise and hassles
9 of city life. Being surrounded by trees,
10 plants and water triggers our instinctive
11 bond with the natural world. Walking
12 through the rustic trails of Morris Park
13 within a cathedral of towering trees,
14 sitting on the banks of the rippling
15 Indian Creek, watching a family of deer
16 run through the forest, West Philadelphia
17 could easily be mistaken for the Poconos.
18 Sitting on the rocky shore of the
19 Delaware River in Penn Treaty Park,
20 watching the boats sail by while kites
21 fly overhead, listening to the sounds of
22 guitars, birds and children laughing, you
23 can almost forget about the casino being
24 built down the road.

25 Parks also allow us to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 reconnect with our friends, neighbors and
3 fellow Philadelphians in a common shared
4 space, open and welcoming for all. I've
5 shared so many great memories at picnics
6 in Konrad Square Park, disk golf at
7 Sedgley Woods and music shows in too many
8 public parks to mention, including
9 Jefferson Square Park, Clark Park and
10 Penn Treaty Park. Without
11 well-maintained public parks, I would not
12 want to live in Philadelphia anymore and
13 neither would a lot of other people.

14 Parks keep tax-paying
15 homeowners like myself in the City, they
16 keep jobs and families in the City, and
17 they continue to give me hope against all
18 odds that Philadelphia truly is the next
19 great city.

20 Thank you very much.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
22 you.

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our
25 next witness?

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 THE CLERK: Is Cindy Masiejczwk
3 here?

4 (No response.)

5 THE CLERK: Judith Robinson?

6 (No response.)

7 THE CLERK: Adrienne Kenton,
8 and after Adrienne Kenton will be A.J.
9 Thomson.

10 (Witness approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
13 morning.

14 MS. KENTON: Good morning,
15 Madam President and members of Council.
16 Thank you for the privilege of speaking
17 with you this morning. My name is
18 Adrienne Kenton. I'm the Co-President of
19 the Friends of Seger Park Playground, a
20 friend of Palumbo Park and, most
21 importantly, the mother of two
22 preschool-age children.

23 I'm very fortunate to live in
24 Bella Vista, with a minimum of five
25 playgrounds in walking distance from my

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 home. Four of those parks have a
3 recreation building on site.

4 At Seger Park located at 11th
5 and Lombard, we host a winter play group
6 in the recreation building for infants
7 through 3 years old and their caregivers.
8 For a nominal fee, parents can provide a
9 place for their small children to
10 interact with others and learn through
11 play. We are currently looking to
12 improve our playground to make it safe
13 and fun for infants all the way through
14 to 12-year-old children.

15 As many of you know, earlier
16 this spring young people descended on
17 South street in droves. All my husband
18 and I could think to ourselves was,
19 Clearly, these teens have nothing else to
20 do with themselves.

21 Imagine what would be possible
22 if our recreation centers were fully
23 staffed and provided programming for
24 infants and their parents, children,
25 teens and adults alike to engage their

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 minds or teach them skills or provide
3 physical activity to disrupt the
4 trajectory of obesity that afflicts so
5 many.

6 Friends groups, like the
7 Friends of Seger Park Playground and the
8 Friends of Palumbo Park, host events,
9 raise money and engage the neighbors in
10 monthly cleanups in our respective parks.
11 Our activities support our
12 representatives in maintaining a public
13 domain where we may interact with our
14 fellow citizens in a decent environment.
15 With your partnership, we could do much
16 more.

17 I respectfully assert that
18 functioning parks and recreation centers
19 add to a high quality of life, a sense of
20 dignity and liberty that I know each of
21 you are committed to providing for your
22 constituents.

23 I humbly request that you vote
24 yes to Mayor Nutter's proposed funding
25 increase for Parks and Recreation in

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 Fiscal Year 2011.

3 Thank you for your time and
4 consideration.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
6 you so much for coming in to testify.

7 MS. KENTON: My pleasure.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our
10 next witness?

11 THE CLERK: A.J. Thomson,
12 followed by James White.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is
14 Mr. Thomson here?

15 (No response.)

16 THE CLERK: James White?

17 (No response.)

18 THE CLERK: Henry Bennett?

19 (No response.)

20 THE CLERK: Yvonne Michael, and
21 if Jeannine Lisitski is here, she will be
22 next.

23 (Witness approached witness
24 table.)

25 DR. MICHAEL: Good morning,

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 Honorable City Councilmembers and Madam
3 President. My name is Yvonne Michael and
4 I am Associate Professor of Epidemiology
5 at Drexel University School of Public
6 Health. I'm also a resident of West
7 Philadelphia and a friend of Clark Park.

8 I am here today with regard to
9 the campaign to increase funding for
10 Parks and Recreation. I will describe
11 the public health benefits of urban parks
12 and trees. Maintaining and enhancing
13 Philadelphia's park and recreation system
14 has the potential to pay significant
15 benefits in terms of the improved health
16 of all Philadelphia's residents,
17 especially the most vulnerable, children,
18 older adults and lower socioeconomic
19 status and minority residents.

20 Before I talk about parks and
21 why they are important to public health,
22 I need to reiterate the facts about the
23 largest social issue faced by the U.S.
24 population today, obesity.

25 In Philadelphia, 15 percent of

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 children and an amazing 31 percent of
3 adults are obese. Obesity is more deadly
4 than drugs, smoking and other issues
5 combined. Obesity places an enormous
6 strain on the healthcare system, is
7 difficult to manage because it is highly
8 life-style related. Lives are at risk
9 and there is no effective prevention set
10 up. Obesity is a major cost to our
11 society. Nationally, annual costs
12 related to obesity are in the region of
13 \$130 billion. Indirect costs include
14 lost working hours and work stalled
15 because of people unable to work due to
16 illness or disability.

17 The Institute of Medicine
18 recently released a report mapping out
19 solutions to childhood obesity. The
20 report concluded that the environment
21 influences the decisions people make and
22 local regulations can make a difference
23 in the fight against childhood obesity.
24 Among the community changes suggested by
25 the IOM report is to build and maintain

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 parks and playgrounds that are safe,
3 attractive and close to residential
4 areas.

5 You've heard about the
6 environmental benefits of parks and the
7 social benefits, but what is the evidence
8 supporting the IOM's recommendation to
9 build and maintain our parks and
10 playgrounds to address obesity? Access
11 to a place to exercise results in a five
12 percent median increase in aerobic
13 capacity, along with a reduction in body
14 fat, weight loss and improvements in
15 flexibility. Parks are commonly used
16 places for exercise. Nationally, about
17 30 percent of physically active people
18 report exercising in public parks.
19 Children and adults who use parks are
20 more likely to be physically active and
21 less likely to be obese. Even more
22 importantly, research has demonstrated
23 that living in a neighborhood with better
24 access to high-quality parks is
25 associated with greater levels of

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 physical activity and lower levels of
3 obesity. According to the CDC, enhanced
4 access to spaces for physical activity
5 resulted in 25 percent more people
6 exercising three or more days a week.
7 The risk of childhood obesity declines
8 with increasing access to green space,
9 like parks and playgrounds. Moreover, we
10 know that access to high-quality green
11 spaces is not equitably distributed
12 throughout the City, and groups that have
13 the least access to parks and
14 recreational activities are the most
15 likely to benefit from it. Currently,
16 less than 60 percent of Philadelphia's
17 residents are adequately served by a park
18 or recreation center within a half mile
19 of their homes. Children and adults
20 living in disadvantaged neighborhoods
21 lack access to parks and get less
22 physical activity.

23 A green city is not only
24 important for reducing obesity. Other
25 health benefits of a strong urban park

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 system for adults include less stress,
3 improved self-reported health and shorter
4 post-operative recovery periods. Among
5 children and youth, the positive health
6 effects of urban parks and forests
7 include improved cognitive functioning
8 and reduced attention deficit
9 hyperactivity disorder symptoms.

10 A healthy urban park system
11 that equitably serves the residents of
12 Philadelphia is an important public
13 health benefit.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
16 you.

17 (Applause.)

18 THE CLERK: Our next witness is
19 Michael Gallagher, and Mr. Gallagher will
20 be followed by Debbie Plotnick and Corey
21 Rogers.

22 (Witness approached witness
23 table.)

24 MR. GALLAGHER: Good morning.
25 My name is Mike Gallagher. I'm here to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 represent Women Against Abuse.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
4 you.

5 MR. GALLAGHER: You're quite
6 welcome, Madam President.

7 Good morning, Madam President
8 and City Council members. My name is
9 Michael Gallagher. I'm the Police
10 Liaison for Women Against Abuse. I thank
11 you for this opportunity to provide
12 testimony today.

13 Women Against Abuse appreciates
14 the ongoing support of Philadelphia City
15 Council on domestic violence issues. We
16 have come before you twice in the past
17 few months, because we are deeply
18 concerned about potential funding cuts
19 that impact the ability to provide
20 life-saving services to victims of
21 domestic violence and their children.

22 As you well know, Women Against
23 Abuse is the largest domestic violence
24 service provider in Pennsylvania and
25 operates the only emergency shelter for

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 children and women that are battered,
3 victims of domestic violence. We are
4 also the lead operator of the
5 Philadelphia Domestic Violence Hotline.
6 We created the first domestic violence
7 legal center in the nation. Women
8 Against Abuse operates a long-term
9 housing program for victims of domestic
10 violence who are homeless. Last year,
11 Women Against Abuse served over 10,000
12 individuals through direct services and
13 educational programs.

14 Women Against Abuse has
15 experienced major budget cuts from both
16 the City and State government last year.
17 We were also forced to suspend children's
18 programs and lay off 19 staff members in
19 order to sustain our core services.

20 Any additional budget cuts will
21 significantly limit our ability to
22 provide life-saving services and force us
23 to terminate some of the essential
24 programs. Although current services and
25 funding do not meet the needs of our

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 society, more budget cuts will definitely
3 put more lives at risk.

4 Our services are especially
5 crucial now that domestic violence
6 homicides have nearly doubled in the past
7 year. At the same time, requests for
8 shelter continue to exceed our capacity.
9 In 2009, Women Against Abuse was forced
10 to turn away 5,000 women and children,
11 which is an all-time high for our agency.

12 In light of the mounting needs
13 among constituents, Women Against Abuse
14 urge City Council to maintain funding for
15 essential services in next year's budget.
16 As a retired detective who put in over 20
17 years with the Philadelphia Police
18 Department, I handled hundreds of
19 domestic violence cases and have seen
20 firsthand the crucial need for advocates
21 like Women Against Abuse. I now work
22 with Women Against Abuse to create a
23 citywide response for victims. Hopefully
24 this will help them access services
25 before it's too late. I encourage City

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 Council to join us in helping
3 Philadelphia's citizens receive the
4 life-saving services they need.

5 Thank you for your attention to
6 this matter.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
8 Mr. Gallagher, do you have any indication
9 that the program is being cut?

10 MR. GALLAGHER: No, we don't,
11 not at this time.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Fine.
13 We just wanted to make sure. We thought
14 you may have more information than we
15 did.

16 MR. GALLAGHER: Not at this
17 time. Thank you, Madam President.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
19 you.

20 THE CLERK: Debbie Plotnick or
21 Corey Rogers.

22 (No response.)

23 THE CLERK: James White, and
24 following Mr. White will be Derrick Ford.

25 (Witness approached witness

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2 table.)

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Good
4 morning.

5 MR. WHITE: Good morning, Madam
6 President and esteemed members of the
7 Council. My name is James White and I am
8 the Policy Coordinator of the
9 Philadelphia Association of Community
10 Development Corporations. PACDC is a
11 citywide association of more than 80
12 community development corporations and
13 non-profit organizations with extensive
14 experience with housing and community
15 development in Philadelphia. My
16 testimony today will focus on three
17 issues which are critical to meeting the
18 needs of Philadelphia's residents and
19 fostering successful revitalization of
20 our neighborhoods.

21 First, the issue of revenue to
22 fund City programs and services. We
23 understand that the City is in a
24 difficult financial situation and is
25 faced with hard choices of how to balance

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 the budget. Given the previous \$2.4
3 billion in cuts to the City's Five Year
4 Plan and the impact of the recession on
5 Philadelphia residents, we urge you to
6 find ways to maintain funding for
7 critical services and programs in the
8 City's budget. A number of potential
9 ways to generate additional revenue for
10 the City have been discussed, and it is
11 our understanding that the City Council
12 is considering increasing property taxes
13 to help balance the budget.

14 If the City plans to generate
15 additional revenue from property taxes,
16 it is critical that measures also be put
17 into place to limit the impact on
18 lower-income homeowners and renters. In
19 particular, we urge the City to pursue
20 implementation of two specific property
21 tax-relief measures for lower-income
22 residents: First, a homestead exemption
23 that would exempt the first thousand of
24 assessed value of the residential
25 property for property taxes, and, second,

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 deferral of property tax increases over X
3 percent until the sale of the property.
4 While this will have some impact on
5 revenue collected in the short term, it
6 will ensure a more equitable solution to
7 the City's budget challenges and
8 especially for low-income homeowners who
9 do not itemize tax deductions on their
10 taxes.

11 Two, restore and expand funding
12 for affordable housing via the City's
13 Trust Fund. Each week at least 200
14 families go into conciliation for
15 residential mortgage foreclosure in
16 Philadelphia courts. Two floors above us
17 right now families are fighting to keep
18 their homes. For those who do not win
19 this fight, they are forced to seek
20 temporary housing with families, friends
21 and the City's shelters because we lack a
22 sufficient supply of affordable housing.

23 There are many other residents
24 who are priced out of Philadelphia's
25 housing market as well. According to the

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 National Low Income Housing Coalition's
3 recent report Out of Reach 2010, the fair
4 market rent for a two-bedroom apartment
5 in Philadelphia is \$1,095 per month. In
6 order to afford this level of rent and
7 utilities without paying more than 30
8 percent of the income on housing, a
9 working family must earn \$3,650 monthly
10 or \$43,800 annually, which is equivalent
11 of a housing wage of \$21.06 per hour for
12 a full-time worker. Viewed another way,
13 the average two-bedroom apartment is not
14 even within the reach of a family with
15 two workers earning \$10 per hour for 40
16 hours a week year round. At the same
17 time, revenue for our only local source
18 to address this challenge, the
19 Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund, has
20 dropped to an all-time low, about half of
21 what it was three years ago, while demand
22 on these resources continues to rise.
23 Simultaneously, the Mayor's proposed
24 budget for FY2011 and the Five Year Plan
25 zeroes out General Fund resources

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 previously committed to the Housing Trust
3 Fund. Factoring in the loss of one-time
4 federal stimulus funds which the City had
5 allocated to affordable housing, the
6 City's preliminary Consolidated Plan
7 budget for the next fiscal year reflects
8 an \$8.3 million decrease in funding for
9 affordable housing over the current year.

10 While we applaud the Mayor and
11 the City Council's support to increase
12 dedicated revenue for the Housing Trust
13 Fund through the approval of the local
14 ordinance last December, the
15 State-authorizing legislation necessary
16 to implement this increase has been
17 stalled in the House Appropriations
18 Committee for nearly nine months. We
19 urge you to do two things to address the
20 shortfall of resources for affordable
21 homes: Restore the full 3 million per
22 year commitment from the City's General
23 Fund to the Philadelphia Housing Trust
24 Fund and engage the City's active support
25 to advance authorizing legislation to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 expand funding for the Housing Trust

3 Fund.

4 Last point. It is critical
5 that we put vacant properties that are
6 currently a drain on the City's budget
7 back into productive use. Given the
8 acquisition pipeline has been frozen for
9 nearly two years and the number of our
10 members have reached the point where they
11 do not have site control needed to
12 advance development projects critical to
13 addressing resident needs and
14 neighborhood needs, we urge the City to
15 do the following: Move quickly to
16 utilize remaining acquisition funds to
17 accelerate the acquisition and
18 disposition of property to support
19 planned development projects that will
20 not be able to leverage outside resources
21 without site control.

22 Two, commence payments into
23 court to begin the process to clear title
24 for properties being disposed of and
25 implement the Recycling Agreement to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 generate additional funds for these
3 programs to support future acquisitions.

4 We look forward to the
5 opportunity to work with the City Council
6 and the Administration to strengthen the
7 City's neighborhoods and address
8 residents' needs.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
11 you.

12 Just a moment, please. I'm
13 sorry.

14 Councilman Clarke.

15 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
16 Madam President. Just a real brief
17 question.

