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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON PARKS, RECREATION

4

AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

5

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, March 26, 2009
1:05 a.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN, CHAIR

12

COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE

13

COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO

14

COUNCILWOMAN MARIA QUINONES-SANCHEZ

15

COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

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RESOLUTION 090057 - Resolution authorizing
Council's Committee on Parks, Recreation and
Cultural Affairs to hold public hearings for
applicants seeking nomination to serve on the
Commission on Parks and Recreation...

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V A R A L L O Incorporated
Litigation Support Services
Eleven Penn Center

24

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
215.561.2220 215.567.2670

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COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good

3

afternoon, everyone. Today is the

4

continuation of a hearing around

5

Resolution No. 090057. This is the last

6

of a four-part series where we have had

7

the great opportunity to hear from a

8

wonderful mix of Park and Recreation

9

citizens who love our parks and have, I

10

will say to you, all been worthy of

11

consideration for this new Commission.

12

So I want to thank my

13

colleague, Councilman Clarke, who at some

14

juncture will join us, wherein together

15

we walked down this nine-year -- we were

16

on this nine-year journey to get to this

17

point.

18

I also must say thank you to

19

our Mayor Nutter, whose support of this

20

effort has been strong well before his

21

tenure as Mayor.

22

And, finally, I would be remiss

23

not to say thank you to the Recreation

24

and Park advocates and employees, who

25

each and every day devote their strength

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2 and energy to improving our Park and
3 Recreation facilities.

4 By way of context, we know that
5 this started summer 2000 wherein the
6 Philadelphia Daily News produced a
7 six-week series called "Acres of
8 Neglect," wherein they did a very, I
9 thought, comprehensive, analytical
10 look-see at our Parks, and my Chief of
11 Staff and I gathered in my office and
12 thought as Chair of this Committee, it
13 would behoove us to do something with
14 that information.

15 So we introduced a resolution,
16 called for hearings, and invited any and
17 everyone in who had a perspective and an
18 opinion about what we should do better
19 and differently with our parks.

20 One of the recommendations out
21 of that was to the Mayor that we needed a
22 new strategic plan. The old strategic
23 plan was 20 years and sitting on
24 somebody's shelf, and it was time for us
25 to move the needle. So the City put up

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2 \$300,000 and the William Penn Foundation
3 matched it with a \$600,000 pot of money
4 for us to now look to a new strategic
5 plan.

6 The Managing Director's Office
7 did a very exhaustive research for a
8 contractor. They came in. They were out
9 of Ohio. All they do is travel around
10 the country and the world and evaluate
11 park systems.

12 They sent back a strategic
13 plan, and then the commitment of
14 Councilman Clarke and I was that that
15 would not sit on a shelf, and one of the
16 recommendations was for us to look as a
17 city to merging the departments.

18 We all know ultimately it went
19 to the ballot, and overwhelmingly
20 citizens supported the notion bringing
21 those two departments together, and then,
22 of course, the Mayor signed it into law.

23 So we gather here today to
24 listen again, seeking to find the best
25 and brightest candidates that reflect,

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2 most importantly for us on this side of
3 the table, a diversity of the mix of this
4 city and a diversity of the users of
5 Philadelphia's Recreation and Park
6 facilities.

7 It's been a monumental
8 challenge and one that I will tell you I
9 have completely enjoyed listening to
10 the -- the breadth and depth of the ideas
11 has been awesome. It really has been.

12 I want to thank the team that
13 helped get us to this point and need to
14 acknowledge my Chief of Staff, David
15 Forde, Sharon Ortiz from the President's
16 Office and Hal Thickhandler, who helped
17 compile the enormous amount of paperwork.

18 So now, what are the ground
19 rules? We will be calling you up in
20 groups of three. We will ask you to sit
21 at the witness table. As stated in the
22 e-mail, we're asking that you honor the
23 rules and limit your brief, concise,
24 thoughtful comments to two, no more than
25 three minutes. We do have a time police,

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2 Councilman Curtis Jones, who will be
3 joining us and helping us to stay on
4 track.

5 So you're welcome to bring your
6 testimony. If you do not have your
7 testimony today, please feel free to get
8 it to us. That is helpful to us as we do
9 the review of all of the documents.

10 The good news is this: We've
11 had 195 citizens submit paperwork, 195.
12 We have thus far heard from 95. We've
13 heard from -- where's David?

14 Thank you. 120. 120. And
15 this is our last round today. So we look
16 forward to your testimony, and we thank
17 you just by your presence for showing the
18 interest that you have in better
19 improving our Parks and Recreation
20 communities here in the City.

21 With us is Councilman Frank
22 DiCicco, a member of this Committee.
23 Joining us is Councilman Frank Rizzo, a
24 member of the legislative body.

25 With that, we'll commence with

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2 hearing your testimony.

3 I would like to invite up Cathy
4 Santose, Anne Schwieger. Thank you. I
5 tried to say that phonetically. I
6 failed. Philip Scott.

7 And if I call a name and
8 they're not here, I will be circling back
9 on the back end to give every candidate
10 an opportunity to tell their story.

11 John Sheahan, Peter Simone,
12 Adonna Sims.

13 (Witnesses approached witness
14 table.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If you
16 have testimony now, we'll take it now.
17 Testimony is not required, but if you
18 have it, I would like to have it on the
19 front end, because I do take lots of
20 notes.

21 All right. Good afternoon.
22 Please state your name for the record and
23 proceed with your testimony. I'll start
24 on my extreme right.

25 MR. SCOTT: My name is Philip

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2 Scott. I'm a 22-year resident of the
3 City of Philadelphia. I grew up in the
4 western suburbs. I lived in Center City
5 for about five years until my family
6 outgrew the house we lived in, and now I
7 live in Chestnut Hill.

8 Professionally, I'm an
9 architect. My practice has specialized
10 in historic preservation for the last 25
11 years. In Philadelphia, I've worked on
12 the Reading Terminal Headhouse, the
13 exterior -- the interior of St. Martin in
14 the fields, and most visibly recently, I
15 was the architect, the day-to-day
16 architect, in charge of the restoration
17 of the Please Touch Museum at Memorial
18 Hall in Fairmount Park. That's a
19 national historic landmark. I think it's
20 widely perceived to be a great success
21 story in terms of reuse of a historic
22 resource within the building for a modern
23 use.

24 Presently, I'm working on a
25 project in Fairmount Park with the

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2 Fairmount Park Historic Trust, which is
3 quite a bit smaller and slightly more
4 commercial. That's the Beatty House,
5 which is in East Falls right off Kelly
6 Drive. Private developers are working to
7 redevelop that very small structure into
8 a cafe and bicycle rental concession.

9 As a citizen, I have been very
10 involved in the Chestnut Hill Youth
11 Sports Club as a coach, member of the
12 Board. I worked with the Philadelphia
13 Department of Recreation in their indoor
14 soccer program. One year I was actually
15 voted the Volunteer of the Year, which is
16 a great honor, and I'm still working with
17 that group training referees. So we have
18 referees that work in our community in
19 the fall as soccer refs, kids 15 through
20 17.

21 So I consider myself a Parks
22 and a Recreation person, and I think that
23 this is a great opportunity for these two
24 pieces of the City to work together to
25 create something more than what was there

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2 before. I think it's a great possibility
3 for synergy.

4 I am a conservationist, a
5 preservation at heart. However, these
6 two projects that I've worked on, the
7 Museum and the Beatty House, indicate to
8 me that the real hope for Fairmount Park
9 is in its being used, used widely, used
10 by everybody and open to everybody and
11 open for all sorts of things and all
12 kinds of activities. I think that one of
13 the things I would like to see is the
14 Park -- is more partnerships between
15 private, non-profit organizations and the
16 Park. I think that's absolutely critical
17 to the success of the Park.

18 I'm also very interested in
19 ideas about how the Recreation Department
20 provides services throughout the
21 community. I think inclusivity and
22 equitable distribution of resources has
23 to be absolutely at the top of the ladder
24 of things to take on.

25 And other than that, I'm not

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2 individuals, raising their voice on
3 behalf of their community, can make a
4 difference, and this is what we have
5 committed our lives to.

6 We had the pleasure of working
7 with the founding Boards of the Cobbs
8 Creek Community Environmental Education
9 Center, which is in West Philadelphia, as
10 well as the Laura Sims Skate House in
11 Cobbs Creek Park. One is under Fairmount
12 Park, one is under Department of
13 Recreation. All of the activities that
14 we have done have always been to provide
15 green space, as well as recreation and
16 community empowerment programs within our
17 neighborhood that also reach out across
18 the City.

19 I've had the pleasure of being
20 on the Advisory Board for the
21 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, and
22 that has been a tremendous joy working
23 with the programs that we have with
24 Philadelphia Green, which is a citywide
25 program that I don't believe is touched

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2 by any other organization around this
3 nation, and working with the Philadelphia
4 Flower Show.

5 My biggest love, I think, for
6 the Park, primarily my focus is bringing
7 people into environments and bringing
8 people into allowing them to have an
9 opportunity to get involved in their park
10 in their community. We're very involved
11 with environmental issues. We're very
12 involved -- as an environmentalist
13 myself, we're very involved with the
14 watershed program with our Environmental
15 Education Center, and we have seen, with
16 the actions of the volunteers from our
17 community and those that we have
18 partnered with -- and there are many
19 organizations that we have partnered
20 with, from the Franklin Institute to
21 Cabrini College, to so many universities
22 that will come, participating in
23 clean-ups, just so many different
24 things -- that we have seen that area
25 transition from where you could not use

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2 the Park, you did not see live --

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
4 seconds.

5 MS. SIMS: -- animals, and now
6 you see it thriving and starting to come
7 back, and I think that is my focus,
8 really empowering individuals to be a
9 part.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
11 then. Thank you very, very much.

12 Good afternoon.

13 MR. SIMONE: Good afternoon.

14 Thank you very much for your time. My
15 name is Peter Simone and I'm here to tell
16 you why I'm a candidate for the
17 Commission on Parks and Recreation and
18 why you should appoint me to that.

19 For the last 34 years, my
20 professional responsibilities have read
21 virtually the same as those advertised
22 for this position. As a landscape
23 architect, I've participated in the
24 design of over 200 park and recreational
25 facilities, 60 trails and greenways,

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2 economic development, revitalization,
3 preservation and fundraising efforts.
4 Grants for local governments authored by
5 my small firm total nearly \$12 million
6 since 1990. In 2005, I was made a Fellow
7 of the American Society of Landscape
8 Architects, one of the highest honors
9 bestowed by my professional organization,
10 and I suggest to you that my
11 qualifications for this position are
12 outstanding.

13 Councilwoman, as you mentioned,
14 Philadelphia voters overwhelmingly
15 approved the plan to combine Parks and
16 Recreation, and I think that was based on
17 the implicit and direct promise that
18 that's going to benefit both the Park and
19 the City. And, unfortunately, we're in
20 an economic recession. I don't think
21 that's an excuse for not moving forward
22 with that promise, because it's a very
23 important promise. And if anything, I
24 think the crisis makes that promise even
25 more important.

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2 the Park's continuing success.

3 In contrast, our playgrounds
4 and recreation centers must be maintained
5 without fee, but I think we need to
6 really re-imagine these places. We
7 should reject the dismal architecture
8 that's prevalent today of cinderblocks
9 and barred windows. Our recreation
10 centers should be beautiful welcoming
11 community spaces that are totally
12 integrated into the lifeblood of the
13 neighborhoods. These facilities should
14 be shared use. District Council offices,
15 State Representative mini offices and
16 even for-profit businesses could operate
17 out of these centers. These will help
18 maintain presence, activity and safety
19 all day long.

20 As a Commissioner, my job will
21 be to consider all the options for
22 revitalizing the parks and rec centers,
23 including shrinking other parts of City
24 government to free up resources.

25 In closing, I'd again like to

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2 thank you for your time, but also
3 acknowledge the many people who have
4 served as Park Commissioners for the last
5 142 years. I think they've succeeded in
6 preserving the world's greatest urban
7 park system, and for that, I think
8 they're due our gratitude.

9 Thank you, and if you have any
10 questions, I'd be happy to try to answer
11 any.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
13 you all for your testimony. Our process
14 has been there may be times when we want
15 to ask questions for clarity and just as
16 a matter of record.

17 Councilman DiCicco, anything?

18 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: No.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, we
20 thank you for your testimony. And the
21 one thing I didn't say in my opening
22 remarks is that we've had every single
23 demographic you can imagine at these
24 hearings, which is the beauty of the
25 democratic process, and by that I mean, a

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2 21-year-old entrepreneur to a 70-year-old
3 silver fox and landscape architect, and
4 that's what he called himself. So the
5 beauty of it has been an affirmation that
6 this was a good thing to do.

7 Councilman DiCicco.

8 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Actually,
9 I do have a question. Thank all of you
10 for being here.

11 Mr. Simone, these facilities
12 should be shared use, District Council
13 offices, State Representative offices and
14 even for-profit. Are there any examples
15 of where that may be going on now or is
16 this just an idea?

17 MR. SIMONE: Well, not
18 specifically, but I'm sure if we do some
19 research, we could find them. I think
20 the best example you have is, for years
21 Valley Green was an old roadhouse. It's
22 owned by the Park. It's a wonderful
23 restaurant, and there are many other
24 facilities like that.

25 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Got you.

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2 Okay. Thank you. Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
4 all.

5 Alan Singletary, Joseph Slane,
6 Doha Soliman. Please, you're welcome to
7 come to the witness table.

8 Harris Steinberg, Janet Stern,
9 Walter Stewart.

10 (Witnesses approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: James
13 Straw, Sarah Stuart.

14 (Witnesses approached witness
15 table.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
17 afternoon, gentlemen.

18 (Good afternoon.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
20 welcome to start. We'll start with the
21 gentleman to my extreme right.

22 MR. STEINBERG: Thank you,
23 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown. My
24 name is Harris Steinberg. I'm the
25 Executive Director of Penn Praxis. It's

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2 great to see Councilman DiCicco, as well
3 as Councilman Rizzo here.

4 What I have to say really has
5 been reflected in my application. I, for
6 the past seven years, have been the
7 Director of Penn Praxis, which is the
8 clinical arm of the School of Design at
9 Penn. My job there is to facilitate
10 faculty and student collaboration across
11 the five disciplines of the school, which
12 include architecture, landscape
13 architecture, city and regional planning,
14 historic preservation and fine arts.

15 I had the honor of being asked
16 to lead the Central Delaware visioning
17 process, which was implemented or
18 instigated, I should say, by Councilman
19 DiCicco, and he serves as the Patron
20 Saint of the process as we're now moving
21 it kind of through the implementation
22 phases. So for the past three years,
23 I've been intimately involved with seven
24 miles of the Central Delaware, which
25 includes a plan for 300 acres of new

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2 parkland of what is now eight acres of
3 park.

4 Inherent in that plan is a sort
5 of sustainability infrastructure
6 component, so that all new parkland
7 really becomes part of a working green
8 infrastructure, which is clearly where
9 we're headed in the Obama Administration
10 as well as the Nutter Administration.

11 As our original Park system, at
12 least the Fairmount Park system, was
13 created to protect our water supply, I
14 imagine that as we envision a park for
15 the next 50 to 100 years, what it does
16 for our competitive advantage as a city
17 and how it helps us manage storm water
18 and create kind of an atmosphere for
19 growth will be the challenge of this new
20 body, and I'd be happy to kind of help
21 with that work in some fashion.

22 My strengths, my core
23 strengths, are in civic engagement and
24 public outreach, as well as civic
25 visioning, and I think there's an

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2 opportunity now as we are combining our
3 Parks and Recreation Departments and
4 agencies to really ask the question, what
5 does a 21st century park system look
6 like, to whom is it responsible?
7 Everyone has a different sense of their
8 rec center versus their park, and being
9 part of that conversation is something
10 that I'd be happy to and it would be an
11 honor for me to participate in.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
13 very much.

14 Good afternoon, sir.

15 MR. STRAW: Good afternoon. My
16 name is Jim Straw, and I've given you a
17 package that includes my statement, as
18 well as some letters of support and my
19 resume. So I will not dwell on what I
20 have done, but what I would like to focus
21 on is what I would do as a Commissioner.

22 The Commission, first and
23 foremost, needs to be committed to
24 communications and civic engagement.
25 There are numerous constituencies. We

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2 have the general public as individuals,
3 as families, as organizations, we have
4 friends groups. There are 130
5 collectively in both systems that have
6 been merged. We have advocacy groups
7 such as the Philadelphia Parks Alliance.
8 We have neighborhood groups. We have
9 historic site stewardship of
10 organizations like Bartram's Garden. We
11 have corporate, foundation and individual
12 stakeholders and volunteers of all kinds,
13 many thousands of volunteers, public
14 agencies, elected officials. Basically
15 the Commission needs to be the eye of the
16 needle in terms of communication and
17 civic engagement for information that
18 comes to us, through us and is
19 disseminated to the Department and other
20 agencies, and information that comes from
21 us and becomes part of the community
22 engagement process. And there were many
23 vehicles for that, and we can go into
24 that, if you wish.

25 We also need to be accountable

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2 for our own actions. Too often you find
3 organizations that sort of wiggle in the
4 chairs a little bit in terms of
5 accountability, and this needs to be a
6 fully transparent and supremely
7 accountable organization, period.

8 You mentioned the creation of a
9 strategic action plan. My firm did the
10 first one 20 years ago, and, yes, it has
11 sat on the shelf, and that's too bad.
12 But here's what I'm particularly
13 interested in within the context of a
14 strategic action plan: We need to have a
15 combined asset inventory. This is assets
16 of programs, of places, of spaces, all
17 kinds of assets, including active and
18 passive recreation. We need to identify
19 quality of life issues. We need to
20 identify asset supply and asset demand.
21 There are some neighborhoods where the
22 demand is probably very high and the
23 asset base is very low. There are
24 probably other neighborhoods where there
25 are facilities that are going unused, and

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2 we need to sort through all of that,
3 because resources are scarce and we
4 cannot afford not to focus our resources
5 where we can.

6 We need to identify system
7 pressure points and fix them, and this is
8 areas where our actions or other actions
9 are holding up the realization of our
10 goals and aspirations. Those need to be
11 fixed.

12 We need to capitalize on
13 economic value and positive economic
14 impacts. In here I refer to the Trust
15 for Public Land report, which is pretty
16 specific about that.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
18 seconds.

19 MR. STRAW: Okay.

20 And I think really we need to
21 help develop new and innovative ways to
22 attract money. We need to be
23 entrepreneurial. We need to be creative.
24 And basically, I'm a preservation
25 architect and planner, and that's the hat

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2 I would wear.

3 I am not doing this to increase
4 the attractiveness of my obituary. I am
5 doing this because I am deeply dedicated
6 to this city that I've lived in since
7 1971.

8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
10 very much.

11 Good afternoon.

12 MR. SLANE: Hi. My name is
13 Joseph Slane. I'm a local entrepreneur.
14 I have a business called Avant Gardens
15 where I've concentrated on doing
16 residential gardens in the City and have
17 developed a commercial interest and have
18 worked with the City of Philadelphia
19 Fairmount Park Commission and the
20 Philadelphia Housing Authority, and I
21 have a lot of experience with actually
22 working with the Parks and Recreation
23 Department in that aspect.

24 But I'm a trained landscape
25 architect. I went to Penn State and have

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2 had several experiences with different
3 types of architectural firms, as well as
4 the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
5 where I worked for a number of years, and
6 I was involved with the renovation of the
7 Azalea Garden, and I would suggest that
8 the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society be
9 involved, particularly because I think
10 that they have the capacity now where a
11 lot of their funding, I guess you could
12 say, has dried up, and their track record
13 speaks for itself. They've worked,
14 besides currently at the Art Museum and
15 the renovation of the lands there, they
16 have also managed the Penn's Landing
17 properties very successfully, as well as
18 the landscaped areas along the I-95
19 corridor for ILMAC, the Interstate Land
20 Management Corporation, which I was also
21 involved with initially.

22 I also think that this is a
23 great opportunity to get a few ideas out.
24 I think everybody has. But, you know,
25 one of the things that I think that this

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2 is a great opportunity for is to also
3 develop more educational facilities and
4 nature centers, and I think a good one as
5 an example is the Pennypack Environmental
6 Center. I think there could be
7 environmental centers throughout the City
8 in all different parks and different
9 areas to help with education and an
10 appreciation of our parks, which I think
11 is kind of falling in some respects to
12 the wayside. I think there needs to be
13 more emphasis on getting children
14 involved.

15 I think that there should be
16 also more emphasis in bringing gardening
17 into the Park and more volunteers and
18 even at the recreation centers. I know
19 there's a lot of volunteerism at the
20 parks level, but I think there needs to
21 be more of that in the Recreation
22 Department.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
24 seconds.

25 MR. SLANE: That's all.

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2 before us and what ideas he has about how
3 we capture you. No matter the outcome,
4 we want to capture what you bring.

5 Councilman Clarke.

6 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
7 Madam Chair.

8 Madam Chair, again, let me
9 apologize. I find myself again today
10 doing multi-tasking.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
12 Multi-task.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I actually
14 have a group of people, some from the
15 Board of Revision of Taxes in my office,
16 discussing a very important issue with
17 respect to real estate tax. So I'm back
18 and forth on that. I know you want me to
19 make sure that I get a handle on that.