18 Good morning, Mr. White.

19 MR. WHITE: Good morning, sir.

20 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you
21 for your continued work on this very
22 crucial issue. One quick question. I
23 know that the PACDCs have been lobbying
24 on the legislation in Harrisburg that
25 would authorize the City of Philadelphia

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 to enact an additional fee for the
3 Housing Trust Fund. My question is, in
4 that discussion have you also talked to
5 them about the other bill that we have on
6 the calendar that would allow us to
7 access the current recording fees to
8 change the formula with respect to the
9 amount of money we can get out of the
10 fees as they currently are constructed?

11 MR. WHITE: No, Councilman, we
12 have not. We appreciate your support in
13 our endeavor in Harrisburg, as well as
14 the other Councilmembers, Council Lady
15 Blackwell as well, but what we thought
16 we'd put before them, given that there
17 was also a statewide trust fund
18 initiative that was also on the calendar
19 in the House, that we would keep it
20 simple and try to push this legislation
21 that was there first, and if it failed,
22 then go to Plan B. But we thank you for
23 your continued support and vigilance.

24 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: The reason
25 I ask that, because it's not clear that

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 we will get dedicated funding from the
3 General Fund as we did the initial year,
4 and if somehow we can't get the increase
5 in recording fees that will accommodate
6 the Trust Fund, there may be some thought
7 that we should move the other bill in
8 Council to access what's currently
9 available in the existing recording fee
10 amount.

11 MR. WHITE: Well, as always,
12 Councilman, I'll keep the Council
13 leadership informed of our progress in
14 Harrisburg, and if it looks like we're
15 not going to be able to move the first
16 piece of legislation through, then I
17 think we should consider the second piece
18 of legislation.

19 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.
20 Thank you so much, Mr. White.

21 MR. WHITE: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
23 you again. Just a moment, sir.

24 Councilman Jones.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 morning. Thank you, Madam President.

3 Mr. White --

4 MR. WHITE: Good morning.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- I began
6 to wonder if in fact that you were an
7 employee of the City of Philadelphia.
8 You spend so much time advocating for
9 your issues. But we appreciate always
10 your insights to how community-based
11 organizations can take advantage of
12 resources, both governmental and private
13 sector.

14 Recently, we had an intense
15 discussion that I'd like to get some of
16 it on the record. Not all of it, but
17 some of it on the record.

18 MR. WHITE: It was a good
19 conversation, sir. Thank you for your
20 time.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: It was a
22 great exchange of ideas.

23 About the use of CDBG dollars
24 to help to address abandonment on
25 commercial corridors, and it is a bill

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 that has been proposed by myself and a
3 few of our colleagues, and I wanted to
4 know if that kind of measure might be a
5 tool among many tools that can address
6 some of the blighted conditions in some
7 of the neighborhoods your groups find
8 themselves.

9 MR. WHITE: Well, as you know,
10 sir, and if I may, through your
11 experience at PCDC and other endeavors,
12 any aid for mixed-use development on
13 commercial corridors improves our
14 opportunities to not only attract and
15 build our small business core that's
16 essential in our neighborhoods and vital
17 for providing not only tax revenues but
18 also jobs for our residents in those
19 neighborhoods, particularly low-income
20 residents, who in some cases maybe their
21 first job comes at the community level in
22 a corner store or a small business. I
23 think it's essential that we look more at
24 shoring up our neighborhood commercial
25 corridors and particularly where there

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 are vacant commercial spaces, which there
3 are a number of them in our neighborhoods
4 that could use a boost of. As you know,
5 about five years ago, PACDC worked with
6 PHFA to develop a mixed-use financing
7 tool that unfortunately has been
8 underfunded by the Commonwealth, but it's
9 still active and a vital resource. So
10 having the CDBG funds as another
11 mechanism maybe combined could probably
12 bring more dollars to the City for mixed
13 use and business development.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Many of my
15 colleagues have small commercial strips
16 ranging from 100 stores to as many as 200
17 stores, and one of the challenges when we
18 look to finance a deal there is that 51
19 percent of the building has been either
20 for commercial use or residential use,
21 and that mixed use combination is
22 something that a lot of times gets left
23 out. And if you look at commercial
24 corridors around the City, viable
25 corridors are the ones where the stores

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2 are open during the day, but people live
3 in the rental units above. If you look
4 at Passyunk Avenue, it's a perfect
5 example of people living above the
6 merchants because of the density of
7 population, feel comfortable not having
8 roll-down gates. They stay open a little
9 later because there are people, and that
10 vitality also is shared by the merchants,
11 because they have longer hours and people
12 shop in the neighborhood. So if you look
13 at that example, and Germantown Avenue is
14 a good one, Chestnut Hill, higher degree
15 of occupancy. You go down that same
16 corridor to Wayne Junction, lower
17 occupancy, lower value. So there's a
18 correlation between these mixed-use
19 properties that I think we need to
20 address.

21 MS. WHITE: I would agree,
22 Councilman.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

24 MS. WHITE: I look forward to
25 seeing the legislation approved.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

3 Thank you, Madam President.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:

5 You're welcome.

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

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: No.

11 The Chair recognizes our next
12 witness.

13 MR. FORD: Good morning, Madam
14 President and members of City Council.
15 My name is Derrick Ford. I'm a lifetime
16 member of the Strawberry Mansion
17 community.

18 Since my childhood, Fairmount
19 Park and the Department of Recreation has
20 played a major role in my life, as well
21 as other members of the Strawberry
22 Mansion community. As a kid living on
23 the 3200 block of Arlington Street, which
24 sits less than 100 yards from Fairmount
25 Park and Mander Playground, playing every

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2 sport from basketball to baseball to
3 football and tennis has afforded me the
4 opportunity to appreciate parks and
5 recreation all my life.

6 In 2007, I developed the
7 Strawberry Mansion Athletic Association,
8 which has over 300 boys and girls playing
9 the wonderful game of baseball, football
10 and basketball at Mander Playground,
11 which is located at 33rd and Diamond in
12 Fairmount Park.

13 Today, Madam President and
14 Council, it is so vital that as we sit
15 here this very moment at 33rd and
16 Diamond, one of my issues is why Park
17 America in conjunction with the Fairmount
18 Park Commission has developed a
19 contractual agreement with Park America
20 and today a new company called Express
21 Parking which is currently parking cars
22 at 33rd and Diamond on our playing fields
23 for \$12 a car based on the regattas.
24 Now, if we're trying to make the City
25 green, then that simply goes against what

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 we're trying to do.

3 It is so vital that the Mayor
4 please increase funding for Parks and
5 Recreation. It is so vital that folks
6 understand the need to improve the
7 quality of life for our youth in
8 Strawberry Mansion and around the City of
9 Philadelphia.

10 I've been raising this argument
11 for two or three years about this whole
12 contractual agreement between Park
13 America and the Fairmount Park Commission
14 and where the proceeds and the revenues
15 going towards helping anyone in the
16 community.

17 So I'm going to be brief, and I
18 thank you again for having me here.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
20 you. Just a moment, please.

21 Councilman Clarke.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
23 Madam President.

24 Good morning, Mr. Ford.

25 MR. FORD: Good morning,

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 Councilman Clarke.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Also known
4 as Rick. Rick, first I'd just like to
5 thank you for your work in the Strawberry
6 Mansion community. Pleasure growing up
7 with you in the same neighborhood, and I
8 want to congratulate you for your
9 mentorship, not just for the young people
10 but also for the adults and encouraging
11 them to get engaged --

12 MR. FORD: Yes, sir.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: -- in a
14 role as being true mentors to young
15 people, and you've done a great job.

16 And I do -- I'm very familiar
17 with the issue. I've witnessed it a
18 couple of times, and it's probably going
19 on as we speak about the parking.

20 MR. FORD: Indeed.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE:
22 Unfortunately, at this moment, I don't
23 think there's a member from the
24 Administration that could respond to
25 that, but I will be asking the Council

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 President if we can reach out, because
3 there are a lot of things going on with
4 the concessions. I understand in talking
5 to a colleague of mine earlier today in
6 anticipation of your testimony that in
7 some cases when there was parking for --
8 contracted parking in the other parks in
9 the City, that revenue generated from the
10 parking concessions, there were
11 contributions to the local community
12 organization. In the case of Strawberry
13 Mansion, I know you have a league. I
14 guess -- what do you have, like 400, 500
15 kids in that program now?

16 MR. FORD: Yeah. Yeah.

17 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And you're
18 basically operating off of a shoestring
19 budget.

20 MR. FORD: We are having
21 community fundraisers with the help of
22 funding from the Activities Grant. Thank
23 God for Council representation for
24 helping us save the lives and improve the
25 quality of life for our kids. Tomorrow

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 morning, God willing if it doesn't rain,
3 we'll have our fourth opening day with
4 well over 500 people in attendance.
5 However, based on the issues with the
6 contractual agreement with Fairmount
7 Park, who is currently parking their cars
8 on our field today, tomorrow and Sunday,
9 will intervene with the development of
10 what we're trying to accomplish in our
11 community.

12 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

13 So we'll be --

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I
15 would like to add to that. I know that
16 one of the parks in my district, the
17 monies that are generated from parking go
18 to the improvements of many of the areas
19 in the park. So that may be something
20 that you would want to do.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I actually
22 heard about that. I didn't want to
23 reference the fact that it was your
24 district that I was referring to.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 you. But the community does not receive
3 what is generated?

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: We don't
5 get anything --

6 MR. FORD: No. We don't get
7 any money from any other source.

8 We started out with four teams.
9 We went to eight teams. We went to 18
10 teams, playing at six different fields in
11 the North Philadelphia area. And, again,
12 with the help of Council representation
13 and Activities Grant and the community
14 fundraisers, we would really like to see
15 some of that residual money come back to
16 our community for lights, improving of
17 the bathroom facilities and all those
18 other things, because what we're doing,
19 we're saving lives.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:
21 Absolutely. Thank you.

22 MR. FORD: Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
24 Madam President.

25 Thank you, Rick.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 (Applause.)

3 THE CLERK: Our next witness is
4 Darius Wright, and following Mr. Wright
5 is Don Kelly.

6 (Witness approached witness
7 table.)

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is
9 Mr. Wright here?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is
12 Mr. Wright here?

13 (No response.)

14 THE CLERK: Following Mr. Kelly
15 will be Mel Wells.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
17 Mr. Wells and One Day At a Time.

18 Mr. Kelly, good morning.

19 MR. KELLY: Good afternoon.

20 Thank you for the opportunity, Madam
21 Chairman, members of Council. I'm Don
22 Kelly with the -- Director of Community
23 and Economic Development with the Greater
24 Philadelphia Urban Affairs Coalition, now
25 with the shorter name of the Urban

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 Affairs Coalition. I appreciate this
3 opportunity.

4 We're a coalition of over 90
5 programs and organizations that provide
6 services and assistance to support
7 families and individuals throughout
8 Southeastern Pennsylvania, and everything
9 we do is about helping individuals,
10 families and businesses and building
11 healthy communities.

12 Through our work, our coalition
13 partners improve the lives of 85,000
14 people each year, from providing summer
15 jobs for youth, helping ex-offenders get
16 back into society, working with people
17 with HIV/AIDS, preventing foreclosures
18 and foreclosure prevention scams,
19 offering free tax assistance. There's a
20 whole range of things that we do helping
21 people to improve their economic lives in
22 this area. And our whole approach is to
23 give people a helping hand so that they
24 can then support themselves rather than
25 just continue a dependent type of

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 relationship. And we're committed to
3 work together as a coalition of
4 organizations to urge the City to
5 continue supporting these kinds of
6 services, because in the long term, it
7 really saves society and saves the City
8 money by getting to problems before they
9 get severe or helping people get past
10 their problems and not go back again to
11 them.

12 So your support has always been
13 crucial for our ability to provide these
14 services in the past, and we really hope
15 that we can continue relying on the City
16 as a partner in the future.

17 We recognize that City Council
18 has very difficult choices with the
19 present economy and budget constraints,
20 and we realize that cuts have to be made
21 and have been made. We just urge you to
22 take a balanced approach to the issue
23 that to balance cuts with revenue
24 enhancements wherever possible, because
25 we feel that our services are really

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 being cut to the bone and we can't get
3 more tighter than we are now without
4 sacrificing the actual benefits to the
5 community.

6 In my particular area, through
7 City-funded home improvement loan
8 programs, we've helped over 340 people,
9 Philadelphia homeowners, invest in the
10 improvement of their homes or needed
11 repairs using bank loans, but these are
12 people who would not have been eligible
13 for bank loans for the most part, and so
14 if it weren't for this program that the
15 City helps to fund, these people would
16 turn to subprime and predatory lenders
17 and then get into all kinds of
18 difficulties. So it prevents problems.
19 Again, once again, investing at the front
20 end of a situation prevents problems
21 later on.

22 We also -- the department next
23 to ours is the Campaign for Working
24 Families that provides free tax
25 assistance to over 10,000 families a year

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 and brings in about \$18 million to
3 Philadelphians. Again, strengthening the
4 economy, strengthening the ability of
5 people to take care of themselves.

6 So we just urge you to look
7 upon this as an investment that has both
8 social, economic and financial returns
9 for the City and do whatever you can to
10 keep these support services going.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
12 you very much. We appreciate your coming
13 in to testify.

14 MR. KELLY: You're welcome.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
16 morning. Please identify yourself for
17 the record.

18 MR. WELLS: Good morning, Madam
19 President. My name is Mel Wells,
20 President of One Day at a Time.

21 Today we came actually to look
22 for support, actually look for an
23 increase in funding. We are a program of
24 the Greater Philadelphia Urban Affairs.
25 We are coming to ask the City to try to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 at least look at better ways to actually
3 save people lives. Right now I believe
4 to incarcerate an individual it costs
5 \$30,000 a year. Compared to One Day at a
6 Time, it costs us about \$2,000 a year to
7 show that individual how not to actually
8 walk down that track again of being
9 incarcerated, which will save us a lot of
10 money.

11 I can say a lot, but I actually
12 brought down two of my clients who
13 benefits from what the City is doing for
14 One Day At a Time. So I would like to
15 ask my clients to share.

16 MR. BEASLEY: Good evening,
17 Madam Chair. My name Ronald Beasley.
18 I'm a member of One Day At a Time. I
19 just want to briefly tell you a little
20 bit about myself. I came here five years
21 ago from Baltimore, Maryland hopeless. I
22 was on drugs. Okay. I came here and
23 somebody told me about a place called One
24 Day At a Time. I said, I made a
25 geographical change. I say, I'm going to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 try it. And I came here, and One Day At
3 a Time welcomed me. And I've been clean
4 now for the last five years as a result
5 of One Day At a Time. And let me
6 mention, I'm also HIV positive. I was
7 positive when I came, where I know I
8 don't look like it. God is good.

9 You know, we need our money.

10 We do. We do. Because like we got
11 support groups, we got all kind of
12 programs that helps the community, and we
13 just doing our thing, and we want to be
14 recognized. We want to be noticed, and
15 that's all we're asking. We're not
16 asking for much. We just want to be
17 recognized, because we are saving lives
18 in numbers. We are saving lives in
19 numbers.

20 (Applause.)

21 MR. BEASLEY: And I want to
22 thank you for hearing me.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
25 you.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Madam
3 President?

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes.
5 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
6 Blackwell.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you.

9 I'm sure all of us know what
10 you do. We all love One Day At a Time,
11 and we would be remiss if we didn't say
12 to Mel Wells that we want to acknowledge
13 you, and not only you but the founder.
14 We have Reverend and Mrs. -- the founder
15 of One Day At a Time here. We're going
16 to ask them to stand. This is the head
17 of One Day At a Time.

18 (Standing ovation.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
20 Reverend and Mrs. Wells.

21 Thank you, Madam President.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
23 You're welcome.

24 MR. DUKEWICZ: My name is
25 Joseph Dukewicz. I am a client of One

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 Day At a Time. I came into One Day At a
3 Time on February 27th of 2010.
4 Beforehand I was in and out of the
5 shelter system and in and out of being
6 incarcerated. I came in looking for
7 hope, and I found it at One Day At a
8 Time.

9 Through my process at One Day
10 At a Time, I found out that I was HIV
11 positive, and One Day At a Time has set
12 me up with case management. My case
13 manager is Kim Wells and she is
14 wonderful. She goes beyond the call of
15 duty to help me. She's helped me with
16 not only getting a doctor to make sure I
17 get my medication and make sure I take my
18 medication, she also helps me with trying
19 to get SSI and housing when that comes up
20 and stuff like that.

21 One Day At a Time does save
22 lives. They do change lives. I need One
23 Day At a Time and so do people on the
24 street. We also have a food bank. We
25 also have other programs as well, and we

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 do outreach programs, and there's people
3 out there that's going to need One Day At
4 a Time.

5 I'd like to thank Reverend
6 Wells, Mrs. Wells and Mel Wells for
7 allowing me to come to One Day At a Time,
8 because they saved my life.

9 I just want to say, Who dat?
10 (ODAAT.)

11 MR. DUKEWICZ: Who dat?
12 (ODAAT.)

13 MR. DUKEWICZ: God is?
14 (Good.)

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. WELLS: Thank you,
17 Councilmembers.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
19 you.

20 Our next witness?

21 THE CLERK: The next witness is
22 Anthony Murray, followed by Leslie
23 Benoliel.

24 (Witness approached witness
25 table.)

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
3 morning.

4 MR. MURPHY: Good morning,
5 Madam President, distinguished
6 Councilmen, Councilwomen that are
7 present. My name is Anthony Murphy and
8 I'm the Executive Director of Town Watch
9 Integrated Services. I oversee the Town
10 Watch programs for the City of
11 Philadelphia, and I'm a part of the Urban
12 Affairs Coalition. So I actually have a
13 two-point process today.

14 One, I don't think that we
15 can -- and I know this Council in all of
16 its leadership has said that it cannot
17 cut its way out of our particular
18 situation, but also I recognize that we
19 have to be concerned with our overall
20 population. Crime and safety in our city
21 has always been a major concern for
22 everyone that sits in this house.

23 I'm here to say to you that the
24 Town Watch program contributes greatly to
25 that through its volunteers and its

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 program supports for those volunteers.
3 Initially we faced a major cut in our
4 funding as it relates to the budget issue
5 that we face in the City, and we
6 understand that, but we also recognize
7 the needs for a balanced approach to
8 addressing the budget where we need to
9 generate revenue in order to not attempt
10 to cut our way out of that, out of our
11 current problem.

12 What's so interesting is that
13 in here today one of the things we
14 provide is a communication system for
15 Town Watch groups who patrol. When those
16 patrols are out, they need to be able to
17 communicate with each other through our
18 walkie-talkie system. The other night in
19 the Northwest area, our repeater went
20 down. We had to get the repeater
21 repaired. We had the same thing happen
22 in South Philadelphia, because you have
23 to maintain this equipment.

24 Those are the things that were
25 removed from the budget, and thankfully

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 they were -- some monies was granted to
3 put that back. I'm here today because I
4 recognize that if funding sources are not
5 established, Town Watch will possibly be
6 a program that could be eliminated and,
7 therefore, the impact on the City's
8 safety would be greatly impacted. But
9 also the same work that we do in
10 affecting lives in the City of
11 Philadelphia is done by the Urban Affairs
12 Coalition, and that's extremely important
13 to all of us, not just ODAAT, because
14 that's important as well, but all of the
15 programs that actually impact on the
16 quality of life for our city. And in the
17 City of Philadelphia, that we are a city
18 of neighborhoods, we have to make sure
19 that neighborhoods are maintained and
20 neighborhoods are okay.

21 Also, I'm here today to say
22 that the two-cent tax for sodas, I'm not
23 opposed to that. If I drink a soda and
24 if I have to spend 50 more cent for it,
25 maybe I'll lose five more pounds if I cut

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 down. So I appreciate that. And I
3 appreciate your time and the opportunity
4 to speak to you, because I think
5 throughout our city and throughout our
6 neighborhoods, we have to make sure that
7 we not only address the safety aspect,
8 but also address the necessary support
9 mechanisms for all of our citizens.

10 Thank you for your time.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
12 you. Just a moment, please.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The
15 Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
17 Madam President.

18 Thank you for what you do. And
19 I wanted to kind of ask a question. If
20 we took a three-year snapshot for the
21 past three years, where has your
22 funding -- how has it been affected?

23 MR. MURPHY: The last three
24 years? The first two years I guess is
25 the last three, that would take us to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 2007. Our funding was basically through
3 the General Fund, and we were able to
4 provide equipment and stipend, actually
5 grants for Town Watch groups, because
6 most of our volunteers utilize their own
7 funding for gas and electricity, and so
8 we were able to help in those areas. We
9 were also able to provide radio equipment
10 for them, and, of course, we develop and
11 maintain our repeater system throughout
12 the City. We provide the training for
13 new Town Watch groups, for existing
14 groups and for new members, and we also
15 worked along with the Office of Emergency
16 Management to get them involved in the
17 neighborhoods so they can provide the
18 workshops, and we work very closely with
19 the Police Department.

20 I know you had asked about
21 funding, but the funding has -- once that
22 tapered off, we maintained our core
23 services, which is the only area that we
24 do not maintain was the financial
25 supports, and we have recently been

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 granted money to purchase equipment. So
3 that's important. I just don't want to
4 see it go away, but it's lower.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: You was
6 going to get to the answer. Has it been
7 decreasing?

8 MR. MURPHY: It decreased, yes.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: How have you
10 adjusted to those decreases, and has
11 there been less or more participation?
12 Have you had to be creative? What's been
13 the impact?

14 MR. MURPHY: Well, we've been
15 more creative in addressing the
16 volunteers. We work very closely with
17 them, so where we could recycle
18 equipment, we managed to recycle. Some
19 of the equipment has to be removed from
20 the streets now. It's been out there for
21 over ten years, so we try to change.

22 So it's been creativity that
23 has allowed us to do it, because there
24 are actually more people volunteering as
25 time has gone on, more people volunteer,

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 more people are engaged, because an
3 organized neighborhood is truly the
4 support mechanism that all parts of city
5 government needs, and that's how we
6 actually reduce crime.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: I really
8 enjoy going crisscross in my district
9 when we do the night out piece, and I
10 want to -- can we anticipate that this
11 year?

12 MR. MURPHY: It's my job to
13 make it happen, so yes. We're going to
14 anticipate it. It will be difficult, but
15 we did it last year and we continue to
16 work with the neighbors to do it. So
17 it's important.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Is there any
19 way this body can help assist that? I
20 mean, when I look at areas 52nd and
21 Parkside, 54th and Berks and I can go all
22 the way up to Andorra where they actually
23 have Town Watches, by the time you get
24 there, you engage community activists at
25 a grassroot level. They tell you what's

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 going on and what's not happening, where
3 the police presence is higher, crime is
4 lower. You get all of that in a snapshot
5 around a single issue. They point out
6 problem areas, and that exchange of
7 information over that three, four-hour
8 period that you're with them is
9 invaluable.

10 So, I mean, I would
11 encourage -- I have a whole list of
12 places in my district I'd like to see it,
13 but how can we help you to lift some of
14 that burden to get more groups involved
15 as opposed to less in that particular
16 night?

17 MR. MURPHY: Many of you
18 actually do support us in that regard,
19 because every time you do a community
20 meeting, we're there to participate. And
21 if and when your constituents call you
22 with neighborhood issues or problems, you
23 can refer them to us, because generally
24 it's a neighborhood problem that will get
25 people initially engaged, and part of our

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 role is to keep them engaged once that
3 happens. So you can continue to do what
4 you do, because you involve us.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: So
6 selfishly, I'm asking for 54th and Berks
7 and 52nd and Parkside and Carroll Park,
8 because Carroll Park --

9 MR. MURPHY: At 52nd and
10 Parkside, we have a Parkside Area Town
11 Watch.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: I know, and
13 it's always a lively night.

14 MR. MURPHY: Yes, it is.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Crime goes
16 down because of it.

17 I want to thank you again for
18 what you're doing, and we want to remain
19 partners with you.

20 MR. MURPHY: Yes, sir.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
22 Madam President.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:

24 You're welcome.

25 Thank you.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 MR. MURPHY: Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm

5 sorry. Councilwoman Miller, I'm sorry.

6 I just noticed your light on. Did you

7 want to --

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I did. I

9 just wanted to -- Mr. McIntosh?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr.

11 McIntosh?

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I mean

13 Tony. I'm sorry. It's not McIntosh. I

14 called his name wrong.

15 MR. MURPHY: It's Murphy.

16 That's why I didn't answer.

17 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I know.

18 I called your name wrong. I'm sorry.

19 MR. MURPHY: No. That's all

20 right, Councilwoman.

21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You know

22 I know your name.

23 MR. MURPHY: Yes, ma'am.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You know,

25 I missed your testimony because I had to

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 go to a short meeting across the hall,
3 but one of the things I did want to say,
4 that I know that your department has been
5 cut continuously, but your staff has been
6 most useful in my district when I've
7 needed them. They're very useful at the
8 high schools and with neighborhood issues
9 and dealing with a whole bunch of the
10 violence issues, and I like working with
11 your staff. Right now I think the only
12 person I have in my district is Reggie
13 Hall.

14 MR. MURPHY: Reggie Hall.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Which I
16 think he has a lot on his plate, because
17 you need more help.

18 MR. MURPHY: Yes, ma'am.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER:
20 Particularly with some of the violence
21 that's going on in some of the high
22 schools and neighborhood violence.

23 So I just want to say, you
24 know, that I support Town Watch. You do
25 a lot more than just Town Watch. I think

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 that's the point I want to make. The
3 training of the Town Watch groups are
4 really good. We just had another group
5 trained up at Cliveden.

6 MR. MURPHY: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Because
8 of the issues that they're having there
9 with the drugs and whatnot. So I think
10 your agency provides a valuable service.

11 MR. MURPHY: Thank you,
12 Councilwoman.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And I
14 think you have a lot of support on City
15 Council, but more people might need to
16 know all the things you do, not just Town
17 Watch.

18 MR. MURPHY: Yes, ma'am.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
20 Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
22 you again.

23 Our next witness?

24 THE CLERK: Leslie Benoliel,
25 followed by Lucy Kerman.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 (Witness approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Good
5 morning.

6 MS. BENOLIEL: Good morning.

7 Well, good morning, President
8 Verna and other distinguished members of
9 City Council. My name is Leslie
10 Benoliel. I'm the Executive Director of
11 the Philadelphia Development Partnership.
12 We're a non-profit organization that
13 provides capital, micro loans and
14 business training and support services to
15 entrepreneurs, self-employed and small
16 business owners throughout the City to
17 help them start up, save lives and grow
18 their business ventures.

19 PDP, which is the short name of
20 our organization, we're a partner of the
21 Urban Affairs Coalition, and we too
22 believe in the power of coalition. And
23 I'm here today as a member of that group
24 of people to advocate for what we think
25 is important, to help the most vulnerable

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 citizens and residents of our city

3 communities.

4 What I think are the critical

5 issues facing our city's economy and what

6 can be done from the City's perspective

7 to stimulate our economy and generate

8 jobs is the support of small businesses

9 and micro enterprises. Micro enterprises

10 are the smallest of small businesses.

11 They're businesses with five or fewer

12 employees, and usually it's just one, the

13 business owner. And all businesses start

14 off as a micro enterprise. All

15 businesses start off as a single

16 individual. And we have thousands and

17 thousands of them in the City, at least

18 75,000 that we can count, but we all know

19 that there's far more, because a lot of

20 those people are just getting started and

21 they're not formalized yet, and the

22 Philadelphia Development Partnership

23 works primarily with that group.

24 Central to my comments this

25 morning are that micro enterprises are a

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 critical component of our city's economy,
3 and they are a critical component and
4 important source of our future job growth
5 here in the City. There's no question
6 that job creation and job retention are
7 key to our city, our state and our nation
8 as we recover from this deep, deep
9 recession. One sure way to create jobs
10 is through business development, and by
11 its very nature, business development is
12 job creation.

13 Smallest businesses are the
14 ones that create jobs. Statistics bear
15 this out year in and year out. They are
16 the largest creators of jobs. Nearly one
17 in seven individuals in the City of
18 Philadelphia -- and that's 13 percent of
19 our employment base -- works for a micro
20 enterprise. That's a significant number.
21 In 2006, there were almost 75,000 micro
22 enterprises employing almost 100,000
23 people in the City. Again, those are the
24 ones that are counted. Those are not the
25 ones that are uncounted. So I would

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 submit to you that that number in 2006
3 was understated. I think if we extracted
4 those numbers today, there would be much,
5 much, much, much more larger.

6 These enterprises can be found
7 throughout all Council districts in all
8 of our neighborhoods. They're as diverse
9 as our residents. They're our daycare
10 centers, our home repair contractors,
11 graphic designers, fruit and vegetable
12 vendors, caterers, barber shops,
13 bakeries, landscaping companies, coffee
14 shops. The list goes on and on. We see
15 them in all of our neighborhoods. And
16 these enterprises provide essential goods
17 and services to their community, and they
18 employ local people, and that's the most
19 important thing, is small businesses
20 typically employ local people, and they
21 don't move. They don't move out of
22 state, they don't move out of the City.
23 They stay where they are.

24 And in a bad economy like we're
25 seeing now, more and more people who are

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 losing their jobs are looking at
3 self-employment as a way to generate
4 income for themselves and their families
5 and to make ends meet. And there are
6 many others who in this economy
7 especially are left out of the job realm.
8 Ex-offenders, those who are taking care
9 of family members who are ill or disabled
10 and those with very limited educational
11 attainment or tarnished credit histories,
12 they're locked out of the job market.
13 They've always had difficulty, but even
14 more so today. Those are the people that
15 my other -- our GPUAC partners provide
16 other types of support services. We work
17 very closely with our GPUAC partners to
18 try and provide them a range of support
19 services.

20 Is that for me?

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Yes.

22 MS. BENOLIEL: So in closing, I
23 urge you to continue providing support.
24 We've received support from the City to
25 provide services to these small

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 enterprises. These funds have been cut
3 back, not as substantially as others, but
4 it's so critical that if we're going to
5 grow our way out of this economy, we need
6 to invest in our services.

7 I thank you for your time.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
9 you. Just a moment, please.

10 The Chair recognizes Councilman
11 Jones.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
13 Madam President.

14 I come from the alumni of small
15 business underwriters that take the
16 difficult deals to try to make good
17 businesses to create jobs and taxes, so I
18 appreciate totally what you do. In the
19 absence of PCDC, has there been a shift
20 in numbers and how small business
21 formation happens in Philadelphia?

22 MS. BENOLIEL: That's a really
23 good question, and, yes, absolutely.
24 We've received a lot of referrals from
25 PCDC or those who look to PCDC. I

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 haven't seen the latest statistics, but I
3 know our inquiries were up almost 20
4 percent within several months after PCDC
5 closed its doors. So absolutely.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: How is your
7 communication with PIDC, which assumed a
8 lot of the duties that PCDC had? Do you
9 have that same level of communication?

10 MS. BENOLIEL: I'm not sure
11 what you mean by "communication." I'm in
12 touch with PIDC. We have referred some
13 of our clients to the extent that we --

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: But have
15 they referred to you?

16 MS. BENOLIEL: No, they
17 haven't.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's a
19 note to the Board of PIDC that might be
20 interested in that.

21 If you could give us an
22 analysis, not today but provide the Chair
23 with that, I'd be interested in seeing
24 your breakdown by Councilmanic district
25 on where your deals are coming from, a

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 slight profile of the types of deals, not
3 individual cases, but the number of
4 women, number of minorities, number of
5 disadvantaged businesses that take
6 advantage of your opportunity, and then I
7 would be willing, and probably along with
8 a few other members, to facilitate a
9 meeting with PIDC and Commerce to try to
10 fill the void that PCDC has left.
11 Because, again, I mentioned in earlier
12 testimony about the use of mixed-use
13 funds for mixed-use deals, and you fit
14 right into the category of being able to
15 provide that seed capital, start-up
16 money, expansion money that is the
17 difference between a bank in today's
18 credit analysis and toughening of those
19 analysis whether or not they get the
20 project done or not.

21 So as we look at arrows along
22 the road that we need to pick up, polish
23 off and put in our quiver to deal with
24 this whole recession, you're one of them.

25 MS. BENOLIEL: Yes, clearly,

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 and I'm happy to provide you with that
3 analysis. We have a lot of that
4 information already on hand, so to the
5 extent that it's going to help identify
6 where there are gaps, and I think those
7 gaps have grown tremendously with the
8 absence of PCDC and also in this tight
9 credit market with the banks having
10 pulled back enormously.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Our Commerce
12 Director or Kevin Dow promised us a five
13 percent increase overall, this body, a
14 five percent increase in small business
15 lending, and that even with the absence
16 of the acronym, the mission would remain,
17 and we're going to hold his feet to the
18 fire. All right?