20 First, I'd just like to welcome
21 everybody and thank everybody for your
22 commitment that you've shown in what I
23 understand -- and we actually have a TV
24 in the room, so we can kind of monitor
25 what's going on. Again, we see some

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2 stellar candidates, and I'm sure that the
3 Chair has talked about the fact that over
4 the last three sessions, that it has
5 caused us to, in retrospect, wonder why
6 we only limited the number to 15, because
7 there are clearly some -- and I have no
8 idea how we're going to figure out how to
9 get down to 25 nominees from this body,
10 because it's just been great. It's been
11 remarkable.

12 Unfortunately, some of you will
13 not be selected, right? But it's our
14 charge as Councilmembers to try to figure
15 out a way to keep you engaged in a
16 meaningful way, and we're actually
17 tinkering with some ideas on how to
18 expand the roles of individuals who have
19 shown an interest in the Park, either
20 legislatively or through executive order,
21 but we are going to create some sort of
22 process that we can continue to keep you
23 engaged in a meaningful way.

24 For those of you that will be
25 successful, we just want to say that

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2 there had been some concerns raised early
3 on in the process that this group was
4 going to be simply an advisory group
5 that, frankly speaking, Councilmembers
6 really weren't going to pay a whole lot
7 of attention to and the Mayor wasn't
8 going to pay a lot of attention to. That
9 is clearly not going to be the case.
10 We're going to be asking you and leaning
11 on you to provide considerable support
12 and input into how we deal with our new
13 strategies as it relates to parks and rec
14 centers, because this is a significant
15 challenge, particularly given our current
16 financial situation, but I view it as an
17 opportunity. Sometimes in dire time
18 people get creative because they're
19 forced to get creative. So I look
20 forward to you all providing significant
21 support.

22 And one last thing -- because I
23 know Councilwoman is getting ready to
24 turn that bell on me, because I only get
25 to speak for three minutes also -- is

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2 that by virtue of establishing what we
3 believe is probably the most transparent
4 process as it relates to engaging people
5 in government and being a part of this
6 process is that we found that being
7 proactive is the best approach, and we're
8 going to be encouraging that this body,
9 once it's selected, take its show on the
10 road.

11 One of the concerns that I have
12 as a former member of both the Commission
13 and past President of the Fairmount Park
14 Commission Advisory Council, that we
15 really didn't get out of that, albeit
16 wonderful building, out of Memorial Hall.
17 We didn't get out of it enough. So I'd
18 like to see that this Commission actually
19 get out in neighborhoods and in parks and
20 recs and really talk to people and
21 solicit really significant ideas about
22 how we can do things a lot better.

23 So with that, I just want to
24 thank you for your commitment. Thank you
25 for your interest and your compassion,

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2 and at some point, we will figure out how
3 to come down to 25 people.

4 So, again, Madam Chair, I just
5 want to thank you for your wonderful
6 work, and Councilman DiCicco, my
7 counterpart on the southern end of the
8 City. We actually share boundaries along
9 a substantial part of our district, so we
10 have some sense of the eastern part of
11 Philadelphia. But I just want to thank
12 you for your great work and your
13 commitment.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Mission
16 continues.

17 Thank you, gentlemen.

18 (Thank you.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
20 welcome.

21 Sarah Stuart, Brian Sullivan,
22 Laurel Sweeney, Joseph Syrnick.

23 (Witnesses approached witness
24 table.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good

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2 afternoon, everyone. Welcome. And
3 please, if we could start on my immediate
4 right, state your name for the record and
5 proceed with your testimony.

6 MS. STUART: Thank you, Madam
7 Chairwoman. My name is Sarah Clark
8 Stuart and I am honored to be here today
9 to speak before you as to why I've
10 applied to serve of the Commission of
11 Parks and Recreation.

12 I'll just briefly recap my
13 qualifications and experience. It's in a
14 lot more detail in the application. And
15 then share with you my thoughts as to why
16 I would like to serve on this Commission.

17 Briefly, my career has always
18 been rooted in environmental protection.
19 I have over 20 years of experience
20 working as an advocate at the national,
21 state and local levels and in the
22 non-profit foundation community on
23 environmental policy issues. My college
24 and post-graduate educational training is
25 in botany and environmental science. And

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2 since moving to Philadelphia in 1995, I
3 have worked at the neighborhood and
4 citywide level on improving
5 Philadelphia's trails and parks as an
6 activist and organizer from the
7 perspective of as a park user.

8 I'm a bicyclist. I'm a walker.
9 I walk my children to school using the
10 trail system. My children have used the
11 recreational facilities in the City,
12 participated in the art camp and most
13 recently in the soccer program within
14 PDR.

15 I'd just like to mention, my
16 daughter's team won the championship last
17 night. I'm very proud. At Shissler Rec
18 Center.

19 Particularly, I really believe
20 in the power of bringing people together
21 who share a common vision to combine
22 their voices to have a greater impact on
23 decision and policymaking, and I have two
24 examples of my work to illustrate this.

25 In 2004, I teamed up with

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2 fellow neighbors and citizen activists to
3 form a campaign to preserve street-level
4 access into the brand new, long-awaited,
5 mile-long Schuylkill River Park Trail.
6 Councilman Clarke is very familiar with
7 this campaign and he played a very
8 important role in helping us. We brought
9 the interests together of over 2,500
10 people who signed up online through
11 petitions and e-mail letters because they
12 felt strongly that such access into the
13 Park should be preserved. And we knew
14 that the success of the Park hinged upon
15 this preserving this access. And
16 thankfully our effort, in combination
17 with those of City Council, the City's
18 Law Department, Fairmount Park,
19 Schuylkill River Development Corporation,
20 all helped set the stage for a successful
21 legal settlement, and it's a wonderful
22 story of people uniting together to voice
23 their interests in an important process.

24 Most recently, I joined forces
25 with 12 other friends groups, non-profit

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2 organizations and development
3 corporations, Bartram's Garden, cultural
4 institutions, public agencies, all of us
5 who share an interest in building various
6 segments of the Schuylkill River Park
7 Trail between Delaware and Montgomery
8 County through Philadelphia. We combined
9 our efforts to articulate a vision for
10 completing the trail and connecting it by
11 adding five more miles of segments to
12 greatly enhance its potential as a
13 connector between numerous neighborhoods
14 and suburbs. It's potential to become
15 the region's first green transportation
16 corridor for multiple communities, a
17 strong catalyst for economic development
18 and a critical access point to open space
19 and commuting paths for underserved
20 neighborhoods. And when we shared this
21 vision with the public, over 320 people
22 came out to a public forum last February,
23 a month ago actually today, and we've
24 already garnered 1,200 signatures on an
25 online petition. And City Council

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2 unanimously agreed that the trail should
3 be completed when it passed Resolution
4 090134 introduced by Councilman Curtis
5 Jones.

6 I think that the Commission can
7 help the Department of Parks and
8 Recreation use similar organizing tools
9 to bring together the people who use and
10 love the City's parks, trails and
11 recreational facilities to give them more
12 opportunities to share their views with
13 decision-makers. I would like to help
14 the Commission find creative ways to
15 foster more civic engagement around the
16 park and the recreational system.

17 My last thought is that while I
18 recognize we're living in an economic
19 crisis, it's important for the City and
20 its residents to have a long-term vision
21 of what the park and recreational system
22 should look like going forward. In order
23 for Philadelphia to be competitive as a
24 livable urban city, it needs a vibrant
25 and connected park and recreational

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2 system that serves all of its
3 neighborhoods and residents. Connecting
4 open spaces, parks and recreational
5 centers with each other through trails,
6 multi-use paths, bicycle lanes, and
7 fixing and enhancing the existing
8 infrastructure and bringing more of the
9 system within easy reach of the
10 neighborhoods, these are critical steps
11 that need to be taken to achieve that
12 goal, and I would be honored to
13 participate on the Commission that helps
14 the new Department take those steps.

15 Thank you.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

17 Good afternoon.

18 MS. SWEENEY: Good afternoon.

19 Good afternoon to everyone here and to
20 Philadelphia City Council's Committee on
21 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs.
22 My name is Laurel Sweeney and I'm here to
23 express my interest in becoming a
24 Commissioner for Philadelphia's Parks and
25 Recreation Department.

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2 Since 1997, I've served as the
3 primary liaison between my neighborhood
4 park and the Fairmount Park Commission
5 and the Philadelphia Department of
6 Recreation for our programs and, further,
7 the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
8 for greening and gardening projects.
9 Through those ties, Fisher Park's 23.3
10 acres in Northwest Philadelphia have
11 enjoyed several physical upgrades and
12 landscaping and excellent educational
13 opportunities for environmental education
14 and an art camp. Currently, I serve as
15 Co-President of the Fisher Park Community
16 Alliance, the duties for which include
17 managing our volunteers and coordinating
18 improvement projects with outside groups.
19 Fisher is in partnership with Greater
20 Philadelphia Cares, the Family Court
21 system and local churches and public and
22 private schools and universities for
23 extra volunteers at monthly clean-ups.

24 While in service to my
25 community, I have developed a thorough

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2 understanding of the import of the social
3 and economic impact of greening projects
4 as they pertain to the health and beauty
5 of natural and watershed lands of
6 Philadelphia and to land values. It is
7 also clear how effective stewardship
8 programs for all ages can promote this,
9 get the work done and feed the human
10 spirit for caring about others and about
11 the environment. Time and time again
12 I've witnessed the intense desire of
13 people to connect with one another.
14 There is a lift of spirit when people are
15 engaged in activity that benefits others
16 as well as themselves. The same process
17 promotes a feeling of safety and of
18 belonging.

19 There are many types of
20 resources that are available in
21 Philadelphia that enable citizen
22 involvement. Presently, they are not
23 linked together efficiently, and they
24 need to be. The combination of the Parks
25 with Recreation was a grand step in the

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2 right direction for economizing on
3 effort, funds and talent toward a highly
4 evolved system. The next measure needs
5 to be the formation of a more organized
6 and trustworthy relationship between the
7 citizens and their government.

8 My mission for the City is to
9 identify the need for modernization as it
10 pertains to Philadelphia's wealth of
11 volunteers, to enlist the counsel of
12 experts for the best ways to accomplish
13 this, and then to make recommendations to
14 City Council for their consideration and
15 action.

16 For the record, I am adamant
17 about the retention of parkland in
18 Philadelphia. I would not agree to
19 parlay land into any other use if it's
20 been formed or bequeathed as a park in a
21 legal document or will. Such a step
22 would be backward. And under any
23 circumstances there would be very limited
24 reasons to subtract open space for which
25 only the solution I consider reasonable

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2 would be to replace that land --

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
4 seconds.