19 Thank you very much.

20 MS. BENOLIEL: Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
22 Madam President.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
24 you.

25 Our next witness?

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 THE CLERK: Lucy Kerman?

3 (No response.)

4 THE CLERK: Alexis Rios?

5 (No response.)

6 THE CLERK: Robert Sharp?

7 (No response.)

8 THE CLERK: Ted Wartz?

9 (No response.)

10 THE CLERK: Is there a

11 representative from the Rudolphy

12 Residence for the Blind?

13 (No response.)

14 THE CLERK: Stanley Daniel?

15 (Witness approached witness

16 table.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

18 you for your patience. Please identify

19 yourself for the record.

20 MR. DANIEL: I think I'm last

21 on the list.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: No.

23 We have quite a list at 1:30.

24 MR. DANIEL: Madam President

25 Verna and members of City Council, good

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 morning. Thank you for giving me the
3 opportunity to testify before City
4 Council. My name is Stanley Daniel. I
5 am a real estate investor and a licensed
6 realtor, with my office and all my
7 properties in the City of Philadelphia.

8 The City of Philadelphia has
9 financial problems. A very large part of
10 the City's budget is supported by real
11 estate taxes. The real estate taxes
12 collected in the City of Philadelphia are
13 very low. They're one-half to one-third
14 of what the taxes are for a comparable
15 valued property in the suburbs. To put
16 that in perspective, if somebody has a
17 property in Philadelphia where the taxes
18 are a thousand dollars a year, the same
19 valued property in the suburbs would be
20 \$2,000 to \$3,000 a year, depending upon
21 what county it is in. This bargain to
22 real estate owners of the City is at the
23 expense of all the people living and
24 working in Philadelphia.

25 This is not the fault of the

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 current Administration. Actually, you
3 are the victim of past City Councils that
4 have allowed this situation to exist.

5 According to the BRT's website,
6 they have been attempting to reassess
7 City real estate since 2004. They have a
8 small army of employees running around
9 the City. They've hired three
10 well-known, expensive consultants who
11 were supposedly experts.

12 I also understand that millions
13 have been spent on a computer system that
14 was going to crunch all of the statistics
15 on every house in the City and spit out
16 an exact value for that house. Even
17 though the BRT is supposedly in agreement
18 with Mayor Nutter's Actual Value
19 Incentive, they haven't gotten there, and
20 many think they will never reach their
21 destination. They're stuck in the mud.
22 They suffer from a case of analysis
23 paralysis. They're trying to look at
24 every detail in attempting to reassess a
25 house.

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 The BRT actually reminds me of
3 an old friend of mine by the name of Lee.
4 We grew up together in Philadelphia. Lee
5 has always been looking for the perfect
6 woman.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Be
8 careful what you say.

9 MR. DANIEL: At the age of 62,
10 he's still a bachelor. I've met many of
11 his girlfriends. Some of them I would
12 have swapped my wife, my car and kids,
13 even the dog for, but Lee always found
14 something wrong with them. They were too
15 short, too tall, too fat, didn't make
16 enough money, lived too far away, et
17 cetera, et cetera, et cetera. He was
18 looking for the perfect woman, and we
19 know that she does not exist.

20 The BRT is looking for the
21 perfect evaluation for each house, and
22 like my friend Lee, they will never find
23 their mate.

24 I have a system that will
25 reassess the entire residential stock of

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.
2 properties, and I believe they total
3 385,000, and it can be done in six to
4 nine months at fair market value. It is
5 simple to administrate and understand,
6 and it is equitable to all. Once this is
7 done, City Council can then realistically
8 consider what they want to do with the
9 real estate taxes, because they will know
10 that anything they do will be fair and
11 equitable to all property owners.

12 I will drop off additional
13 information to all the offices of
14 Councilmembers after this meeting.

15 Thank you for your time and
16 consideration. Are there any questions?

17 (No response.)

18 MR. DANIEL: Thank you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERA: Thank
20 you very much. You were very patient and
21 we do appreciate your testimony.

22 This Committee will stand in
23 recess until 1:30.

24 Thank you.

25 (Luncheon recess.)

1 5/7/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: This
3 is a continued public hearing of the
4 Committee of the Whole.

5 I would ask Ms. Murray to
6 please read the name of our first
7 witness.

8 THE CLERK: A.J. Thomson.

9 MR. THOMSON: That's me. I'm
10 going to defer to this gentleman. He
11 wants to go first. He's been waiting
12 here for a while.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Very
14 well.

15 MR. CRANE: Should we wait
16 until Councilmembers are here?

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I
18 think many of them are in their offices,
19 but they can hear what's going on.

20 Please approach the witness
21 table.

22 MR. CRANE: All right.

23 (Witness approached witness
24 table.)

25 * * *

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 (Second-shift stenographer
3 Josephine Cardillo relieves first-shift
4 stenographer Michele Murphy.)

5 MR. CRANE: Rudolphy Home for
6 the Blind, if you've ever heard of it,
7 it's at 38th and Powelton Avenue, across
8 from Presbyterian Hospital. It's the
9 oldest blind home in the United States;
10 we're going to be celebrating our 143rd
11 year this year.

12 And it's the case that right
13 now, we're suffering from the standpoint
14 that we lost a lot of money there, and
15 the reason for that was the accountant we
16 had, she did not take and deduct the
17 taxes that -- in other words, the
18 employees' tax from their salary, you
19 know.

20 And the IRS came into the bank,
21 and went to the bank the other day at PNC
22 over here, on Market Street, and checked
23 the account for the payroll. And the
24 girl said, "Oh, Mr. Crane. Oh,
25 Mr. Crane. Your account is overdrawn in

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 the payroll accountant." And I said,
3 "Why, why, why?" She said, "Well, the
4 IRS came in here, and they deducted all
5 of the money out of your payroll
6 account." And sure enough, we're broke
7 now, with the payroll account.

8 And then what happened? The
9 residents -- not the residents, but the
10 employees, they know about this, and they
11 felt, Gee, we couldn't pay them last
12 month or the month before, and when we
13 couldn't pay them, they left us.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh,
15 my.

16 MR. CRANE: In fact, the vice
17 president over there every night now,
18 Anna, and she's over there and she's
19 actually between the hours of, I think --
20 what did she say? -- 1 and 8 in the
21 morning. She's staying overnight there
22 and she's trying to take care of the
23 place too, see.

24 I just talked to her this
25 morning; I was going to bring her with

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2 me. And it's the case that she said,
3 "George, I just got off of work here at
4 Rudolphy, and I'm going to go home and go
5 to bed."

6 So sure enough --

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How
8 many residents do you have?

9 MR. CRANE: Right now, darling,
10 we have about residents that we care for,
11 but the Blind Home is actually designated
12 for sixteen blind people.

13 And Mercy Douglas is involved
14 with it, because the home, you know,
15 realized -- I'll tell you about the home.
16 About eight years ago -- I think I've
17 told you this before, but eight years
18 ago, we received a grant from the HUD
19 program and so forth, and it made us
20 where we actually converted the 42 rooms
21 we had before -- for all these years, we
22 had 42 rooms and 42 residents living
23 there.

24 They insisted we convert those
25 rooms to individual apartments.

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2 Therefore, we only received -- out of the
3 42 rooms, we only received about 19
4 apartments. And that's what we have the
5 source of the home is right now.

6 Actually, it's -- so what's --
7 with 19 apartments, 19 residents from 42,
8 it cuts my budget right in half.

9 Actually, we have no money where we --
10 I'm not begging.

11 I have these plea letters here,
12 and in the plea letters, I've begged to
13 our alliance clubs and I've sent them
14 letters; you probably maybe received them
15 too.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I
17 know that they're very generous and they
18 do give money to, you know, many of the
19 blind --

20 MR. CRANE: Oh, darling, we're
21 trying to save the home, see. And
22 it's -- like I say, being president, I've
23 been -- actually, I've been actually a
24 volunteer there for over 30 years now and
25 have been with our alliance -- I've been

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2 with the 36 years, you know.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

4 Mm-hmm.

5 MR. CRANE: And I've been past
6 president of the Northeast Alliance and
7 past president of the Torresdale
8 Alliance, see, and you're the past
9 president of the South Philly Alliance,
10 right?

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Right.

12 MR. CRANE: There you are. So,
13 sweetheart, what we're trying to do is
14 save this place, and I don't know if the
15 City can help -- if your council can help
16 me or not, but I'll appreciate anything
17 you could possibly do to save that home.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How
19 much money would it take to save it?

20 MR. CRANE: Well, I'd say a
21 hundred dollars or a couple of hundreds
22 or something like that.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: A
24 couple of hundred dollars to save the
25 home?

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2 MR. CRANE: Darling, the reason

3 I say that is the case that -- I get the
4 Inquirer -- we went to the Inquirer a
5 couple weeks ago and we were talking to
6 one of the girls there, and she's quite
7 interested in helping us. And Channel
8 10, I went to Channel 10, and they were
9 quite interested in helping us. I gave
10 them my plea letters, you know.

11 And I saw this in the paper the
12 other day, and I said, My gosh, these
13 people are running these benefits for
14 these, you know, needy organizations; why
15 can't we do that too, why can't we have a
16 big benefit running at the Bellevue or
17 something like that, you know, and raise
18 money, because here's one that's in the
19 paper that raised \$270,000 in some affair
20 they had, you know.

21 And why can't we do the same
22 thing because, you know, years ago, I
23 raised money for the Kidney Foundation; I
24 worked with the Kidney Foundation years
25 ago too, before I got involved with the

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2 Alliance too much. And it's a case that
3 we raised a lot of money for helping
4 people with kidney patients, kidney
5 disease.

6 But truly, if I can get maybe
7 your committee members and so forth to
8 back us up. See, in our area, we have
9 Jannie Blackwell, and once, many years
10 ago, when I was president, even then,
11 Jannie Blackwell was on our board. And
12 Chaka Fattah in this area, West
13 Philadelphia, he was on our board. And
14 I've been trying to get our alliance, I'm
15 trying to get them to come on the board,
16 you know, 'cause we did have a very
17 active board when we first started with
18 it.

19 And, anyhow, we -- little by
20 little, they passed away or something
21 like that, or they retired and they went
22 down to Florida probably, where everyone
23 else is, and we lost our good board
24 members. We're looking for good board
25 members.

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2 And right now, to top it all
3 off, I'm looking for a good attorney to
4 fight our case and maybe do it pro bono
5 especially. That's what I need. I need
6 that very badly because we had a good
7 attorney there for years, and his name
8 was Chris Stover, and Chris we had for
9 years, like I say, but he wants a lot of
10 money from us to fight the cases, and we
11 can't afford it.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

13 Again, I think I'd like to ask you the
14 same question --

15 MR. CRANE: So I hope everyone
16 heard me now.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How
18 much would it take to save the home?

19 MR. CRANE: To save the home
20 right now? Oh, gosh. I'd say a couple
21 hundred thousand dollars or something
22 like that truly, you know, because right
23 now, we have a budget that's, like I say,
24 practically over drawn, you know.

25 I try to get the alliance and I

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2 give 'em my plea letters. I sent these
3 out to them; in fact, these are made out
4 to some of the alliance clubs. But if
5 anyone wants plea letters, I'd gladly get
6 them to, you know, and tell you.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: All
8 right.

9 MR. CRANE: I hope that City
10 Council can probably help. I even
11 dropped some plea letters off at the
12 Mayor's Office today, Anna, darling Anna,
13 I've dropped some plea letters off at the
14 Mayor's Office so maybe Mayor Nutter
15 or -- the past mayors were very anxious
16 to help us years ago too.

17 And Governor Rendell, I know
18 Eddie, and he and his wife were quite
19 active with us when we started -- well,
20 when we built the additional frame
21 building next to our building right now.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
23 Mm-hmm.

24 MR. CRANE: And if you're all
25 aware where the Rudolphy Home for the

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2 Blind is, it's at 3827 Powelton Avenue,
3 and you're welcome to come there, and let
4 me know, and I'll be glad to give you
5 what we call a nickel tour, you know.

6 (Timer bell rings.)

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Very
8 well. Thank you.

9 MR. CRANE: So I appreciate
10 what you do here, City Council, all of
11 your members and so forth. I think
12 you're doing a fantastic job, and I'm so
13 proud of you all too, you know.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
15 you. And if I think you contact the
16 alliances, they would be more than happy
17 to give you whatever help they can.

18 MR. CRANE: Well, we'll try to
19 do it.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Right.

21 MR. CRANE: 'Cause we go to
22 your benefits for your alliance club too
23 in South Philadelphia.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

25 Mm-hmm.

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2 MR. CRANE: I love that.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Right.

4 MR. CRANE: I love you too,

5 Anna.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
7 you, thank you very much. Thanks for
8 coming in.

9 MR. CRANE: Anything else I can
10 do or anyone else have questions or
11 anything like that?

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Does
13 anyone have any questions?

14 MR. CRANE: I'll be glad to
15 take questions and clear up the whole --

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We
17 don't have any questions. We'll
18 certainly look into it.

19 MR. CRANE: Did I bend your ear
20 enough?

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: No,
22 it's fine. I'm glad you came in. Thank
23 you.

24 MR. CRANE: Anything else
25 anyone else wanted to know?

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: No,

3 thank you.

4 MR. CRANE: Oh, all right.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

6 you very much.

7 MR. CRANE: So I have to leave

8 you now, right?

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay,

10 sorry.

11 MR. CRANE: Oh. God bless you

12 all.

13 See this hat? See this hat?

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes.

15 MR. CRANE: I'm also the

16 president of the USS San Francisco for

17 the second world war. Any of you people

18 who are second world war? Or your

19 grandfathers, I guess, or parents. I'm

20 also the president of the USS San

21 Francisco Association.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

23 That's wonderful.

24 MR. CRANE: And in a couple of

25 weeks, I'm going to go out to San

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2 Francisco for Memorial Day. I've been
3 going out for six years 'cause I've been
4 president for six years.

5 And I feel this way: Whatever
6 I can do to help the veterans and all of
7 that, you know, I'm trying, because
8 veterans, you know, are getting older.
9 They're not 39 like me, you know.

10 And I tell them, I said, Well,
11 they tell me they said they don't fly any
12 more or drive any more because I'm trying
13 to get my shipmates to come to my
14 reunion, you know.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

16 That's wonderful.

17 MR. CRANE: So it gives you an
18 idea of what --

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well,
20 it sounds like you're a very busy man.

21 MR. CRANE: Well, I try.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And
23 we do appreciate your coming in. Thank
24 you so much.

25 MR. CRANE: And I want you to

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2 get the alliance club, anyone to join the
3 alliance, too. We're up in --

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay.

5 MR. CRANE: Northeast Alliance
6 Club. Thank you.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
8 you.

9 MR. CRANE: God bless you all.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
11 you.

12 Our next witness.

13 THE CLERK: A.J. Thompson.

14 (Witness comes forward.)

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
16 afternoon. Please identify yourself for
17 the record.

18 MR. THOMPSON: My name's A.J.
19 Thompson. I'm here on behalf of the
20 Friends of Penn Treaty Park as well as a
21 number of organizations in the Fishtown
22 area.

23 One of the things that I want
24 to address in the budget is, with the
25 incoming casino at SugarHouse at Delaware

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2 and Frankford Delaware and Shackamaxon,
3 Penn Treaty Park is only about 400 yards
4 away from that entrance. And at this
5 point in time, Penn Treaty Park has no
6 electricity or lighting. And a member of
7 the Friends, we have frequent cleanups
8 the second Saturday of every month, if
9 anybody wants to show up. And we're
10 going to have Love Your Park Day on
11 Saturday.

12 We have no real security at
13 night. Now, there's always been sort of
14 an element at nighttime who use the park
15 and leave their, you know, belongings
16 after there. Unfortunately, a lot of
17 them tend to use the children's area.

18 With what we anticipate not
19 tremendous problems but an increase, flow
20 of people who are leaving the casino,
21 maybe down on their luck, popping over to
22 the park. With no lighting or electric
23 or anything really in the park to enhance
24 safety, it becomes, you know, a little
25 bit more of a safety hazard because we

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2 anticipate more people there at
3 nighttime.

4 When there were clubs on
5 Delaware, which there are a lot less now,
6 it was a popular hangout then. That's
7 subsided feel, but we anticipate it's
8 going to, you know, increase, especially
9 as the casino comes closer and sort of
10 the attendant development around the
11 casino, which, you know, I'm sure we all
12 hope, that's going to increase traffic,
13 it's going to increase further building.

14 Now, there is a master plan for
15 Penn Treaty Park that has been completed.
16 The total master plan costs about \$14
17 million. And one of the components is,
18 you know, a complete upgrade to the
19 water, the pier, and other things.

20 But the first thing that the
21 Friends and other people have identified
22 is lighting. There are absolutely no
23 lights in the park right now, there's no
24 electricity. If you go in the park, you
25 can't see 20 feet in front of your face

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2 unless the moon's out.

3 So it's one of the things that
4 we would like at least addressed in the
5 capital budget for Recreation and Parks,
6 especially coming up and especially
7 trying to get ahead of the casino.

8 There's ways in which we can
9 put solar lights along the walking path
10 that won't cost a lot of money. There's
11 other ways which we could have power into
12 the park; we're trying to work with PECO.

13 We want to bring the issue to
14 visibility within Council, especially,
15 you know, as our neighborhood and the
16 park are going to serve as host to the
17 casino, we would like to see this safety
18 measure put in place -- not just for the
19 people who are using the park at
20 nighttime, but for, you know, kids who
21 are there, you know.

22 The amount of drug
23 paraphernalia and other paraphernalia
24 that's on the ground, you know, we're
25 going to do a cleanup Saturday, and we'll

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2 find a lot of -- people tend to take
3 their dates down there, so there's a lot
4 of, uh, you know, trash and refuse that's
5 left afterwards.

6 So we feel we can get a real
7 concept of lighting at least right now,
8 we can ensure a little bit more safety
9 and --

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm
11 really not familiar with the area. How
12 close is the park from the new casino?

13 MR. THOMPSON: About 400 yards.
14 So it's about -- I mean, it's two long
15 city blocks. So you're talking about,
16 you know, very, very close.

17 There are people who will
18 probably -- might park at Penn Treaty
19 Park to down to the casino if the lot's
20 full. It's very close. So it's just an
21 issue that we would like to see addressed
22 coming up.

23 (Timer bell rings.)

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm
25 sure there had to be a couple hundred

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2 community meetings when they were

3 considering this.

4 MR. THOMPSON: I was at almost

5 every one so I --

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I beg

7 your pardon?

8 MR. THOMPSON: I was almost at

9 every one. Unfortunately --

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Did

11 you ever take this issue up at the any of

12 the meetings?

13 MR. THOMPSON: We've taken it

14 up many times. We've taken up a lot of

15 safety issues. It's something that's

16 been talked about; unfortunately, it's

17 not been accomplished.

18 I met with Deputy Mayor Everett

19 Gillison and a number of other people did

20 a few weeks ago. I gave him a letter

21 committing \$10,000 from our group as the

22 first \$10,000 to this lighting project.

23 Even if it was a solar lighting, it would

24 not cost as much as, you know, burying

25 power lines. So it's something that we

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2 want to try to raise visibility, you
3 know, and get Council's support to try to
4 get this out ahead of the casino, which
5 is supposed to open in September.

6 You know, it's a part of the
7 comprehensive plan that takes time, but
8 this is something that we can at least
9 get out there right now and kind of light
10 some of the paths, light the parking lot,
11 light the children's area, so that we
12 can, you know, get ahead of --

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
14 you.

15 MR. THOMPSON: -- what I think
16 will be minimal problems but some.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I
18 understand your concerns.

19 Who's the District
20 Councilperson?

21 MR. THOMPSON: Frank DiCicco,
22 and we've been in contact with his
23 office.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well,
25 see, he's not here at the moment. I

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2 don't know whether this is in the budget
3 or whether it's been considered. So
4 before the budget's passed, I suggest you
5 be in contact with him --

6 MR. THOMPSON: We have. And I
7 just, you know --

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: -- to
9 inquire about it.

10 MR. THOMPSON: You know, it is
11 a concern for, you know, future
12 budgeting. And at least, you know, if
13 there's a more comprehensive lighting and
14 electrical design, we'd like to have that
15 considered for the upcoming budget.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Fine,
17 thank you.

18 MR. THOMPSON: Okay, thank you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
20 you.

21 THE CLERK: Is Christine
22 Knapp -- and Rachael Vassar, is she here?

23 MS. KNAPP: She'll be coming
24 shortly.

25 THE CLERK: Okay. After

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2 Christine, Cindy Masiejczwk. Okay.

3 (Witness comes forward.)

4 MS. KNAPP: Hi. How are you?

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Very
6 good. Hi.

7 MS. KNAPP: Should I begin?

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:
9 Please identify yourself for the record.

10 MS. KNAPP: Okay. My name is
11 Christine Knapp. I'm the Director of
12 Outreach for Citizens for Pennsylvania's
13 Future, also known as Penn Future. We're
14 a statewide environmental advocacy
15 organization.

16 I'm also the coordinator of the
17 Next Great City Initiative, which is made
18 up of over 125 organizations throughout
19 Philadelphia working for the
20 implementation of an environmental agenda
21 to strengthen our neighborhoods, increase
22 economic competitiveness, and improve our
23 environment.

24 I'd like to focus my testimony
25 on two specific areas: funding for Parks

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2 and Recreation and the proposed trash
3 fee.

4 First I want to express my
5 support for the proposed \$3.3 million
6 increase in the newly-combined department
7 of Parks and Recreation Operating Budget
8 as well as the 5.4 million in capital for
9 Parks and 5 million in capital for
10 Recreation. For too long, we've
11 neglected our parks and recreation
12 facilities, and now we have the
13 opportunity to reverse decades of
14 disinvestment, and it couldn't come at a
15 better time in.

16 In bad economic times such as
17 these, it is imperative that we continue
18 to provide recreational and open-space
19 opportunities. We know that more and
20 more people are cutting vacations out of
21 their family budgets, but a vibrant and
22 healthy park system can help provide
23 relaxation, enjoyment, and a much-needed
24 break from the urban concrete and asphalt
25 that surrounds us.

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2 Additionally, we also know that
3 job markets are tight right now and it's
4 harder for young people to find
5 employment, but if they're engaged in
6 their local recreation facilities,
7 they're less likely to put that idle time
8 to bad use.

9 And while the City itself
10 struggles to balance a budget, it's also
11 important that we use every dollar
12 carefully and with purpose. Money spent
13 on improving and maintaining
14 Philadelphia's parks and recreation
15 systems is a good investment and will
16 help the City to achieve several goals
17 with just one dollar so you get more bang
18 for your buck.

19 Some of the major positive
20 effects of investing in our parks and
21 recreation system include that parks and
22 trees and open space has a positive
23 impact on home values. Young people want
24 to live in a city that has a vital park
25 system and good tree coverage, so this

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2 investment will help to retain and
3 attract young professionals and increase
4 our tax base.

5 Reducing air pollution and
6 absorbing storm water is one of the
7 benefits of parks and trees that help to
8 make our residents healthier and help to
9 reduce the property damage caused by
10 storm-water runoff on their properties.

11 Open spaces that are maintained
12 also help to reduce crime. And also,
13 they help to attract regional tourism,
14 which we know is an important industry
15 for Philadelphia.

16 So I hope that Council will
17 agree that this is an important
18 investment to make for the long-term
19 health and growth of our city and
20 specifically in our neighborhoods. And
21 no matter where that initial source of
22 revenue comes from, this specific
23 allocation should be maintained.

24 On the topic of where funding
25 is going to come from to close the budget

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2 gap, I wanted to comment on the trash fee
3 that has been proposed by Mayor Nutter.
4 I'm also a board member of the Recycling
5 Alliance of Philadelphia, and I've long
6 supported ways of reducing the amount of
7 waste that's created by Philadelphians
8 that end up being burned or buried.

9 We already concede the economic
10 and environmental impacts that increasing
11 recycling made. We've tripled the City's
12 diversion rate in recycling, and we're
13 saving lots of money in the process. So,
14 while Philadelphians are recycling more,
15 we also need to make sure that they are
16 producing less waste as well.

17 There are, again, many negative
18 environmental and health impacts of
19 burning and burying our waste. But more
20 importantly, probably to this body, is
21 that waste creates a lot of -- it costs a
22 lot of money to collect, transport, and
23 dispose of.

24 So the concept of putting value
25 on that waste, to help educate residents

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2 about how their decisions are making an
3 impact on the City's budget is important.

4 A pay-as-you-throw system would
5 be my preference, in that it would be
6 more effective than a flat fee and giving
7 the incentive to reduce their waste and
8 to recycle or compost as much as they
9 can.

10 So I really would encourage
11 Councilmembers to take a look at a
12 pay-as-you-throw system might be deployed
13 in Philadelphia. I think it can be done
14 here successfully, but it needs to be
15 given careful thought. And it needs to
16 be planned appropriately; it can't just
17 be sort of thrown in at the last minute.

18 As for the flat fee, I think
19 there are still strong arguments for why
20 it makes sense to pursue it. Again, it
21 puts the value on waste so Philadelphians
22 can begin to understand and be educated
23 about waste their decisions and the
24 impact that they have.

25 Secondly, with the recycling

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2 rewards, residents are able to make back
3 the money that they would spending on the
4 tax by participating in the program and
5 receiving rewards and coupons to spend on
6 things that they're already spending
7 money on such as groceries. So there's a
8 direct correlation between it; they'd be
9 paying this money, but then they'd be
10 making the money back on the other side.

11 But I would say that if Council
12 is going to be seriously considering the
13 trash fee, that you should not do it
14 before pushing for other efficiencies to
15 the trash-collection program.

16 Philadelphia's one of the few
17 cities in the country that still has
18 three-man crews, or three-person crews,
19 on recycling and waste trucks. These
20 crews can easily be reduced to two or
21 even one person in some cases.

22 (Timer bell rings.)

23 And I know there are union
24 issues with that, but that could be done
25 through attrition over time.

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2 And secondly, most collection
3 does not have routes that they follow.
4 Thy sort of meander through their
5 neighborhoods, collecting trash and
6 recycling however they see fit, not
7 knowing if that's the most efficient use
8 of their gas and their time. So we
9 really need to standardize some routes,
10 especially now that recycling is
11 increasing and waste is going down, to
12 make sure that that's as efficient as
13 possible.

14 And I'm sure there are many
15 other upgrades as well. So, again, if
16 the trash fee is going to be accepted by
17 Council, I would suggest that it done in
18 exchange for some serious efficiency
19 upgrades.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
22 you.

23 The Chair recognizes Councilman
24 Greenlee.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Why do

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2 you think the trash trucks have no
3 routes? I mean, I've always been told
4 they do.

5 MS. KNAPP: They have -- I
6 mean, they have areas that are -- you
7 know, they call 'em routes where like,
8 you know, your trash is collected on
9 Wednesday morning, and it's generally
10 around this time.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Right.

12 MS. KNAPP: But in terms of, do
13 we start here and go down this street and
14 circle this way and this way, or do we go
15 up and this way and this way, that's
16 not -- that is a -- I mean, and the same
17 people are on those crews every week, so
18 they may have sort of their plan of how
19 they want to attack it.

20 But this has come to light,
21 especially now that recycling has
22 increased so much, because now you're
23 taking a lot more of the recycling out of
24 the waste stream, so a truck that used to
25 fill up after, say, you know, 20 blocks

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2 is now maybe filling up after 25 blocks
3 because there's less trash and it's all
4 in the recycling.

5 So now would be a great time to
6 take a look at how they're collecting and
7 figuring out ways of making it most
8 efficient for both the trash and the
9 recycling trucks.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And one
11 last thing on trash the fee, you said
12 putting a cost on it would make people
13 think about it more? If it's going to be
14 a flat fee and it's going to be \$300
15 whether you put five bags out or two bags
16 out, how's that --

17 MS. KNAPP: Like I said, I
18 would much prefer a pay-as-you-throw, and
19 I would suggest that if the trash fee is
20 agreed upon as the system to close the
21 budget gap in the short term, that it be
22 done with idea that we're going to
23 convert this over to pay-as-you-throw in
24 a year or in two years and give yourself
25 the time.

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2 If you said right now we're
3 going to institute pay-as-you-throw to
4 the next budget cycle, I would say you're
5 not going to do that successfully. It
6 takes time to figure out how it's going
7 to work, to make sure you think about
8 short-dumping and other issues like that
9 and you do it appropriately.

10 So if you do the flat fee, do
11 it with the intent that it we're going to
12 change the system, to make sure that
13 we're incentivizing. But at least I
14 think the discussion has been helpful,
15 you know, in that the proposal's been in
16 the newspaper a lot, you know, and a lot
17 of people are talking about it.

18 And I think it's been helpful
19 for people to realize when you put trash
20 out, it costs money, it costs the City
21 some serious money. And that might lead
22 to them making better decisions.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 you very much. We appreciate your coming
3 in today.

4 MS. KNAPP: And I know you
5 called Rachael. She's here too.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
7 Right. And we have someone else here
8 too, don't we.

9 THE CLERK: Marcy Witherspoon
10 and then Rachael Vassar.

11 (Witness comes forward.)

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
13 afternoon.

14 MS. WITHERSPOON: Good
15 afternoon.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
17 Please identify yourself for the record.

18 MS. WITHERSPOON: My name is
19 Marcy Witherspoon, and I'm the Director
20 of Children and Youth for the Institute
21 for Safe Families. And I'm actually here
22 on behalf of ISF, the Institute, to
23 express my support for the Philadelphia
24 Department of Public Health and its
25 current operating budget, a city

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 department that serves many of the City's
3 most vulnerable residents.

4 ISF has partnered with the
5 Health Department for almost two decades
6 on issues relating to family violence, a
7 significant public healthy issue. We
8 know that the residents who patronize our
9 community health centers are those who
10 are often confronting issues of lack of
11 access, lack of opportunity, and have
12 often not been well served by our
13 educational system.

14 We must continue to work
15 together to build up those in our
16 community who are struggling with the
17 issues of self-determination, for we are
18 only as strong as our weakest link.

19 I have been partners with the
20 Health Department to train health-center
21 staff on how to address issues of family
22 violence in a health-care setting. We
23 recognize that relationships and our
24 experiences, in large part, are
25 determinants of our health, safety, and

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 wellbeing. And we like to refer to an
3 Ashanti proverb that goes: "The ruin of
4 our nation begins in the homes of its
5 people."

6 The Health Department has also
7 been very receptive to innovative
8 programming and ideas to generate an
9 improvement in patient outcomes. I serve
10 in the Fetal and Infant Mortality Review
11 Committee, which is only one of the many
12 committees that the Health Department
13 conducts, to review the care that
14 patients receive and attempt at improving
15 that care.

16 Let us not be derelict in our
17 responsibility to continue funding the
18 programs that many depends on literally
19 for their lives. That's the kind of city
20 that we can be proud of.

21 Thank you very much.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERA: Thank
23 you. We appreciate your testimony.

24 MS. WITHERSPOON: You're quite
25 welcome.

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2 THE CLERK: Rachael Vassar.

3 (Witness comes forward.)

4 MS. VASSAR: Good afternoon.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
6 afternoon.

7 MS. VASSAR: My name's Rachael
8 Vassar, and I'm the Philadelphia Outreach
9 Coordinator for Penn Future. And Penn
10 Future works to create a just future,
11 where nature, communities, and the
12 environment thrive. And in line with
13 that mission, Penn Future works as the
14 lead organization behind the Next Great
15 City Coalition, which is dedicated to
16 creating a positive future for
17 Philadelphia by advocating for
18 commonsense, cost-effective policies that
19 enhance environmental quality, along with
20 strengthening neighborhoods and
21 increasing our economic competitiveness.

22 And we're made up of a variety
23 of organizations, civic associations,
24 labor groups, public-health
25 organizations, environmental nonprofits.

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2 Faith-based communities, et cetera. And
3 the Next Great City Initiative came
4 together in the fall of 2005 to address
5 the environmental and public-health
6 issues that are harming Philadelphia's
7 economy and quality of life. And our
8 diverse coalition identified ten
9 affordable actions that the City could
10 undertake to make Philadelphia's
11 neighborhoods more vital -- revitalized.
12 And these actions have the broad support
13 of the 126 organizations that make up the
14 coalition.

15 Among the ten agendas items I'm
16 here to talk about here today is the
17 recommendation that Philadelphia maintain
18 healthy parks. And as part of that
19 recommendation, we call on the City to
20 provide the park system with much-needed
21 additional revenue.