5 MS. SWEENEY: --- square foot
6 by square foot and in close proximity.

7 A note I'd like to make is, as
8 the Parks and Recreation Departments
9 merge into one entity, having Michael
10 DiBerardinis take the helm made a huge
11 difference in the way the Commissioner
12 position was perceived by interested
13 parties. A handful of applications
14 swelled to over 200 as his appointment
15 was being announced. I had already
16 applied, so I think you've got to know
17 that I'd like to take an occasional leap
18 of faith.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
21 very much.

22 Good afternoon, sir.

23 MR. SYRNICK: Good afternoon,
24 Madam Chairwoman, members of the
25 Committee. My name is Joseph Syrnick,

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2 and I appreciate the opportunity to come
3 before you today to speak about the
4 Commission on Parks and Recreation and to
5 present my credentials for service on it.

6 I have provided you copies of
7 my testimony, and with it are three
8 letters of recommendations from people
9 whom I respect and for whose
10 recommendation I appreciate.

11 Some of you may remember me. I
12 was a City employee for almost 35 years
13 and came before this Council to testify
14 many times. For the last 18 years of
15 that career service, I was the City's
16 Chief Engineer and Surveyor. As such, I
17 was an ex-officio member of the Fairmount
18 Park Commission. It was one of my
19 favorite duties and the one that I miss
20 the most since I retired.

21 I grew up in Manayunk, the
22 oldest of four brothers. I now live up
23 the hill in Roxborough. When we were
24 growing up, the park was our play land.
25 I remember many opening days of trout

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2 season, skipping stones across the creek,
3 feeding the ducks at Valley Green and
4 finding crawfish under rocks, crawdads my
5 father always called them. I took my
6 three children there when they were
7 growing up and now I take the grandkids.

8 I played high school baseball
9 at the Dairy Field in East Park, and
10 later as an adult played softball and
11 touch football in both East and West
12 Park.

13 Growing up I spent a lot of
14 time at Hillside Recreation Center and
15 Kendrick Recreation Center. I swam up
16 the "bathy" at Kendrick and down the
17 "bathy" at a pool near Main and Cotton
18 Street in Manayunk. It's long gone, but
19 the memories remain. As an adult, I
20 played softball at Houston, Kendrick and
21 Hillside playgrounds. So I know
22 firsthand what parks and recreation mean
23 to kids growing up in Philadelphia and
24 adults, too.

25 I've worked in City government.

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2 I'm an engineer by training and a
3 professional land surveyor. I now work
4 for a non-profit that does many of the
5 same things as Fairmount Park and the
6 Recreation Department. We build trails,
7 run programs, work to protect the
8 environment, maintain facilities and do
9 all the peripheral stuff, like marketing,
10 fundraising and community outreach.
11 There is much more detailed information
12 in my application than I could ever hope
13 to present in two or three minutes and I
14 hope that you will have the chance to
15 read it.

16 I'm never comfortable promoting
17 myself, but I believe I have the
18 background, training and experience
19 necessary to be an effective Park and
20 Recreation Commissioner. Having been a
21 Fairmount Park Commissioner for 18 years,
22 I guess I have some kind of a track
23 record which could be evaluated. I
24 welcome that scrutiny. I have a pretty
25 good idea of what this position involves

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2 and I have the willingness to put in the
3 time to make my participation meaningful
4 and valuable.

5 You folks have a tough decision
6 to make here, but it's a very important
7 one. I'm confident you'll recommend the
8 right Commission. You certainly have a
9 great list of people to choose from, and
10 I look forward to it doing great work.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
13 all very, very much for your testimony,
14 and the only thing I might add is a
15 number of citizens indicated how it was
16 the appointment of Mr. DiBerardinis that
17 ignited their interest to want to submit
18 their application. So you're in a crowd
19 of many who felt inspired by his
20 appointment.

21 Councilman Clarke.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you,
23 Madam Chair.

24 I just wanted to reference the
25 fact that I think Ms. Sweeney talked

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2 about her concerns about land retention.

3 During the course of this process, there
4 were significant concerns raised by the
5 advocates about the possibility of the
6 City selling off parkland.

7 Mr. Syrnick, as a former
8 Commissioner, you can probably tell
9 people that that's not what we did during
10 the course of the old Park Commission.

11 But to put people at a comfort
12 level, City Council in its rules created,
13 I think, a two-thirds majority vote for
14 any Park disposition, and it was a
15 temporary move because we wanted to put
16 people at a comfort level as we moved
17 through the process of passing the bill.
18 But what we would ultimately like is for
19 this Commission to give us some real
20 serious guidelines and recommendations on
21 Park disposition.

22 One of the concerns that I had
23 in the former process, that there was
24 really no set guidelines in terms of what
25 you look at when you talk about disposing

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2 of land, should there be swaps one for
3 one for other land, do we talk about
4 nominal values for Park disposition,
5 should it be market rate, the impact on
6 the ultimate use of the parkland that is
7 acquired by a third party. All of those
8 things should be a part of guidelines and
9 not simply at the will of a Councilperson
10 or a Commissioner at the time or a
11 constituent group. We really need to
12 work off of some set of guidelines. So
13 that will be probably one of the most
14 significant charges we will impose upon
15 this newly formed organization.

16 Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
18 all.

19 Frank Thomas, Kevin Thomas,
20 Ronald Thomas, Andrew Thomson.

21 (Witnesses approached witness
22 table.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If there
24 is anyone here who missed the first,
25 second or third and you're here now

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2 because your schedule permits, you may
3 not be on our list, you're welcome to
4 testify, but please make sure that David
5 Forde has your name so that we do the
6 add-on in this process.

7 Good afternoon.

8 MR. FRANK THOMAS: Frank
9 Thomas.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: There you
11 go. Thank you.

12 Please, first of all, let's
13 just make sure we have all copies.

14 We'll make sure you get a mike,
15 sir, when we have a seat available.

16 Okay. Mr. Thomas, proceed with
17 your testimony.

18 MR. FRANK THOMAS: Thank you
19 and good afternoon.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
21 afternoon.

22 MR. FRANK THOMAS: Obviously
23 there are 200 well-qualified people who
24 are appearing before you, and the
25 question is why would you want to select

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2 me as opposed to any one of the others.

3 I would suggest to you that I can bring

4 to this position a breadth of experience

5 and a breadth of background that is, I

6 think, unique. I have a Master's Degree

7 in city planning. I started life doing

8 conservation planning for the Department

9 of the Interior, including Loudoun Scenic

10 River studies throughout the Northeast.

11 I then fell off the wagon, went to law

12 school. That led me shortly after law

13 school to become a Deputy City Solicitor

14 in the early '80s when I was a

15 constituent of then-Councilwoman Verna's.

16 During those years that I

17 served as a Deputy City Solicitor, I

18 handled environmental work for the City

19 and I was counsel to the Philadelphia

20 Historical Commission. I am the author

21 of the current version of the

22 Philadelphia Historic ordinance, which

23 was passed back in the early '80s. After

24 I left City service and went back to

25 private practice, I was asked to work for

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2 the City to get overturned the Supreme
3 Court's decision that had originally
4 declared the City's ordinance
5 unconstitutional. On a pro bono basis, I
6 did weigh in for a variety of
7 conservation and preservation
8 organizations, and we got that decision
9 overturned, which is not something that's
10 usually done.

11 In the past six years, I have
12 served as a Director of the Fairmount
13 Park Conservancy, which, as you know, is
14 the primary fundraising organization on a
15 non-governmental basis for the Fairmount
16 Park system, and I believe you're well
17 aware of the various projects that we've
18 been able to work on over the last six or
19 seven years which have resulted in
20 substantial Park improvements.

21 So I guess what I'm saying is
22 that both by background and experience, I
23 understand conservation. I understand
24 this particular Park. I understand
25 historic preservation, which is a major

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2 component of the resources that this Park
3 holds.

4 Where do we go from here? What
5 do I perceive is what is needed? First,
6 money. No matter how we organize
7 ourselves to run this Park system, it
8 doesn't work unless we have the funds,
9 and we need to begin to explore ways to
10 keep money that is generated in the Park
11 to be used for Park purposes.

12 I know from sitting on the
13 Conservancy that there are a lot of ideas
14 available out there for how to raise
15 money, but they don't come forward or
16 they're not advocated aggressively
17 because there's no assurance it will stay
18 in.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
20 seconds.

21 MR. FRANK THOMAS: Second,
22 land. We're talking about land in the
23 wrong way. We're talking about land in
24 terms of how do we keep the Park from
25 losing land, when the discussion should

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2 be how do we expand the land in the Park,
3 how do we make decisions, how do we
4 partner with various organizations to
5 make this Park larger over the course of
6 time. And we really haven't had that
7 discussion yet, and we need that
8 discussion.

9 Third, looking forward, the
10 City is going to face the consequences
11 that every city is going to face with
12 respect to global warming over the next
13 five, ten, 15 years. We have to prepare
14 ourselves and our Park for that as well.
15 It will make large changes in the
16 ecosystems of our Park and it will
17 require that we have large changes in the
18 manner by which we do things, like
19 forestation or reforestation of our
20 parkland.

21 Again, there's not enough time
22 to talk about those issues, but I think
23 those are three of the most important
24 going forward.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you

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2 for your testimony, Mr. Thomas.

3 Good afternoon.

4 MR. RONN THOMAS: How you
5 doing, Councilwoman Reynolds Brown,
6 Councilman Clarke, Councilman DiCicco.

7 In answer to a question you
8 asked a little earlier, I've lived in and
9 worked in North Philadelphia, the Smith
10 Playground, a private park. I played at
11 what we called then the Semont Pond,
12 which is our reservoir that has been
13 fenced off in the early '60s.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Provide
15 your name for the record, though, so that
16 we know who you are.

17 MR. RONN THOMAS: Ronn Thomas.
18 And I've worked at Shepard Recreation
19 Center in West Philadelphia.

20 I've been a 30-year member of
21 the Horticultural Society of
22 Philadelphia. I participated as a
23 volunteer with non-profit organizations
24 since I was five years old and served as
25 President of the Sunbeam Choir of Union

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2 Baptist Church in Baltimore, Maryland.

3 Then I was placed as President and

4 spokesperson and given rules to follow.

5 Since then, I've written or followed

6 various constitutions and bylaws to meet

7 agreed-upon organizational outcomes.

8 Upon my return to Philadelphia

9 after college and training in public

10 information, I have participated in every

11 aspect of life in the total community.

12 My employment resume reflects

13 the exploration of my professional

14 interests, but it's a small slice of who

15 Ronn Thomas is. I am proudest of my

16 non-profit community activities. They

17 are too numerous to discuss in their

18 entirety, but included in my submission.

19 While in college and for the

20 past 30 years, I've assisted with or

21 developed recreational activities for

22 youth and adults.

23 My family, as led by my great

24 grandmother, a product of reconstruction

25 era Virginia, believed the old adage

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2 "service to mankind is the price we pay
3 for living." Being property owners, she
4 and her husband shared crops, livestock
5 and their family farm with neighbors less
6 fortunate of all races. Because of them,
7 I have a few relatives that I related to
8 through love, not blood. Great grandma's
9 quilts and jelly cakes are still a part
10 of Middlesex County, Virginia lore.

11 My experience is full of
12 committee activities, membership
13 development and working within the
14 confines of an established budget. As a
15 member of the Board of Directors of the
16 Brewerytown/Sharswood Civic Association,
17 I've worked with our neighbors to support
18 our neighborhood recreation center
19 through funds, program development and
20 advocacy. We used organizational
21 initiatives to work with our community to
22 get the Athletic Recreation Center pool
23 open.

24 As the Chairman of the North
25 Central Philadelphia Block Captains

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2 Association, I partnered with Sports
3 Service concessionaires to raise funds at
4 Philadelphia Eagles games for our
5 neighborhood programs that included
6 school supplies. We ran two stands for
7 three years.

8 Over the past four years, I've
9 served as a middle school football coach
10 for the School District of Philadelphia.
11 We've worked with over 220 young men in
12 sixth, seventh and eighth grade.

13 In 1997, I developed a
14 successful proposal in Mayor Rendell's
15 Neighborhood Festival Contest during that
16 year's Welcome America celebration. It
17 required the combining of advisory
18 councils and staff at Mander, Martin
19 Luther King and Athletic Recreation
20 Center with the North Central Block
21 Captains Association. Our event was one
22 of the most successful volunteer
23 activities ever in the North Philadelphia
24 neighborhood.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen

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2 seconds.

3 MR. RONN THOMAS: As a member,
4 regional officer and past national
5 President of Groove Phi Groove Social
6 Fellowship, Incorporated, I've learned to
7 forge coalitions among members with
8 differing opinions, backgrounds and
9 experiences. As a national barbecue
10 judge and track and field official, I've
11 had to practice patience and learn to
12 develop openness to new and
13 non-traditional ideas.

14 In serving on this Commission,
15 I bring the experience of a community
16 service worker that has spent a lifetime
17 building coalitions. One of my major
18 interests, in addition to fiscal
19 responsibility, would be the training of
20 a vast array of employees. They are our
21 eyes and ears and the first point of
22 contact for our guests.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
25 for your testimony.

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2 Good afternoon.

3 MR. KEVIN THOMAS: Good

4 afternoon.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Your name?

6 MR. KEVIN THOMAS: My name is

7 Kevin Thomas, Kevin L. Thomas. Good

8 afternoon, Councilmembers.

9 I'm one of the individuals who
10 was born in Philadelphia, traveled
11 extensively for a little bit, 28 years in
12 the military. I had the pleasure and
13 honor of being one of the individuals who
14 used to fish along the Wissahickon Creek
15 with the family, and I'm bringing to the
16 Board a lot of things that will be
17 beneficial to our community and
18 Philadelphia.

19 In the notes of paperwork I
20 gave you is an outline of myself, my
21 organization, Karing - Living Together.
22 I'm also a certified fish instructor,
23 Fish and Boat Commission. We're adopters
24 of Fairmount Park stewardship program.
25 We take kids out in the Park. We travel.

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2 We do environmental projects. We hosted
3 1,700 kids last summer. We do quite a
4 bit.

5 I am looking for an opportunity
6 to bring the vast majority of programs
7 and organizations we had the pleasure of
8 working with to Philadelphia. As a
9 member of Bass Master Fishing
10 Organization and Fishing Society, we have
11 individuals who are willing to come and
12 work within Philadelphia and bring an
13 array of opportunities for our kids and
14 our families to enjoy the Park and the
15 environment. I had the pleasure of
16 speaking to many politicians in the past
17 and organizations and meetings for --
18 recently for the meeting we had for the
19 casinos, going to their meetings,
20 bringing ideas, trying to bring in
21 environmental programs which will save us
22 money, help take care of our parks and
23 also allow an opportunity for funds be
24 raised at no cost but bringing in costs,
25 also allowing opportunities for visitors

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2 who may come to Philadelphia to enjoy
3 themselves, tying in universities and
4 schools to work within the City, thus
5 bringing families from out of town to
6 work within the City also.

7 There is quite a few things
8 that myself and the organization which
9 I'm CEO of, Karing - Living Together, can
10 bring to the Commission to help. We've
11 been established since 1994, and as a
12 resident of Philadelphia, knowing some of
13 the problems that have occurred through
14 residents trying to contact the
15 Recreation Department and Parks
16 Department in the past trying to get
17 things done, I know firsthand how
18 frustrating it can be. Given the
19 opportunity to work with the Commission,
20 given the opportunity to bring some of
21 the resources that we have attained and
22 contacted over the years would allow me,
23 allow us to improve Philadelphia and make
24 it more enjoyable.

25 Once you're a fishing man,

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2 you're a fishing friend, and woman. So
3 it's an enjoyment process that can take
4 place. We have contacted individuals out
5 of Philadelphia on many occasions that
6 are willing to bring peers into
7 Philadelphia.

8 Some of the ideas that I have
9 that I think would benefit Philadelphia
10 working on the Schuylkill and Delaware
11 River and proposed in the information
12 provided, there is some outlines, and
13 also if you check our website, there's
14 some more details and a little history.

15 I don't want to -- okay. My
16 time is up. There's a lot more we can
17 discuss. I'm looking for an opportunity
18 to bring it to the Board.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I thank
21 you all for your testimony. The joy I've
22 gotten out of these hearings is that it's
23 been a great learning process for me, and
24 every type of sport that one can imagine
25 has been mentioned during these hearings.

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2 We can now add the sport of fishing.

3 MR. KEVIN THOMAS: Yes, ma'am.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
5 very much, gentlemen.

6 MR. KEVIN THOMAS: Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me
8 hear your name, sir.

9 MR. THOMSON: Andrew Thomson.

10 I thank you for letting me have the whole
11 table here.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm
13 actually going to have folks join you.

14 MR. THOMSON: I guess the luck
15 of the draw.

16 I thank you, Councilwoman
17 Reynolds Brown -- Councilman Clarke and
18 DiCicco I know very well -- for dealing
19 with neighborhood issues over the last
20 few years. Again, I'm Andrew Thomson. I
21 live in the Fishtown section. I've lived
22 there my whole life. I've had the
23 opportunity to grow up in recreation. My
24 father was a Police Athletic League
25 officer, a very highly decorated one, and

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2 I had a chance to basically live at a
3 playground for most of my young life, as
4 well as work for the Recreation
5 Department while I was in law school here
6 and in the summers while I was in
7 college. In that time, I was able to see
8 what I consider an unfortunate tragedy
9 over the last decade or so in the
10 growing -- I guess not growing, but the
11 ever-increasing erosion of the
12 Philadelphia youth sports and cultural
13 organization infrastructure that existed
14 when I was a kid. And I want to use my
15 time to highlight the fact that this
16 Commission and City Council at large
17 really take time to study. It wouldn't
18 take much. It would take the opportunity
19 to look at a schedule from the
20 Philadelphia Recreation Department from a
21 decade ago and two decades ago for
22 sports, for cultural activities such as
23 cheerleading and baton twirling and those
24 type of activities. Look at a schedule
25 from 20 years ago. Look at a schedule

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2 from ten years ago. Look at the schedule
3 now, and you'll see an unfortunate
4 opportunity missed by the City to provide
5 quality youth activities.

6 I had a chance to grow up in
7 PAL, and my dad was in commercials. They
8 would always end the commercial by
9 saying, It costs ten cents a day to keep
10 a kid in PAL and a dollar ten a day --
11 when this is in the '80s -- a dollar ten
12 or so to keep them in jail. Can you
13 imagine what the figure is now? The City
14 youth detention budget is larger than the
15 Recreation Department's budget. And I
16 think what I will be able to bring to the
17 Commission -- and my qualifications are
18 outlined in my packet there and in my
19 application, but this is an opportunity
20 that I think that I will be able to bring
21 to the Commission, the energy that I've
22 been able to give to things that I care
23 about over my lifetime, and in there,
24 I've listed seven immediate priorities
25 for the City's Rec Department. One is

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2 obviously this organizational
3 infrastructure, but I also recommend that
4 the City coordinate with the Police
5 Department for every rec center and
6 visits, especially in the summertime.

7 I go throughout the City. I
8 was a member of the Police Advisory
9 Commission for four years. We do a
10 number of out-of-neighborhood,
11 out-of-downtown meetings throughout the
12 City, and I go to a lot of neighbors
13 association meetings, and I know that you
14 guys go to them as well, and I think
15 other than -- there's a lot of crime in
16 the City. The number one complaint or
17 wish of everybody who goes to these
18 meetings is quality and improvement in
19 their rec centers. It is the number one
20 thing that people who care about their
21 community want to see. They want to see
22 investment made there, because, like I
23 said, for every ten cents we spend at
24 these playgrounds, it multiplies itself
25 in money we won't spend on youth

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2 detention, youth crime-fighting things.

3 These are the essential
4 investment that we need to make in our
5 city, and I would like the opportunity to
6 bring my energy and my experience within
7 the Rec Department and in my community
8 and beyond in my community to the
9 Commission, realizing I'm one of the
10 younger people probably applying for
11 this, but I think I've demonstrated a
12 life of service and a life of ideas that
13 I think would be an asset to the
14 Commission.

15 So I thank you for your time.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
17 you for your testimony, and your passion
18 is authentic and clear. Thank you very,
19 very much.

20 MR. THOMSON: Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: David
22 Thornburgh, David Tukey, Adrienne Turner.

23 (Witnesses approached witness
24 table.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

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2 Christopher van de Velde.

3 (Witness approached witness
4 table.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
6 afternoon, everyone.

7 (Good afternoon.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please.

9 MR. TUKEY: Good afternoon.
10 Sorry for my laryngitis today.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
12 quite all right.

13 MR. TUKEY: My name is David
14 Tukey. I'm from West Mount Airy in
15 Philadelphia. My application materials
16 outline my background in administrative
17 affairs, policy creation and
18 implementation, and also my neighborhood,
19 the planting of over 200 street trees in
20 West Mount Airy since the spring of 2005.

21 Let me put those things aside.
22 You can review those on paper. What I
23 want to focus on in my testimony is the
24 urban forest of Philadelphia.

25 By Commonwealth statute,

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2 cities, boroughs and townships have the
3 authority to create Shade Tree
4 Commissions to administer the planting,
5 maintenance and removal of trees in
6 public parks and along public streets.

7 That authority has been under the
8 Fairmount Park Commission. That
9 authority will now be under the new
10 Commission. But what is our vision for
11 the urban forest? What do we want it to
12 be? What benefits do we seek and what
13 are the goals for the different diverse
14 neighborhoods within Philadelphia?