22 Healthy parks are a community
23 assets. They improve health by providing
24 outdoor spaces for recreation and
25 exercise, they reduce sewer backup by

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2 managing storm water, they raise property
3 values, and they contribute to
4 neighborhood cohesion.

5 However, poorly-maintained
6 parks do quite the opposite -- by
7 contributing to urban decay and becoming
8 magnets for crime. And decades of
9 neglect have left many of Philadelphia's
10 park in unacceptable condition.

11 In a 2006 survey commissioned
12 by the Next Great City Coalition, almost
13 half of Philadelphians reported that they
14 stayed away from the park in the previous
15 year because they feared for their
16 children's safety or their own. And
17 despite the valiant efforts of park
18 supporters throughout the City, from that
19 same survey, we saw that 40 percent of
20 respondents said that they had
21 volunteered to plant tree in the park or
22 to help do a park cleanup in the past
23 year.

24 Volunteer efforts aren't
25 enough; we cannot rely on volunteers

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2 alone. And keeping our parks well-
3 maintained, safe, and attractive requires
4 sufficient funding for the Department of
5 Parks and Recreation. And the proposed
6 \$3.3 million increase in the newly-
7 combined departments' operating budget,
8 as well as 5.4 in capital for parks and
9 5 million in capital for recreation is
10 the right thing to do for our
11 communities, the economy, and the
12 environment.

13 This money would be used for
14 much-needed maintenance, tree-planting,
15 youth programming, and safety and
16 security measures.

17 For too long, our parks have
18 been underfunded under-appreciated. So
19 on behalf of the over 125 organizations
20 that form Next Great City, I urge you to
21 give your full support to the Mayor's
22 proposed budget increase for Parks and
23 Recreation. And not only will this
24 additional funding help our parks to
25 realize their full potential, but we

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 believe it will also make our city
3 cleaner, greener, and healthier for the
4 future.

5 So thank you so much for your
6 time and consideration.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
8 you. We appreciate your testimony.

9 Do we have anyone else to
10 testify? Did you want to testify?

11 We do have a number of people
12 that are scheduled to come in to testify,
13 so we'll just have to wait.

14 (Witness comes forward.)

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
16 afternoon.

17 MR. PYZYNSKI: Good afternoon.

18 Good afternoon. My name is Walt
19 Pyzynksi, and I was an elected official
20 for ten years, and I've been involved
21 with city and government affairs for
22 almost over 35 years, coming into City
23 Council and -- with budgets and things.

24 And the one problem that really
25 affected the City of Philadelphia many

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2 years ago -- and I'm speaking as a member
3 of the Chamber of Commerce -- and that
4 is, at that time, the City, the Mayor,
5 and City Council came in and said to the
6 corporations and small businesses,
7 everybody, that they were going to raise
8 the taxes in Philadelphia, and they
9 challenged the corporations and
10 businesses in Philadelphia.

11 And they came back, the Chamber
12 of Commerce and all of these huge
13 corporations, and said, If you do, we
14 were going to leave the City. This was
15 back in the 1970s; I'm going back, you
16 know. And they, you know, came up, you
17 know, they passed the bill, you know, to
18 raise these taxes. And it was terrible.
19 And the City of Philadelphia lost
20 corporations, small businesses.

21 At that time, we had three
22 Congressional seats here, in
23 Philadelphia. Because of that, all of
24 the businesses left Philadelphia. I
25 mean, they just moved out of the City.

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2 And it was just unbelievable.

3 At that time, I was in
4 business, and I was working in, you know
5 -- I was an electrical contractor working
6 at these industrial plants. And at the
7 time, you know, they just they said, you
8 know, if you do it, you know, we're going
9 to go. And they did, they really did.

10 And today, we see, you know,
11 over these 35 years all these empty
12 industrial buildings. And to me, it
13 always comes up the budget, the budget,
14 the budget.

15 And I've been involved, like I
16 say, in wanting to rebuild the riverfront
17 and everything and all of the --
18 everything down there and the SugarHouse
19 and the casinos and everything. And we
20 have the SugarHouse Casino now that's
21 going to be built. When it comes up,
22 it's going to be about September I
23 believe, August or September.

24 And we're really in debt that I
25 look at for about \$150 million, you know,

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 \$150 million we need to make up. And
3 when I sit back and I look at the budget
4 and everything else and the money that,
5 you know, we need to spend, I truly
6 believe that \$150 million could be picked
7 up over that casino with -- between the
8 riverfront, the restaurants. And I get
9 involved with the -- down here at the
10 Convention Center a lot, and I talk with
11 a lot of business people that come into
12 Philadelphia because I go into their
13 shows.

14 And the one question they ask
15 me all the time is, Where is a good place
16 to go, you know, at night? And I'll tell
17 'em -- I have to, you know, smile in a
18 way.

19 (Timer bell rings.)

20 I'll tell 'em to go down to
21 Chinatown. That's about all I can really
22 say to you, you know, or go to a
23 restaurant. And I believe that once we
24 get the casino built, these people that
25 come into Philadelphia, because

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2 Philadelphia is the birthplace of the
3 United States. It is so strong, it's
4 unbelievable. People come in here and
5 they look at Philadelphia, these
6 businesspeople that I talk with, and they
7 talk about Philadelphia.

8 I'll say, Well, you can go down
9 to the -- go down to Fifth and Market and
10 see Betty Ross's house. Okay, you know.

11 But I believe with the
12 riverfront being built and those
13 restaurants and all of this with the
14 casino and those condominiums that are
15 built there now, the tourists are going
16 to come into this city like we never seen
17 before.

18 And I'm really giving you, you
19 know, my honest opinion of it. I would
20 say within the next --

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: You
22 certainly have a wealth of knowledge.

23 MR. PYZYNSKI: Oh, what was
24 that?

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: I

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 said you certainly have a wealth of
3 knowledge.

4 MR. PYZYNSKI: Well, after
5 35 --

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: And
7 we appreciate your coming in.

8 MR. PYZYNSKI: -- years, you
9 know, you have to sit and take it all in,
10 Ann.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Oh,
12 it's wonderful.

13 MR. PYZYNSKI: And I have great
14 respect for you, Ann, you know, and
15 everything.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:
17 Thanks.

18 MR. PYZYNSKI: And I come in
19 all the time.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: I
21 know you do, and we appreciate that. We
22 appreciate your testimony.

23 MR. PYZYNSKI: And that's about
24 all I could say of it. And I truly
25 believe that within two to three years,

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2 we're going to -- that \$150 million could
3 be fixed up.

4 And I listen to the Congressmen
5 here back and forth in various parts on
6 cutting back and cutting back. And we
7 could really pull this city back together
8 again because people will come into this
9 city like they never did before, because
10 this is the birthplace.

11 I always say the one thing --
12 and I'm not being, you know, the
13 gentleman that just got done talking
14 about Penn Treaty Park. I used to go
15 down there all the time when I was a kid
16 and all, but I always say I don't know
17 what would happen if William Penn, that
18 man on top, was to land over in Jersey.
19 We wouldn't have over here down at Fifth
20 and Market Independence Hall. This is
21 the city of cities, and that man on top
22 this building is the founder, in 1682 and
23 down there in Fishtown.

24 And the SugarHouse is like -- I
25 say -- he said, it's only about 4, 500

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2 feet away. And the people that come in
3 here will walk that 4 or 500 feet into
4 that park.

5 And I'm going to tell you, I've
6 walked down the park about six months
7 ago, when it was beautiful, and I walked
8 in there and I started to cry. Because
9 when I knew it, it was just a small -- it
10 is now gigantic and beautiful. I would
11 put lighting all around that street down
12 there for the people.

13 And that's about all I can say.
14 I don't know, I'm just being normal, a
15 everyday person as I can be with you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: We
17 appreciate your testimony.

18 MR. Pyzyński: Okay. That's
19 about all I can say.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
21 you so much.

22 MR. Pyzyński: Okay.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
24 you.

25 * * *

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2 (Councilman Clarke chairs

3 committee.)

4 (Witness comes forward.)

5 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Good

6 afternoon, ma'am.

7 MS. LEVKOVICH: Good afternoon.

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Good

9 afternoon. Please --

10 MS. LEVKOVICH: It feels a

11 little bit odd to be in this empty, large

12 room.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: There are a

14 lot of folks that preceded you, so

15 consider yourself lucky that you didn't

16 have to wait to testify.

17 MS. LEVKOVICH: Good,

18 excellent. So thank you for this

19 opportunity.

20 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: You're

21 welcome.

22 MS. LEVKOVICH: My name is

23 Natalie Levkovich, and I'm the Executive

24 Director of the Health Federation of

25 Philadelphia, and I'm here to support the

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2 Department of Public Health's budget
3 request and to advocate for new revenue
4 sources, including the sugar-sweetened
5 beverage tax.

6 The Federation's mission is to
7 improve access to and quality of
8 health-care services for under-served and
9 vulnerable individuals and families. And
10 we achieve this mission through our work
11 with community health centers as well as
12 our professional training and capacity-
13 building activities and our direct-
14 service programs.

15 The Department of Public
16 Health's programs are essential to the
17 health of all Philadelphians. Any cuts
18 to the department would be harmful to the
19 population overall and particularly to
20 our most vulnerable citizens. Therefore,
21 I ask you to please approve the
22 department's full budget request.

23 Philadelphia's district health
24 centers do a tremendous job of caring for
25 those who otherwise would not have access

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2 to care. These centers provide primary
3 care, access to specialty care, dental
4 care, prenatal care, pharmacy services,
5 family-planning services, management of
6 complex and chronic diseases, as well as
7 preventive public-health services such as
8 immunizations and treatment of infectious
9 diseases to more than 90,000 City
10 residents every year.

11 With the recent passage of
12 federal health-care reform, we can
13 anticipate that even more Philadelphians
14 will soon seek care from the City health
15 centers and other local community health
16 centers. As more people gain insurance,
17 they will seek preventive and routine
18 care that they may have delayed while
19 they were uninsured. Philadelphians will
20 need all of our safety-net providers to
21 meet the increased demand and ensure
22 access.

23 Beyond the health centers, the
24 department -- the Health Department plays
25 an extremely important role in monitoring

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2 and addressing infectious disease. This
3 is not a matter of need among our poor
4 population; it is, in fact, something
5 that affects all of us, the containment
6 of infectious disease.

7 During the past year,
8 Philadelphia and much of the nation faced
9 the H1N1 flu pandemic, and the department
10 responded quickly to bring the disease to
11 manageable levels. The department
12 efficiently mobilized its own resources
13 and distributed vaccine to large and
14 diverse cohort of community partners,
15 including schools, health centers,
16 hospitals. And as a result, at-risk
17 Philadelphians were able to obtain the
18 vaccine easily and quickly in comparison
19 with many other communities across the
20 country.

21 This was a wonderful example of
22 public-private partnership. The non-city
23 operated City health centers participated
24 at a hundred percent level with walk-in
25 clinician and processed hundreds, if not

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2 thousands, of people during that
3 immunization campaign.

4 Council must support a budget
5 that will enable the department to
6 continue to act effectively in the face
7 of public-health emergencies. The
8 department, of course, has many other
9 important functions, and has demonstrated
10 a creative and comprehensive approach to
11 public-health problems such as obesity,
12 smoking, lead poisoning, infant
13 mortality, and sexually-transmitted
14 diseases.

15 The public-health challenges in
16 Philadelphia are multifaceted and
17 deep-rooted, and we need to sustain and
18 expand the capacity of the department to
19 continue to address these. While the
20 Health Department has many partners in
21 the nonprofit sector, including the
22 Health Federation, it is only with a
23 strong public-health authority that the
24 health and safety of the public can truly
25 be protected.

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2 I would also like to speak in
3 support of the department's and the
4 Mayor's proposal to raise revenue for
5 public health and other services through
6 the sugar-sweetened beverage tax. This
7 proposal would both raise much-needed
8 revenue and help to achieve public-health
9 goals.

10 Almost 60 percent of
11 Philadelphia children ages 6 to 11 are
12 overweight and obese. Soda and other
13 sugar-sweetened beverages are a major
14 contributor to this public-health crisis.
15 Children now drink more sugar-sweetened
16 beverages than milk. And researchers
17 have found that with every additional
18 glass or can of this beverage a child
19 drinks per day, that child has a 60
20 percent chance of becoming obese. Obese
21 children are far more likely to become
22 obese and chronically-ill adults, facing
23 a lifetime of compromised health status
24 and quality of life.

25 Researchers have also shown

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 that when sugar-sweetened beverages cost
3 more, people drink less of them.

4 Families are more likely to substitute
5 water, milk, or other healthier beverages
6 for soda. Therefore, the proposal would
7 help to reduce sugar-sweetened beverage
8 consumption and generate revenue, a
9 portion of which would go into additional
10 programs to increase health eating and
11 exercise to further address this problem.

12 I know that there is strong
13 opposition to this proposal from the
14 industry that manufacture these
15 beverages. However, I urge you to
16 carefully consider the public-health
17 impact before you reject it.

18 Obesity costs us dearly -- in
19 dollars and in early death and
20 disability. The SSB, if implemented at a
21 level that would genuinely affect the
22 cost of sweetened beverages can be an
23 important tool in addressing this growing
24 public-health problem.

25 Philadelphia has taken several

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2 steps in recent years to become a city
3 that puts the health of its citizens
4 first. Our strong primary-care system,
5 the new rules regarding menu labeling,
6 initiatives to reduce obesity and smoking
7 rates, pioneering efforts to bring fresh
8 foods to underserved neighborhoods,
9 programs to increase green space and bike
10 paths all are transforming Philadelphia.
11 Your support for the Department of
12 Healthy and the SSB tax will be
13 instrumental to continue this positive
14 trend.

15 Thank you very much.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you
17 so much for your testimony.

18 MS. LEVKOVICH: Thank you.

19 Enjoy the rest of your break.

20 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I'm waiting
21 for the onslaught of citizens to come in
22 and testify.

23 MS. LEVKOVICH: Well, I hope
24 they show up.

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you

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2 so much.

3 The Committee of the Whole will

4 stand in recess for half an hour.

5 (Committee stands in recess.)

6 (Proceedings resume at

7 3:30 p.m.)

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

9 Hello.

10 PANEL MEMBERS: Hello.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: This
12 is a continued public hearing of the
13 Committee of the Whole. I understand we
14 have a couple of our distinguished guests
15 that would like to testify. May I have
16 their names, please.

17 THE CLERK: Forgive me if I
18 mispronounce them.

19 Heather Rozjabedk.

20 Jennifer Awakeni

21 Elizabeth Yim.

22 Irim Azam.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And
24 Councilmembers are in their offices,
25 listening to your testimony.

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2 I understand you're all from

3 Drexel?

4 PANEL MEMBERS: Yes.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:

6 Wonderful.

7 MS. ROZJABEK: My name is

8 Heather Rozjabek.

9 MS. YIM: My name is Elizabeth

10 Yim.

11 MS. AZAM: My name is Iram

12 Azarm.

13 MS. AWAKENI: And I'm Jen

14 Awakeni.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:

16 Wonderful.

17 MS. ROZJABEK: Dear members of
18 the Philadelphia City Council, thank you
19 for giving us the opportunity to give you
20 public testimony on this important public
21 health issue.

22 We are all current students at
23 Drexel University School of Public
24 Health, and we are here to support the
25 sugar-sweetened-beverage tax. As public

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2 health students, we advocate for public
3 policy promoting healthy initiatives
4 within the Philadelphia community.

5 In Philadelphia, 64 percent of
6 adults and 57 percent of children between
7 6 and 11 years old are overweight or
8 obese. In addition, nearly 50 percent of
9 Philadelphia children will become
10 overweight or obese in their lifetime.

11 Obesity is a growing public
12 health concern, not just relatively but
13 nationally. Obesity has been linked to
14 many chronic diseases such as diabetes,
15 cancer, heart disease, high blood
16 pressure, and stroke.

17 Sugar-sweetened beverages are
18 different from other beverages in that
19 they are non-alcoholic, with an added
20 sugar-based sweetener such as high-
21 fructose corn syrup. They contribute to
22 the growing obesity epidemic because they
23 contain empty calories and ingredients
24 that are also addictive. When we drink
25 sugar-sweetened beverages, our bodies

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2 don't feel full, and we consume more
3 calories than we need. They make us
4 crave sweeter foods.

5 Think about the impact of
6 giving sugary drinks to children. They
7 are going to continue to crave unhealthy
8 foods for the rest of their lives, and it
9 will be harder for them to eat healthier
10 foods. In the end, we are going to have
11 an increased risk for developing
12 diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and
13 other that reduce the quality of life.

14 MS. YIM: Across the nation,
15 cities and states are addressing the same
16 issue.

17 We understand that there are
18 some who are concerned about the
19 implication the tax will have on their
20 jobs and lifestyles. For instance, we
21 realize the tax alone will not guarantee
22 the decrease in consumption of sugar-
23 sweetened beverages.

24 Additionally, the nature of
25 this business tax does not ensure an

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2 increase in the price of these beverages
3 in order for it to serve as a
4 disincentive from purchasing sugar-
5 sweetened beverages. Also, people will
6 drink other non-sweetened beverages, so
7 jobs will still be needed for bottling
8 and transportation.

9 We ask that our audience view
10 this tax on sugar-sweetened beverages as
11 a novel opportunity for corporations,
12 retailers, and employers to put on their
13 thinking caps and innovate new ways to
14 sell their products without hindering
15 their consumers' health.

16 The tax has been argued as
17 being regressive, meaning that the
18 increased costs would disproportionately
19 target low-income communities. However,
20 these communities can potentially benefit
21 the most from this tax, because they are
22 one of the greatest consumers of sugar-
23 sweetened beverages and have a higher
24 prevalence of obesity and diabetes.

25 This tax would provide means to

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2 promote prevention of obesity, which is a
3 cost-saving alternative to expensive
4 health-care treatments.

5 MS. AZAM: In this testimony,
6 we would like to focus on the benefits of
7 the revenue generated from this tax if
8 the City Council passes this is
9 legislation.

10 Twenty million dollars of the
11 projected revenue will be used to fund
12 healthy initiatives in Philadelphia.
13 These initiatives include programs to
14 make healthy foods more available and
15 affordable and decrease the amount of
16 unhealthy foods consumed such as
17 including more farmer markets into
18 low-income communities so that there is
19 increased access to healthier and
20 affordable foods.

21 Public-health research has
22 shown that there fewer healthy food and
23 beverage options in low-income
24 communities. Fast-food corporations and
25 beverage companies disproportionately

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2 target their marketing in low-income
3 communities. These same targeted
4 neighborhoods do not have as many healthy
5 food options available for their
6 residents, and this dilemma has
7 perpetuated obesity, diabetes, and other
8 related illnesses.

9 MS. AWAKENI: Another
10 initiative is to expand the pedestrian
11 and bike network to promote physical
12 activity. We would like to emphasize
13 that the money generated from this tax is
14 an investment which I will go towards
15 combating the obesity epidemic.

16 As public-health students, we
17 are always striving to promote healthy
18 behaviors and positive changes in our
19 community. We are here today to support
20 this tax as a means to strive for social
21 justice in Philadelphia. This tax will
22 bring us one step closer to solving the
23 obesity epidemic that is plaguing our
24 community and that will put Philadelphia
25 on the map as one of the leaders in this

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2 national initiative.

3 We implore the City and county
4 to pass this tax because it has
5 innumerable benefits for all
6 Philadelphians.

7 Thank you for time and
8 consideration.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
10 you. It was wonderful testimony. Good
11 luck to all of you I'm sure you'll be
12 very successful.

13 PANEL MEMBERS: Thank you.

14 (Committee stands in recess.)

15 (Proceedings resume at
16 4:25 p.m.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The
18 Committee of the Whole is now back in
19 session. I would ask Miss Murray to
20 please call our next guest.

21 THE CLERK: Ted Weerts.

22 (Witness comes forward.)

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
24 afternoon.

25 MR. WEERTS: Good afternoon.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

3 Kindly identify yourself for the record
4 and proceed with your testimony.

5 MR. WEERTS: My name is Ted
6 Weerts, W-E-E-R-T-S, and I'm the
7 Executive Director of Travelers Aid
8 Family Services of Philadelphia.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
10 Welcome.

11 MR. WEERTS: Thank you.

12 And I'd like to speak a bit
13 about the City budget as it relates to
14 homeless services. I've been the
15 executive director of Travelers Aid of
16 Philadelphia for the last 11 years, and
17 most of our services are to homeless
18 families.

19 And I came to Philadelphia in
20 1988, under the Wilson Goode
21 Administration under a grant from the
22 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to help
23 organize homeless services in
24 Philadelphia, which already had a
25 considerably extensive and high-quality

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2 set of services. And I've seen the
3 system go on for the past twenty-some
4 years through many changes; and, clearly,
5 this is one of the biggest changes that
6 has occurred, with the recession that has
7 come on.

8 One of the first things that
9 happened to us is that in December of
10 2008, the services to stranded travelers
11 in this city -- of course, which all are
12 homeless in the City of Philadelphia --
13 were completely eliminated. And that
14 means that anywhere from 2 to 3,000
15 people are now on the streets of
16 Philadelphia that would have otherwise
17 would have been moved along and found
18 another destination if those services had
19 continued.

20 Now, I think it's important to
21 realize that not all cases are of the
22 same severity and don't present the same
23 problems and the same risks. And I think
24 it could have been a program which, with
25 some consideration, would have been

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2 downsized to perhaps a quarter of what it
3 was, focusing on those high-risk people
4 and making sure that they do not continue
5 on in the City of Philadelphia, that they
6 go on to where they would be in much
7 better shape rather than be arrested or
8 hospitalized or run into our difficulties
9 in the City. It's -- it wasn't not good
10 for them, it's not good for the City.

11 Probably a better example of
12 what should have been done is that -- we
13 also had a program for lead abatement in
14 which we moved families into lead-free
15 housing while the lead was taken out of
16 their homes. We had 17 units for that,
17 and it was downsized to five. Well, five
18 isn't a lot but five at least makes sure
19 that you're taking care of the most
20 serious problems and identifying them and
21 not letting them continue on.

22 One of the other points that
23 I'd like to make is that we and other
24 nonprofits have been receiving now in the
25 past year-and-a-half cuts, and, many

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2 times, those cuts have been given to us
3 on short notice and with the instructions
4 that we must continue on with the same
5 services and the same contract; we're
6 just going to have less money to do that
7 with.

8 Now, the --

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

10 Excuse me. Your program has been cut
11 again?

12 MR. WEERTS: Our family shelter
13 has been cut twice, yes, in terms of the
14 amount of services.

15 And I'm not alone. I mean,
16 other programs, I know, have been -- the
17 amount of the contract has been reduced a
18 couple percent, five percent; whereas,
19 the requirements remain the same.

20 Now, we, as nonprofits, have
21 been pretty good at working on government
22 contracts, and the government contract
23 then provides the essential services, and
24 then we go out and find other money to
25 supplement those services to make it

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2 better and richer. And I think that's a
3 very appropriate thing for nonprofits to
4 do.

5 So when we run a shelter, a
6 family shelter, of 75 families and we
7 work to get other funds to run after-
8 school programs for the children and the
9 City provides the basic money for the
10 living and we provide those extra
11 services, I think that runs nicely when
12 that's done. But when you get to the
13 point where there's not enough funds to
14 handle the basic services, the nonprofits
15 now are in no position to make up the
16 difference.

17 I know many of the nonprofits;
18 I'm a part of Give Philadelphia, Give
19 Philly, which is seven major agencies
20 that are working together to try to raise
21 funds and work collaboratively, and were
22 all in the same position. Since the
23 recession, giving has gone down
24 dramatically. We probably have been in
25 better shape than most, seeing agencies

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2 with \$10 million budgets some may only
3 have \$6 million budgets because the
4 people who are giving simply don't have
5 it anymore.

6 Everything that I see certainly
7 in our budget and other people's
8 nonprofits really indicate that they're
9 really at the point of not being able to
10 do the work that needs to be done under
11 their contract if it gets cut any
12 further. And I think it has to be looked
13 at closely at what gets eliminated versus
14 anymore what simply gets cut off the top,
15 because there simply isn't the room
16 anymore.

17 And I think in homeless
18 services, I've seen many waves of
19 homelessness. In 2002, we saw homeless
20 families increase dramatically for no
21 known reason; they just did, and you had
22 to increase capacity because of that.

23 It's clear that with the
24 foreclosures and the evictions and the
25 unemployment that's going on now isn't

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2 causing homelessness as of this moment;
3 it's 'cause people have some other
4 alternatives, but those alternatives
5 don't last forever. And once you go
6 through and foreclose, you may go through
7 an eviction, you may stay with your
8 family, with family members, but at some
9 point, all that is worn out, and the next
10 wave is probably going to be coming
11 probably in a couple years.

12 And we must understand that our
13 capacity can't be dropping too much and
14 we have to get so we provide the
15 essential services and don't try to keep
16 -- have someone else pay that bill,
17 because the other people don't have it.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERA: They
19 don't have it, either.

20 I want to thank you for your
21 testimony. And I know that you say that
22 Councilwoman Blackwell is here, who is a
23 very, very strong advocate for the
24 homeless.

25 MR. WEERTS: Yes, she is.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

3 Councilwoman Blackwell, your light's on.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

5 I wanted to say thank you for coming and
6 for his commitment over the years.

7 MR. WEERTS: You're welcome.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: He's
9 worked with so many people and done so
10 much to help with housing and services
11 for people in need. And certainly we
12 thank him for coming in and testifying
13 about this important issue.

14 MR. WEERTS: Thank you. I
15 appreciate the opportunity.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
17 you.

18 Continue with the good work.

19 Our next witness.

20 THE CLERK: We'll call them
21 together, a panel.

22 Robert Sharp, Linda Burnett,
23 Jasmine Hunt, and Diara Oliver.

24 And if there's anyone else with
25 that group.

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2 (Witnesses come forward.)

3 MS. BURNETTE: Good afternoon.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
5 afternoon. Please identify yourself for
6 the record.

7 MS. BURNETTE: My name is Liz
8 Burnett, and I'm the Executive Director
9 of the Youth Outreach Adolescent
10 Community Awareness Program, YOACAP, and
11 I'm also representing the Southwest
12 Community Advisory Group.

13 MS. HUNT: Hi my name is
14 Jasmine Hunt. I'm 18 years old. I go to
15 the Academy at Palumbo High School, and
16 I'm involved in the YOACAP program.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
18 you.

19 MS. HARDY: Hello. My name is
20 Morticia Hardy. I'm 17 years old, and I
21 go to the Academy at Palumbo. I'm here
22 representing YOACAP as well as the Boys
23 and Girls Club.

24 MR. SHARP: How you doing. My
25 name is Robert Sharp. I'm age 20 and I'm

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 representing youth programs of Orleans

3 Technical Institute, and I'm also

4 representing the same program as

5 (indiscernible).

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

7 you.

8 MS. BURNETTE: First and

9 foremost, we really want to thank you for

10 being here to listen to us and for giving

11 these young people a voice and an

12 opportunity to speak about their

13 concerns.

14 I don't know if you know, but I

15 know Representative Blackwell knows that

16 YOACAP has been in existence since 1989,

17 providing services for youth and young

18 adults in and around the Philadelphia.

19 Our program provides HIV prevention,

20 youth development, STD control, community

21 engagement, parental training. We try to

22 treat the whole family in a holistic type

23 of way.

24 We've been providing services

25 in unusual areas. We're that group that

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2 you'll see at 3 o'clock in the morning
3 doing HIV testing in areas that other
4 people don't visit. We're that group
5 that's in front of the school that says
6 that we had a breakout of syphilis or
7 gonorrhea, because we're trusted by the
8 community, we're respected by the youth,
9 and we take our work very seriously. We
10 have had a record of honesty and
11 integrity and success for the last 20
12 years.

13 Today, we would like to really
14 just talk to you about what is going on
15 in our community as it relates first to
16 the funding, as you know. YOACAP has
17 taken a terrible hit, as has most of
18 these AIDS service organizations from the
19 State. We provide services around sexual
20 health at Bartram, West Philadelphia High
21 School, University City, Strawberry
22 Mansion, Fitzsimon Multicultural Academy.
23 We provided 500 youth and adult with
24 mobile testing this year.

25 I don't know if people have

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2 started to believe that HIV disappeared
3 because we don't talk about it, but it's
4 still very much alive and well in our
5 communities. And the ages of people who
6 are becoming infected and affected by
7 this disease are getting lower and lower.
8 Our young people are becoming sexually
9 active at a younger age now. And as
10 these young people will attest to, one of
11 the ways that we reached them is by
12 providing services that peer-to-peer.

13 Today, I guess what I would
14 really like to get you all to see is that
15 we're almost an institution in the
16 community because we've been there so
17 long. We've developed the trust. And
18 you've been to our southwest community,
19 you've sent representatives and support
20 it, our southwest advisory group.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Yes.

22 MS. Burnette: In our community
23 engagement piece, YOACAP doesn't do
24 anything that we don't involve the
25 community that we're trying to reach in

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2 developing. These young people helped
3 develop the strategies that we use for
4 young people.

5 The Southwestern Community
6 Advisory Group helped develop the
7 strategies that we're using, and I know
8 you can see the success, because the
9 community has now taken some ownership
10 for itself and have developed good
11 relationships with our police department,
12 they're manning their own communities.
13 We have community groups in West
14 Philadelphia that have never worked
15 together that are now working together
16 and saying, You know what? We provide
17 this service and you provide that
18 service; perhaps we shouldn't compete.
19 Maybe you should continue to provide this
20 service, and I'll refer people to your
21 area. We're very proud of that.

22 And I think we're doing what
23 folk are asking us to do. Our officials,
24 from our president, from our mayor, from
25 our governor, and me being from the

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2 Kennedy group, have asked us not to ask
3 so much what they can do for us but what
4 we can do for ourselves. And YOACAP
5 continues to teach communities and young
6 people to do for themselves and to teach
7 others.

8 So I'm going to be quiet
9 because I -- I'm never the out front
10 person. Today, they said, "Miss B, you
11 have to talk," so I'm going to turn it
12 over to Morticia and Jasmine and Robert
13 and let me show what we try to teach
14 them.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
16 you.

17 MS. HARDY: Can you hear me?

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
19 afternoon.

20 MS. HARDY: Good afternoon. My
21 name is -- as Miss B said, Morticia
22 Hardy. I am also the Boys and Girls Club
23 Youth of the Year for the City of
24 Philadelphia, and I also work with
25 Ms. Burnett with the Youth Council as

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2 well.

3 Today, I wanted to share a poem
4 with you. I write poetry as well as
5 other short pieces, and it's the best way
6 for me to explain how I feel about the
7 program YOACAP. So I'll do that now.
8 And it is entitled, "Small Epiphanies."

9 "Handcuffs, sirens, bullets
10 flying. Weed, cold crack maybe. Mothers
11 hollering, Oh, my baby. But seeing is
12 not always this big it started small.

13 "Like a girl at the mall or a
14 boy at the court, too short to make a
15 score, but no one urging him to try
16 anyway. No one to pick him up or no one
17 to tell her not to flaunt her stuff. And
18 faster and faster, my community becomes
19 (indiscernible).

20 "Can you really blame us. See,
21 'cause we do what we're taught and we're
22 taught what we do. And you want to get
23 mad at us. Why? We're only following
24 you.

25 "And if my (indiscernible) is

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 wrong, step in and be the right one.

3 Mentor me, guide me, talk to me while the
4 fight's on.

5 "But by the time I'm old enough
6 to articulate this, it's probably too
7 late, because everyone has turned their
8 heads, and no one stepped up to the plate
9 to take out time out for me to tell me
10 I'm great, to tell me I'm brilliant, to
11 tell me I'm a leader, I have so much to
12 say. And all you reply is, Oh, you know
13 teenagers these days.

14 "You know teenagers these days?
15 No. You know some teenagers these
16 days -- out robbing and dodging and
17 killing and flash-mobbing, out here
18 making my home life a wreck.

19 "And oh, don't forget, I'm a
20 teen, so I must always think about sex.
21 But no, we are more than just baby-
22 makers, shot-takers, disease-spreaders,
23 ex-offenders, tattoo junkies. My poor
24 generation; abort, abort.

25 "With our pants too low and our

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 skirts too short, and we too late to
3 care, 'cause the window has closed, and
4 I'm on the wrong side, banging to escape
5 for myself.

6 "Will you open the window for
7 me or just worry about your wallet.
8 Afraid to get connected for fear you'll
9 be infected with the failure that seems
10 to run through my veins.