15 For inspiration, I reviewed the
16 2004 strategic plan for the Park system.
17 That report mentioned trees only briefly.
18 It said we should follow the example of
19 the City of Milwaukee, but only mentioned
20 the maintenance of trees and
21 administrative issues, not to a vision
22 for the urban forest that Milwaukee has.

23 I then reviewed the report on
24 the value of the Park system authored in
25 2008. It mentioned significant values of

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2 water runoff, air quality, property
3 values, recreation, public health and
4 tourism, but didn't mention a vision for
5 the trees, how big, what kind and where.
6 So where do we go for guidance?

7 Recently, just recently, the
8 American Planning Association selected 13
9 cities as having best practices in
10 planning for urban and community
11 forestry. Let me mention two of those
12 briefly.

13 Minneapolis has a comprehensive
14 urban forestry policy to guide and
15 coordinate the affairs of all city
16 departments, public institutions,
17 developers and contractors that have an
18 impact on trees. They have a particular
19 ecological focus to plant native trees
20 and plants that help migratory birds. We
21 have a significant migratory bird
22 population in Philadelphia. There's also
23 one in Chicago, and they're making
24 efforts to preserve them.

25 They also mention the City of

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2 Baltimore. They're highlighted for
3 having the regional emphasis, not looking
4 at Baltimore alone, but in concert with
5 other municipalities nearby in the
6 preservation vision of its urban canopy
7 of trees.

8 But where does Philadelphia go?

9 Well, the nice thing is that we don't
10 have a plan, a clear vision of where we
11 want to go, but we have abundant
12 resources. We have the Pennsylvania
13 Horticulture Society, the Morris
14 Arboretum, the TreeVitalize program under
15 DCNR, Friends of the Wissahickon, the
16 non-profit University Green program in
17 West Philly. On two occasions I've heard
18 Secretary DiBerardinis speak, both before
19 the Growing Greener II bond issue was
20 passed many years ago and most recently
21 at a conference of regional arborists.
22 His vision is very clear, but we need to
23 have a citywide vision.

24 Because of the vested authority
25 in this Commission over trees, I urge

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2 this group to nominate at least three
3 persons with expertise in trees, in the
4 hopes that at least one of those persons
5 will be selected by the Mayor to really
6 formulate a strategic plan for our urban
7 forest.

8 My materials submitted, along
9 with the testimony, indicates contracts
10 for trees just in West Mount Airy alone,
11 let alone for the City, and an example of
12 policy where things we plant in our
13 neighborhoods can help support items in
14 our parks.

15 Thank you.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
17 very much.

18 Good afternoon.

19 MR. VAN DE VELD: Good
20 afternoon. Good to see you, and I want
21 to congratulate you. The process that
22 you've been going through is testimony to
23 the wisdom of the decision to change this
24 city and the Fairmount Park Commission
25 structure. And incorporating it, of

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2 course, with Parks and Recreation is an
3 amazing opportunity for the City as a
4 whole.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: State your
6 name for us, please.

7 MR. VAN DE VELDE: I'm sorry.
8 Chris van de Velde. A very long resident
9 of Mount Airy and now of Andorra, and I
10 represent the dog walkers. I've been 40
11 years of walking dogs in the upper
12 Wissahickon part of the Park system.
13 But, more importantly -- and I'm not
14 going to dwell on it. You have my
15 resume. You know something about my
16 professional background and expertise.

17 Basically, I'm a government
18 manager. I have the expertise and I have
19 been in the oversight position of both
20 parks and recreational systems in two of
21 the communities around the Philadelphia
22 area in the last ten years. So that I
23 bring, I think, to the equation the
24 business management side of it, and
25 clearly in this city for the moment, we

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2 have a very serious fiscal problem. So
3 somebody with the expertise to figure out
4 or help to figure out how we're going to
5 take limited resources and maximize what
6 we do with them is extremely important.
7 And so I think that's the primary thing
8 that I would offer, is that I have
9 watched -- we started a recreation
10 program where there was none in Yeadon
11 when I started there as Borough Manager.
12 When I got to Whitemarsh as the Township
13 Manager, we had about 150 programs in the
14 Recreation Department. We now offer
15 about 500 programs in the Recreation
16 Department.

17 Recreation is not just for the
18 young. It is for the full range of
19 people in the population. And, of
20 course, I have a tremendous experience in
21 the Park system as a firsthand user of it
22 here, but also as a manager of parks in
23 several locations.

24 So thank you very much for the
25 opportunity.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You have
3 at least a minute left. Do you want to
4 seize the moment and share with
5 colleagues some information on your
6 background, professional background.

7 MR. VAN DE VELDE: As I
8 suggested, Township Manager for
9 Whitemarsh. I have been the Borough
10 Manager in Yeadon. I did economic
11 development for a number of years. I ran
12 real estate operations for the University
13 of Pennsylvania for a number of years. I
14 actually put in a year as the interim
15 head of PGW. There were difficulties
16 between the Mayor and City Council over
17 who should lead the -- I was on the Board
18 and had an opportunity to try and help
19 that.

20 I have a variety of years of,
21 as I said, economic and urban renewal
22 development, community service, been
23 active in neighborhood organizations,
24 helped form the Friends of the Free
25 Library. So if you want some more

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2 troublemakers, I know how to go find
3 them. We don't make budget issues easy
4 for people, you know. It is a very
5 serious set of problems that you have in
6 front of as Councilmembers, and the
7 advocates and the passionate people that
8 you've been listening to for the last few
9 days just represent the diversity of this
10 city and the enthusiasm of this city and
11 the readiness of people.

12 I know many of the people on
13 the list, either by reputation or
14 firsthand working relationships with
15 them. I don't envy, as Councilman Clarke
16 suggested, the difficulty of trying to
17 find 25 good people to represent or
18 suggest to recommend to the Mayor, but I
19 have to tell you that you'll be well
20 served. You got a list. You could pick
21 almost any of them and you'd be well
22 served by the results, I think, that you
23 would get.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you

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2 very much.

3 Good afternoon.

4 MS. TURNER: Good afternoon.

5 My name is Adrienne Turner. I am a

6 healthcare worker and a community

7 activist in the Tacony section of

8 Philadelphia.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: In what
10 section?

11 MS. TURNER: Tacony in
12 Northeast Philadelphia.

13 First I'd like to thank you for
14 having this open session for all of us to
15 come and to offer our expertise.

16 I would like to serve on the
17 Commission on Parks and Recreation for a
18 number of reasons. The most important
19 one for me is to give a chance to serve
20 my city, to help sustain our green space
21 and to bring attention to the communities
22 we serve.

23 I have spent the most part of
24 my life in Northeast Philadelphia in
25 Tacony. Three years I lived in

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2 Jenkintown, Pennsylvania. I enjoyed the
3 use of Russo Park, which as growing up we
4 called the Tacony Park at Cottman and
5 Torresdale Avenue, Keystone Park,
6 Pennypack and the Burholme Park where we
7 had our family reunions. The experiences
8 have been great memories for me and my
9 family, spending Saturdays learning to
10 ride horses in Pennypack, playing tennis
11 in Russo Park, family reunions in
12 Burholme, playing basketball with my son
13 in Keystone Park. Growing up around
14 these parks has helped me to give back to
15 my community, be it taking walks, helping
16 the elderly, helping the disabled. Most
17 of them are mentally challenged from the
18 PATH organization use our trails in our
19 parks, and so as a worker for them, I was
20 able to go bring them to the Carousel
21 House in Fairmount Park to different
22 events and also to have them on the
23 trails, walk on the trails and enjoy the
24 trails.
25 These lifelong memories for me

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2 and my family have helped us with great
3 experiences to remain in the City for
4 over -- I'm the fourth generation of my
5 family to live in Tacony.

6 Use of the parks and recreation
7 can help our youth find more positive
8 things to do with their free time. As a
9 single parent, my son played for the
10 Frankford Boys Club in Frankford and also
11 he played sports at Vogt Recreation Park,
12 and the coaches and all the facilities
13 there that we enjoyed have deteriorated.
14 A lot of us have come out as parents that
15 use the Park and have come out and tried
16 to clean up the parks on our Saturdays
17 and to encourage the coaches and the
18 teams.

19 I would feel honored to serve
20 the citizens of this city. As a
21 community activist, I really -- I worked
22 with my Councilwoman. I worked with the
23 quality of life in Tacony with the Tacony
24 Civic Association and with the Disston
25 Rec Center, which just finished some

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2 renovations, and our church, Star of Hope
3 Baptist Church in Tacony, has been able
4 to mentor a basketball league there.

5 In 1920's my grandfather,
6 Hester Scott, came to Tacony to work for
7 Mr. Disston at the Disston Saw Mill. He
8 was proud and he was committed to his
9 community, his family and his church. He
10 instilled in his grandchildren the love
11 of nature by working in the vast gardens.
12 We started a lot of gardens on the block
13 of the 7100 block of State Road. A lot
14 of us have put little gardens out in
15 front of our house even though we are
16 under construction now with PennDOT.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
18 seconds.

19 MS. TURNER: And I would like
20 to carry on that dream and legacy of my
21 family to be able to serve with the Parks
22 Commission and Recreation.

23 Thank you for your time.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
25 for your testimony. Would you be willing

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2 to share with us copies of your
3 testimony?

4 MS. TURNER: Yes.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
6 then. We'll see that that happens.

7 We thank you all for your
8 testimony.

9 I would like to acknowledge the
10 presence of Committee member Councilwoman
11 Marie Quinones-Sanchez.

12 Robert Vance, Jr., Aharon
13 Varady -- forgive me -- Maria Walker,
14 David Walsh, Heidi Warren.

15 (Witnesses approached witness
16 table.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
18 join us on this side of the rail, and as
19 soon as a seat becomes available, we'd be
20 happy to hear from you.

21 I want to start with the
22 gentleman on my right. Good afternoon.

23 MR. VANCE: Good afternoon. My
24 name is Robert Vance. I'd like to say
25 good afternoon to Councilwoman Reynolds

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2 Brown, Councilwoman Quinones-Sanchez and
3 Councilman DiCicco.

4 Most of my qualifications and
5 my ideas for the Commission are contained
6 in my application, but I would like to
7 highlight some aspects of them.

8 I am a resident of the Mount
9 Airy section of the City, and to give
10 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown another
11 sports nugget here, I'm an avid runner
12 and I run in the Wissahickon Valley and
13 other parks, Schuylkill River Park,
14 constantly.

15 I have served as the Chairman
16 of the City Planning Commission from 1992
17 through 1998. I am an attorney in
18 private practice. I also served as Ward
19 Leader in the 22nd Ward in Mount Airy,
20 and I've served on the Board of numerous
21 civic and charitable organizations.

22 Currently, I'm a member of the
23 Friends of the Wissahickon, probably most
24 relevant to this proceeding, and I've
25 been a member of the Friends of the

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2 Wissahickon Board since 1997 and served
3 in various committees there.

4 I think my background as a
5 Board member, as a parent, as a park user
6 would be invaluable to the Commission.
7 As a park user, I like to make sure that
8 the Park is available for use by anyone
9 who wants to use it and it's in the most
10 pristine condition possible for whatever
11 particular use you might have in mind.

12 As a parent, not just the Park,
13 but also our recreational facilities, I
14 want to ensure that they are available
15 for our children. My kids played soccer
16 and baseball and I've been -- I've
17 coached various teams.

18 And as a former government
19 employee, so to speak, as a member of the
20 Planning Commission, as Chairman of the
21 Planning Commission, I know firsthand the
22 difficulties in trying to maintain our
23 facilities, our Park and Recreation
24 facilities, specifically from the capital
25 standpoint, the deterioration of our

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2 recreation centers and the struggles that
3 we engaged in during my tenure to make
4 sure that there were sufficient funds to
5 keep the level of those facilities to an
6 acceptable level.

7 I also have served as a member
8 of the Pleasant Playground Advisory
9 Committee, so I'm familiar with the
10 struggles of the recreational advisory
11 committees to try to make sure that not
12 only they have the resources to support
13 the programs that they want to see in
14 their particular playground or park, but
15 also to make sure that the facilities are
16 amenable to those particular activities.

17 So from the standpoint of this
18 Commission, I think my experience would
19 be invaluable, and I believe that in this
20 current economic situation, we really
21 need to focus on ways to enhance revenue
22 that can be directed towards the Park.
23 It's an often overused phrase that the
24 Park is the jewel of the City, but I
25 think that it needs to be marketed both

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2 inside Philadelphia to all the residents
3 and also outside.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
5 seconds.

6 MR. VANCE: Yes.

7 We can do this in a way that's
8 both reasonable and responsible, just as
9 we can make sure that the facilities that
10 we do have currently in place are
11 utilized to their best and highest use.

12 So I would welcome the
13 opportunity to serve on the Commission
14 and commend my credentials to you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
16 for your testimony.

17 MR. VANCE: Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
19 afternoon.

20 MS. WALKER: Hi. Good
21 afternoon, everyone. Thank you so much
22 for this opportunity. My name is Maria
23 Walker and I'm a lifelong Philadelphian
24 from South Philadelphia, graduate of
25 Girls High and Temple University, and I

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2 have more than 20 years professional,
3 civic and community experience.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Excuse me.
5 Just hold your testimony for a moment.

6 (Short recess for medical
7 emergency.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We do want
9 to thank all of you for your patience.
10 It's clear that we had a medical
11 emergency, but our well-trained EMTs were
12 able to come of aid, and he did leave
13 here alert and awake. So we're hopeful
14 he will indeed be okay. And he was so
15 conscientious, he made sure that we got
16 copies of his testimony. So that's
17 somebody who truly cares about the parks.

18 All right, then. So please
19 state your name for the record and we'll
20 proceed.

21 MS. WALKER: Sure. Thank you,
22 Councilwoman. I just want to say, I know
23 Skip and I know a couple of us in here
24 know him, and we wish him all well. He
25 is a wonderful, hard-working guy, so I

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2 hope everything is okay.

3 My name is Maria Walker and I'm
4 a lifelong Philadelphian from South
5 Philadelphia, graduate of Girls High and
6 Temple University. I have more than 20
7 years professional, civic and community
8 experience.

9 Currently, I'm Executive
10 Director of After School Activities
11 Partnerships, a non-profit organization
12 whose mission is to keep kids safe and
13 active after school. In this capacity, I
14 oversee several citywide youth
15 initiatives, including the Philadelphia
16 Youth Chess Challenge, Philly Plays
17 Scrabble, the Philadelphia Scholastic
18 Debate League, Philly Dance and Yoga
19 Youth, which Councilwoman visited one of
20 our yoga clubs and kicked her shoes off
21 and started doing poses with the kids.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It's all
23 good.

24 MS. WALKER: It was a wonderful
25 experience for everybody. We serve about

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2 6,000 kids annually.

3 Through ASAP, I work very
4 closely with the Department of
5 Recreation. This year alone ASAP staff
6 has trained 55 Department of Rec
7 employees and provided materials to start
8 chess clubs in Center City wide.

9 My professional experience also
10 includes working as Director of
11 Congressman Tom Foglietta's South
12 Philadelphia district office, where I
13 worked with incoming Parks and Rec
14 Commissioner Mike DiBerardinis. While
15 with the Congressman's office, I was part
16 of the team that had the difficult task
17 of handling the closure of the
18 Philadelphia Naval Shipyard.

19 My past experience also
20 includes working as a journalist. I've
21 also done welfare-to-work training and
22 job placement. All of these positions
23 required regular interaction with the
24 public, including organizing, hosting and
25 coordinating community meetings.

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2 My community and volunteer work
3 includes past President and founding
4 member of Friends of Dickinson Square, a
5 small park in South Philadelphia, which
6 in the '80s and '90s was drug-ridden.
7 We've since turned the Park around.
8 Councilman DiCicco was a wonderful friend
9 of the Park, and we thank him so much for
10 all of his efforts. I started a
11 parent-toddler play group there. I also
12 was instrumental in getting a police mini
13 station established there.

14 So I'm also a block captain for
15 my block, 200 block of Morris Street.

16 My strengths include working
17 with and creating partnerships between
18 community, corporate, non-profit and
19 government agencies. However, the best
20 experience I think I have to contribute
21 comes from being the mother of three
22 adolescent boys, which I think also
23 nominates me for Sainthood. Adolescent
24 boys, don't forget I said.

25 Anyway, thank you so much for

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2 all of your time and efforts in making
3 this process so open and accessible to
4 the public.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
6 for your testimony.

7 MS. WALKER: Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
9 afternoon.

10 MR. WALSH: Good afternoon,
11 members of Council. My name is David
12 Walsh, and thank you for the opportunity
13 to present my credentials to serve on the
14 Commission.

15 Serving demands experience,
16 commitment and creativity. I bring all
17 of those and a wide range of expertise in
18 strategic and business planning,
19 marketing and financial management. I
20 offer the City a unique blend of
21 experience, perspective and strategic
22 thinking. Through a 25-year career in
23 the non-profit, corporate and
24 entrepreneurial worlds, I am well versed
25 in business management, finance and

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2 organizational dynamics and can quickly
3 assess opportunities and create clear and
4 concise roadmaps for future success.

5 As a consultant over the last
6 seven years, I have worked with over 60
7 different non-profit organizations, both
8 locally and nationally, including parks,
9 museums, zoos, conservation groups and
10 many City and County government entities,
11 including Millennium Park, Theodore
12 Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and
13 Valley Forge National Park. I've also
14 done work with some existing Park
15 organizations, including the Fairmount
16 Park Conservancy and Glen Foerd Mansion.

17 My work with the youth and
18 recreation organizations includes the
19 Boys and Girls Club of Philadelphia and
20 the Children's Crisis Treatment Center.

21 Each of these projects really
22 reinforce my strong belief that a vibrant
23 Park system, quality youth programs and
24 easy access to Recreation facilities
25 raise the quality of life for all and are

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2 essential to the economic health of the
3 region.

4 Having consulted with so many
5 different types of organizations, I can
6 leverage the best practices from each,
7 taking what worked, what didn't, what can
8 be improved and bring them to the City.

9 This cross-pollination of ideas
10 will energize the Commission and help
11 provide creative solutions to the
12 challenges the City faces as it looks to
13 establish the Parks and Recreation system
14 as a real jewel of the region.

15 I have developed successful
16 public-private partnerships, funding
17 models and partnered with design teams to
18 link financial and business goals and
19 create new fundraising campaigns,
20 knowledge which will prove especially
21 beneficial as the City looks to new
22 resources to help provide funding to
23 support its goals.

24 In my business, I have a
25 saying: "No margin, no mission," and

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2 money is going to be a very important
3 part of making the Commission and the
4 Park and Recreation system work.

5 My experience is only one part
6 of what I bring to the Commission. What
7 really sets me apart from the many other
8 talented applicants is really a unique
9 outsider's perspective. I have not been
10 involved in local politics. I come with
11 no preordained agenda and no links to
12 special interests. I approach my role
13 just like I approach all my clients,
14 offering unbiased and objective
15 recommendations.

16 Residing in Delaware County, I
17 understand the importance of reaching
18 beyond the City's borders to build a
19 broader coalition of support. I will use
20 my experience and background to put
21 together partnerships and promote the
22 importance of the Parks and Recreation
23 system, not just in the City but
24 throughout the region.

25 Finally, as a runner, hiker and

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2 parent, I am a regular user of the Park
3 and believe it's a really underutilized
4 resource. My fervent desire for the
5 Parks and Recreation system is to grow
6 and thrive. I believe the best way to do
7 that is get involved and serve as a
8 member of the Commission.

9 We have a treasure here in our
10 own backyard and I'd like to make
11 everyone, not just in Philadelphia but
12 the entire region, recognize its value.

13 Thank you for the opportunity.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
15 very much. And just let me say by way of
16 snapshot, when I say that the diversity
17 has been rich, this panel reflects that.
18 We have suburban, urban and all sections
19 of the City reflected. So thank you for
20 your testimony.

21 (Thank you.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Heidi
23 Warren, John Weatherbe, Eileen Wilder.

24 (Witnesses approached witness
25 table.)

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good

3 afternoon, everyone.

4 (Good afternoon.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We'll

6 start on my extreme right.

7 MS. WARREN: Good afternoon,

8 members of City Council. My name is

9 Heidi Warren. I live in South

10 Philadelphia. Thank you for this

11 opportunity to speak in front of you and

12 for the open process that you've created.

13 These are exciting and

14 challenging times for Philadelphia. The

15 current economic challenges force us to

16 be innovative with our resources and to

17 seek new ways to serve the common good.

18 Given this reality, the merging of the

19 Fairmount Park Commission with the

20 Department of Recreation is both smart

21 and timely. This unified system will

22 eliminate overlaps and inefficiencies

23 and, more importantly, I believe that it

24 will be better equipped to connect all

25 Philadelphians to the City's rich array

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2 of environmental, educational and
3 recreational resources.

4 Creating this unified Parks and
5 Recreation system is going to be
6 challenging. In particular, integrating
7 the two organizations' goals and internal
8 cultures must be handled with care and
9 transparency and guided by strong
10 leadership. The Commission is going to
11 play a vital role in this through
12 effective policy-setting and in
13 supporting Commissioner DiBerardinis and
14 his staff in this process. I believe I
15 can be an asset to the Commission for the
16 work ahead.