11 "But it's not failure, only
12 success stained. All I need is some
13 dusting, maybe some elbow grease. Or
14 maybe you really have to scrub and get on
15 your knees, scrub through my addiction,
16 through my good-for-nothing ways. Go
17 deep in my soul, where the sun never
18 rays.

19 "Give me a place where I can
20 rest my mind, spit my lines where I won't
21 be judged. Give me people -- no, give me
22 ten, a good wholesome place where I'm
23 disciplined in the way I should go. Give
24 me a pen, a guitar, or a ball.

25 "Remember, all good things good

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2 or bad started small."

3 And I wrote this piece because
4 I think that everyone my age should have
5 someone to mentor them and show them the
6 right way, especially if their parents or
7 their community isn't really a positive
8 influence. And I know I've had some
9 times where I'm very much brilliant, but
10 if I was steered in the wrong direction,
11 I could have just did so worse than I am
12 today.

13 And if it wasn't for Miss B, as
14 well as the rest of YOACAP disciplining
15 me and guiding me in the way I should go,
16 I really don't know where I would go.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

18 (Inaudible; off-mic.)

19 MS. HARDY: Yes.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. HARDY: Thank you.

22 Now I'll turn it over to my
23 friend Jasmine Hunt.

24 MS. HUNT: Hello. I'm Jasmine
25 again. I wrote a acronym about YOACAP,

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 the youth council program that I'm in.

3 Y is for youth that get to have
4 a say.

5 O is for outstanding people and
6 students from various parts of Philly.

7 A is for active in community
8 service.

9 C creates new ways of enhancing
10 and broadening our horizons.

11 A is achieving many great
12 things by reaching a young demographic of
13 students.

14 P paves the way for other
15 nonprofit organizations to make the
16 change.

17 Y is for yearning to learn
18 more.

19 O is for opening their arms to
20 high school teens such as myself.

21 U is united we stand to make a
22 difference, one day at a time.

23 T is thoughtful people.

24 A is able to be anything that
25 we want to be.

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2 C is the canny ability to make
3 our voices heard amongst a sea of them.

4 O is offering information on
5 how to prevent STDs and ways to help stop
6 violence.

7 U, understanding of any
8 problems that come our way.

9 N, the necessity for teens who
10 feel like they don't have any positive
11 adult role models to confide in.

12 C, concerned individuals who
13 jump at the chance to help their city.

14 I, intellectuals who put their
15 minds together to make things happen.

16 O, leaders of today and
17 tomorrow.

18 I am a part of two nonprofit
19 organizations. One is YOACAP, the one I
20 just described and sitting here. YOACAP
21 has many different phases that I went
22 through.

23 First, I was on Project Build,
24 and they teach you different skills that
25 you need to know in order to survive in

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 the working world and things that you
3 need.

4 City Year is another program
5 that I do, and it's doing community
6 service around greater Philadelphia.

7 It's hard to picture a life
8 without these programs. They provide
9 leadership skills, community service,
10 tutoring, job opportunities,
11 scholarships, and many other resources
12 that would be beneficial to teens.
13 Taking away programs such as that would
14 be hurting the community, not helping it.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
16 you.

17 (Applause.)

18 MR. SHARP: How are you doing?

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Hello.

20 MR. SHARP: My name is Robert
21 Sharp. And I represent the UAC, UAC
22 (indiscernible).

23 So another program that I'm
24 representing is Orleans Technical
25 Institute. Now, I could say that that

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2 school has really got a change or really
3 been a change into my life; whereas,
4 though as in the youth, 'cause youth --
5 most youth don't have no one around to,
6 you know, coach 'em or lead 'em or teach
7 'em or say, Hey, this way is the way out.
8 I mean being as though I'm in there, we
9 have a lot of social skills. Social
10 skills is finding the real you and
11 actually where you are and what you want
12 to be and where you want to go in life.

13 So being as though I say to
14 myself, I'd like to be -- I like to
15 build, you know. So I'm going to say I'm
16 going to go to school and try to build or
17 try to, you know, get education on it or
18 certificates so I can build my own career
19 in my life, 'cause me, as a black male,
20 as a youth, I can say it's kind of hard
21 because, you know, you got to have a lot
22 of falls that you could take, you know,
23 of people offering you things or the
24 streets that's calling you. And, you
25 know, you just want to be the one that

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 don't go that direction. And, you know,
3 you want to go the right way.

4 So I took the program and it's
5 wonderful for me. You know, I learned
6 how to communicate with a lot of people,
7 like different people, speaking more
8 proper, it's not always slang, and it
9 just makes me happy when I mention the
10 program. It's just an unstoppable smile.

11 And I learned a lot of things,
12 meet a lot of good people, wonderful,
13 educated, smart, you know. And they try
14 to teach me things -- well, they don't
15 try to; they teach me things and teach me
16 ways to make it. You know, the streets
17 is not the only way.

18 It's not just the hood, it's
19 not just the neighborhood where you grew
20 up. Okay, you can represent where you
21 grew up at, but eventually, you don't
22 want to be there all your life, till
23 you're like 40 or 50; you want to get
24 away.

25 So me, as a young man -- and,

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 by the way, I'm 20, I want to make a
3 change in my life and try to better my
4 community. So that's the reason I'm here
5 and I'm having this conversation with you
6 guys.

7 And I really love the program.
8 You know, GPUAC helps a lot. It really
9 does.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
11 you.

12 May I say I think you're all
13 very talented, and it's quite apparent to
14 me that you're going -- you can be as
15 successful as you want to be, and I think
16 you all want to be successful. So I do
17 wish you luck.

18 And as I said, I think you're
19 all very intelligent, and it's wonderful
20 that you have somebody standing over you
21 who is willing to dedicate her life --
22 I'm sorry, did you want to come up too?

23 MS. BURNETTE: I would like to
24 introduce Miss Davis, who is also a part
25 of the UAC family and who has worked very

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 closely and mentored not just this young
3 man but other young man.

4 Not one program can stand
5 alone, YOACAP can't do it all. But this
6 young lady has been working with young
7 people since we were 35, and that was two
8 years ago.

9 (Laughter.)

10 (Indiscernible; parties talking
11 over each other.)

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Miss
13 Davis, thank you. Thank you.

14 MS. DAVIS: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I
16 think, you know, these children are
17 speaking volumes for the successful work
18 that you have done, and you're to be
19 applauded for it.

20 MS. DAVIS: Thank you so much.

21 MS. HARDY: She's also a part
22 of the Boys and Girls Club.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh,
24 great.

25 MS. BURNETTE: And we do hope

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 that that as you all make your
3 decisions -- we know that there is a
4 recession, but we do hope that you will
5 remember that there are programs who are
6 working very hard day and night to try to
7 save our future, because sooner or later,
8 they're going to be sitting where you are
9 and where I am.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

11 That's right.

12 MS. BURNETTE: And if we turn
13 our backs on them now, where are we going
14 to be?

15 Thank you very much, thank you
16 so much for the opportunity. Thank you.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
18 you.

19 MR. SHARP: I have another
20 thing too.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes,
22 Mr. Sharp.

23 MR. SHARP: I wanted to mention
24 about the youth groups. In our community
25 we need more, 'cause some youth groups,

1 5.7.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (2011 BUDGET)

2 some don't really qualify for certain
3 things. So, you know, like it's a lot of
4 ex-offenders out there. And I know
5 there's some youth groups that's going on
6 now. But I think, you know, the City
7 needs to invest in more money for youth
8 groups so they can find themselves.

9 You know, I go out there, I
10 spread the word and say, Yo, I got this
11 program that I'm in called Orleans Tech,
12 and it's this program that will help you
13 find jobs. And, you know, some of them
14 will listen. But once you start seeing
15 things posted, more things out there,
16 then that's when they're really
17 listening.

18 See, right now, they can hear
19 me, but they won't really do it
20 (inaudible). So that's another thing I
21 wanted to mention.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

23 Wonderful thank you.

24 MS. HARDY: I have one more
25 thing.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay.

3 MS. HARDY: Sorry. I don't
4 want to take up too much time, but I just
5 wanted to thank you all for taking your
6 time out to sit and really listen to us.
7 'Cause we're teenagers, people think we
8 really don't have a lot to say, and
9 people say my generation is the future.
10 My generation is the present; before you
11 know it, we'll be right taking care of
12 you, and you will be sitting over there.

13 And I really think that you
14 really need to invest in these programs
15 so we can do it correctly. It's not too
16 late, it's never really too late. We
17 want to make sure we get people while
18 they're young, while the clay is still
19 wet and we can still be molded.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
21 you again.

22 MS. HARDY: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

24 You're wonderful. Very good.

25 (Applause.)

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2 (Committee stands in recess.)

3 (Proceedings resume at

4 5:45 p.m.)

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The

6 Committee of the Whole is now back in

7 session.

8 If you will take the witness

9 table.

10 (Witnesses come forward.)

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

12 Please identify yourself for the record.

13 MR. MORINA: My name is Elir

14 Morina.

15 STENOGRAPHER: Could I get the

16 spelling, please.

17 MR. MORINA: I-L-I-R,

18 M-O-R-I-N-A.

19 STENOGRAPHER: Thank you.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

21 you.

22 MR. MORINA: I am here to speak

23 against the beverage tax. I believe that

24 with the millions of dollars that are out

25 there, there's a great likelihood that,

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2 due to some inefficiencies and wasteful
3 spending, that the City could find a
4 better way to retrieve some of those
5 funds. That's sort of my business I do
6 this for companies with much smaller
7 budgets than the City's, and I'm able to
8 come up millions of dollars usually that
9 we find with waste within that company.

10 And I would like to think that
11 the City itself has programs where it's
12 seeking out to eliminate the waste within
13 its own system before it reaches out into
14 the pockets of its citizens.

15 That's about it.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
17 you.

18 And do you want to make mention
19 that you have other people with you?

20 MR. MORINA: I have some
21 representatives as well as from
22 Philadelphia Coca Cola.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How
24 many people from that industry are
25 employed in the City of Philadelphia?

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2 MR. MORINA: From -- I can't
3 speak to the entire industry. Roughly
4 about 1200 are directly employed by
5 Philadelphia Coca Cola.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Very
7 well.

8 Thank you for coming in.

9 MR. MORINA: All right. Thank
10 you.

11 (Committee stands in recess.)

12 (Proceedings resume at 6 p.m.)

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
14 evening. Please identify yourself for
15 the record.

16 MS. MORRIS: Yes. Good
17 evening. My name is Darlene Morris, and
18 I am a provider of homeless services to
19 families through the Office of Supportive
20 Housing. And I'll be brief.

21 I basically just came to, you
22 know, let people know how important it
23 was that the things of the Office of
24 Supportive Housing and the providers that
25 are associated with that organization,

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2 the impact that the organization -- the
3 agency has on the lives of the consumers
4 that it serves.

5 I didn't prepare anything, so
6 I'm speaking --

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

8 That's okay. Just speak. Tell us what
9 your issues are.

10 MS. MORRIS: Okay.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are
12 you a provider?

13 MS. MORRIS: I am a provider,
14 and I've been a provider for many years;
15 pretty much my career has centered it
16 since I was -- what I consider a young
17 person.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

19 You're still young.

20 MS. MORRIS: Basically, I'll
21 get to the -- you know, I'll make a long
22 story short.

23 A lot of times when people, you
24 know, hear of the services that the
25 Office of Supportive Housing provides

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2 they figure, you know, they provide
3 services for homeless families and also
4 for individuals. I know that they do
5 transitional housing. I am a provider of
6 emergency services, I do emergency
7 housing, and I run a, quote/unquote,
8 shelter. We like to call it emergency
9 housing services.

10 Basically, I provide a homelike
11 setting for my residents. I don't have a
12 huge, you know, facility. Each of my
13 residents have -- they have their own --
14 each family has their own private
15 quarters in each of the buildings that I
16 provide services, and they all have their
17 own dining rooms. And, you know, we do
18 go by the guidance of the CACS -- that's
19 the child and adult food care program and
20 the menus and whatnot. But everything is
21 pretty much like a home-style situation.

22 And I think that it's important
23 that something like that continue because
24 a lot of the families that we provide
25 services for, they come from various

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2 backgrounds. Some people, you know, they
3 slip between the cracks due to economic
4 reasons. And some people --
5 unfortunately, a lot of them, it has to
6 do with not really having a solid family
7 base or background. And we see a lot of
8 different things, we see a lot of various
9 behaviors. We see a lot of, you know,
10 things where they need to be socially
11 directed.

12 In my facility, as is all the
13 other facilities that are under contract
14 with OSH, we provide case-management
15 services. And I just wanted to tell you
16 that when a family comes into a situation
17 like that, a lot of times, they don't
18 know, you know, what to expect. And
19 then, when they finally realize and see
20 all of the support that we give 'em --
21 and we give 'em a lot of support.

22 Not only are we providing them
23 with temporary means to stay en route to
24 trying to find some permanent housing,
25 but we also help to shape their lives and

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2 try to provide them some guidance and
3 direction.

4 In my facility, I engage other
5 programs to come in and to provide
6 sessions for my clients so that when they
7 leave, I want them to leave with
8 something; I don't want them to just come
9 and say, Okay, I had a place to stay on
10 the City. It's not like that when. They
11 leave, they leave as a newly-built
12 person. You know, they leave with
13 fundamentals and things that they can
14 pass on to their children.

15 And I think it's a good program
16 basically. And I think it's something
17 that -- and I don't know if this has been
18 said already, and this is the last day,
19 I'm probably the last -- one of the last
20 few people to testify, but I felt it was
21 important that I come down here and
22 saying something.

23 We do touch people's lives and
24 we have impact on people's lives. We
25 provide -- try to provide a nurturing

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2 environment. I get volunteers to come in
3 and I have tutoring that goes on, you
4 know, for the kids. And OSH, you know,
5 we have meetings, and they want to make
6 sure we stay on track.

7 And they have -- they're an
8 excellent agency in terms of making sure
9 that we do what we're supposed to do.
10 You know, they have analysts that come
11 down. And I work very well with the
12 people in the agency because even though
13 sometimes they may want me to you --
14 okay, you've got to do this or you've got
15 to do, and it they may stick me a little
16 bit in the rib, but in the long term, I
17 know that I can sleep good at night
18 because I know that I'm doing the right
19 thing for people who live in my facility.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERA: Miss
21 Morris, there was a gentleman in earlier
22 who also was a provider.

23 MS. MORRIS: Okay.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERA: How
25 long have you been a provider?

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2 MS. MORRIS: I've been a
3 provider since 1987, minus a couple of
4 years.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Have
6 your reimbursements gone down?

7 MS. MORRIS: Um, they've kind
8 of stayed the same. Well, since that
9 time, they've -- I guess they've kind of
10 leveled out a little bit. The way I get
11 paid has changed.

12 And initially, when I start
13 out, it was called -- it was actually
14 years ago. It was called Adult Services,
15 and then it changed to the Office of
16 Emergency Services.

17 I was getting paid a per diem,
18 but now it's a budget -- a budgeted-based
19 type of payment. And I guess if I look
20 at things and I kind of calculate it, it
21 has gone down.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The
23 other provider indicated that the budgets
24 have been cut.

25 MS. MORRIS: Yeah.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Has
3 your budget been cut?

4 MS. MORRIS: It's been -- yeah.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: It
6 has been.

7 MS. MORRIS: Yeah.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: By
9 how much?

10 MS. MORRIS: I would say maybe
11 20 to 25 percent.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Of
13 your total budget?

14 MS. MORRIS: Yeah. If I to
15 compare from the time that I've been --
16 it's been -- it's remained -- it's --
17 it's remained -- well, yeah, 'cause I've
18 had to add -- I've had to add my own
19 personal monies to keep things going. So
20 I would say about 20 percent.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And
22 how many clients can you accommodate?

23 MS. MORRIS: I can accommodate
24 72. That includes the mothers with the
25 children, so it's about -- about 16 to 19

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2 families.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank

4 you.

5 MS. MORRIS: Okay. Thank you

6 very much.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:

8 Thanks for coming in to testify. We

9 appreciate it.

10 MS. MORRIS: Okay, thank you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: The

12 committee will stand in recess until

13 tomorrow, Saturday, May the 8th, at

14 10 a.m. thank you.

15 (Proceedings end at 6:10 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

WE HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings of the City of Philadelphia
Council Committee of the Whole are contained
fully and accurately in the stenographic notes
taken by us on Friday, May 7, 2010, and that
this is a true and correct statement of same.

MICHELE MURPHY
Registered Professional Reporter

JOSEPHINE CARDILLO
Registered Professional Reporter

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