17 I've worked in the non-profit
18 sector in Philadelphia for nearly 18
19 years. During this time, I've acquired a
20 broad set of skills and experience that I
21 feel are well suited to the needs of the
22 Commission on Parks and Recreation. For
23 nearly ten years, I held a leadership
24 position at the Village of Arts and
25 Humanities. This is a community-based

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2 organization in North Philadelphia. Our
3 work spanned arts, education, greening
4 projects, health initiatives and much
5 more, all of this with a deep commitment
6 to engaging local residents in all
7 aspects of the work.

8 We collaborated closely with
9 the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society
10 through Philadelphia Green, and just as
11 one detail, we were able to convert over
12 200 vacant lots into new green spaces in
13 our neighborhoods.

14 I'm currently the Executive
15 Director of the Starfinder Foundation.
16 This is a non-profit organization devoted
17 to promoting children's healthy
18 development through soccer programs and
19 character education curriculum.
20 Starfinder partners with the School
21 District and with the Department of
22 Recreation to deliver after-school and
23 summer programs to hundreds of children
24 throughout Philadelphia, particularly in
25 the most underserved neighborhoods. I

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2 anticipate that these partnerships will
3 continue to grow.

4 Through my work with these and
5 with other organizations, I've gained
6 significant experience in bringing vital
7 services to neighborhood residents, in
8 managing organizational finances and
9 operations, developing strategic plans
10 and partnerships, and in securing
11 resources and investment from a broad
12 range of public and private resources.
13 Perhaps most importantly, I've seen how
14 important green spaces and recreational
15 resources are to the health and success
16 of communities, and I know I'm not alone
17 in this view.

18 The message from the Mayor's
19 recent budget forums was loud and clear:
20 Don't cut funding to parks and
21 recreation. They know that
22 well-supported parks and recreation
23 systems strengthen their communities,
24 enhance public safety and support the
25 healthy development of their children. I

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2 believe that the Department of Parks and
3 Recreation, with support from the
4 Commission, can tap this enthusiasm to
5 foster new strategic partnerships and
6 access new sources of public and private
7 funding.

8 I've spent my career working to
9 improve the lives of youth, build
10 communities and strengthen Philadelphia
11 as a place to live, grow and thrive. As
12 a member of the Commission, I'll bring
13 this passion to strengthening and
14 promoting a unified Parks and Recreation
15 system that enriches the lives of all
16 Philadelphians.

17 Thank you very much.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
19 for your testimony.

20 Good afternoon.

21 MR. WEATHERBE: Good afternoon.

22 Hi. First, thank you for the opportunity
23 to testify and provide supporting
24 recommendations for the Parks and
25 Recreation Commission. My name is John

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2 Weatherbe.

3 Currently, I have the -- I
4 guess the -- I'm currently working for
5 Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller's office
6 as a staff member. My duties in her
7 office, besides constituent service, is
8 research, as well as public -- assisting
9 with public relations and media. Prior
10 to that, I was brought along to the
11 Crisis Management Team during the
12 aftermath of Councilman Richard Mariano's
13 indictment, along with Jay McCullough and
14 Anthony Ingargiola, to handle public
15 relations. And prior to that, I was a
16 volunteer intern at the Southwest
17 Community Development Center, where I
18 served as an assistant to the economics
19 coordinators. I would assist them on
20 various projects.

21 I'm MBA -- I'm actually
22 attending Villanova for my MBA. I think
23 I bring more of an analytical perspective
24 to this Commission. In my initial
25 application, I briefly spoke of six areas

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2 the Commission on Parks and Recreation
3 should focus to support, promote and
4 invest in the City's Park and Recreation
5 system. During these economic times, by
6 all means, we want to avoid potential
7 pitfalls of our past that can
8 traditionally affect our future.

9 Therefore, what I presented coincides
10 with the overall mission of this
11 Committee, because they helped to
12 streamline the services of the former
13 Park and Recreation Commission, while
14 maximizing efficiencies and maintenance
15 planning and other functions. My
16 suggestions were to inspire community
17 pride and ownership, invest in
18 environmentally sensitive programs,
19 deliver innovative and responsive
20 programs, maintain public safety and
21 quality park maintenance, provide
22 high-quality service and focus on
23 employee development.

24 Briefly, I would just like to
25 pinpoint a few of those.

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2 In terms of inspiring community
3 pride and ownership, I feel that the
4 Commission should focus to encourage the
5 volunteerism of children, youth and
6 adults, promote public awareness of
7 programs and activities, increase and
8 diversify community involvement, and
9 provide welcoming facilities and faces
10 for the community.

11 Secondly I bulleted investing
12 in environmentally sensitive programs.
13 We would develop and/or increase
14 management and maintenance procedures,
15 protect public lands and utilize
16 practices for preservation.

17 My third bullet was to deliver
18 innovative responses and programs,
19 whereas we would develop a needs
20 assessment based on community
21 demographics, create programs that
22 benefit the needs of the community, and
23 improve relationships with the community
24 organizations and the church.

25 And that's just a few. Most of

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2 it is already in my packet that I
3 presented with you.

4 And my final thought, although
5 some of the ideas presented may be
6 difficult to execute, the ultimate
7 solution can only be determined due to
8 collaborative efforts and opinions of
9 those who serve on this Board. As a
10 member of this Commission, to ensure
11 these goals are achieved, I will commit
12 myself to collaborative teamwork that
13 promotes open-minded, out-of-the-box
14 thinking, choosing from generated
15 alternatives that only creates efficiency
16 methods and financial solutions.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
19 very much for your testimony.

20 Please.

21 MS. WILDER: Good afternoon.

22 My name is Ilene Wilder and I appreciate
23 this opportunity to speak before you
24 today.

25 I am very passionate about the

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2 environment. I personally live my life
3 as sustainably as I can to be a good role
4 model. I've taken every opportunity,
5 both personally and professionally, to
6 promote sustainability. As a
7 professional marketing and communication
8 executive, I've had the opportunity to
9 help educate and promote sustainable
10 living practices, as well as work through
11 our government system to help educate our
12 legislators to enact sustainable
13 policies. As an environmental lobbyist
14 for a large consulting engineering firm
15 whose focus was the design of power
16 plants, I had the unique privilege of
17 testifying before congressional
18 committees urging them to support clean
19 air legislation.

20 Today, I have that same unique
21 privilege in Philadelphia to work at the
22 University of Pennsylvania, a leader in
23 sustainable practices, and to be actively
24 involved in the University's
25 sustainability program. I serve on the

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2 Communication Team for the Environmental
3 Sustainability Advisory Council of the
4 University. As the Director of Marketing
5 and Business Development for Business
6 Services at Penn, I feel I'm really part
7 of a system that can make a difference in
8 Philadelphia. In addition, I have over
9 20 years of experience in fundraising for
10 non-profits and experience working with
11 government entities on the local, state
12 and federal level. I can work very
13 effectively with a diverse group of
14 people and can lead and manage programs
15 successfully.

16 But, most importantly, I have
17 become very active in my neighborhood.
18 Last year I was elected Vice-President of
19 the Columbus Square Advisory Council.
20 Columbus Square Park is located in South
21 Philadelphia between 12th and 13th and
22 Reed and Wharton Streets. I live on 13th
23 Street, right across from the park, which
24 is one of the reasons I bought the house.

25 Using my marketing and

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2 communication expertise, I've established
3 a website for our Park Council with a
4 database. I send out e-mail blasts
5 regularly to our neighbors informing them
6 of meetings, park clean-ups, sending out
7 calls to actions for tree plantings and
8 informing them of opportunities to get
9 involved. I've had a wonderful response,
10 and today our community involvement is
11 stronger than ever.

12 I've learned a lot in the past
13 year working on the Advisory Council of
14 our park. The people in my neighborhood
15 are active and willing to work in making
16 our park a green space and a place of
17 community. The residents of our
18 neighborhood put the time and effort into
19 the maintenance and upkeep of the park
20 and, in some cases, their own funds. Yet
21 they seem to have no say in what
22 activities actually go on in the park. I
23 think the newly formed Commission should
24 create a strategic plan to help guide the
25 Department so both the actual grounds are

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2 maintained regularly and the programming
3 of the centers meet the needs of the
4 community in which they are located.

5 I feel I have both the
6 professional experience as well as the
7 personal passion to serve on this
8 Commission. I would like to see the
9 Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
10 Department become the stewards of the
11 City's greening.

12 With the current state of the
13 economy and the many challenges facing
14 all of us today, I truly believe people
15 want to be involved, and I feel I have
16 both the experience and communication
17 background to bring that call to action
18 forward and help forge a great
19 partnership between the citizens and the
20 City's newly formed Department of Parks
21 and Recreation.

22 As a member of the Commission,
23 I could help design programs to educate
24 and motivate residents to get involved.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen

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2 seconds.

3 MS. WILDER: The Commission
4 should be an agent in forming
5 partnerships with local community groups
6 and park councils. There's a great deal
7 of frustration around getting anything
8 done and, as such, people who were once
9 dedicated and energetic have lapsed into
10 apathy out of frustration. This is the
11 time to rekindle the fire in these
12 people. The City needs community
13 involvement if we are to reach Mayor
14 Nutter's goal of being the greenest city
15 in the country.

16 I am involved in my community.
17 I would really like to be a voice on this
18 Commission and to help make the decisions
19 necessary to keep our parks viable and
20 our city sustainable for future
21 generations.

22 Thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I thank
24 you all for your testimony. I do have
25 one question.

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2 In the first paragraph of your
3 testimony, you mention how -- and I
4 quote -- "to help educate and promote
5 sustainable living practices." Just
6 provide an example, if you will, of what
7 you've done there.

8 MS. WILDER: I did some
9 community -- when I was lobbying, we did
10 a lot of community outreach, because we
11 were lobbying, we were doing some -- we
12 were building a new power plant, so we
13 were talking to people about conservation
14 of energy; for example, how to keep --
15 not to use their lights, how to keep
16 their lights off during different times
17 like this and we were talking about the
18 use of energy, energy conservation in
19 their own living. A lot of people leave
20 their lights on, they leave their
21 commuters on. They don't think about
22 that it's drawing energy. When they
23 leave it plugged in, it's still running.
24 So that's the kind of education programs
25 we're doing.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right,
3 then. I thank you all.

4 Kenneth Wong, L. Trena Woodson,
5 Gabriel Y-I-M-E-S-G-H-E-N, Anita
6 Zalewski, Joanne Zarro.

7 (Witnesses approached witness
8 table.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
10 afternoon. Please state your name for
11 the record and proceed with your
12 testimony.

13 MS. WOODSON: Good afternoon,
14 Madam Chair and members of City Council.
15 My name is L. Trena Woodson. I come
16 before you with joy in being able to
17 assist in not only merging the Recreation
18 center and the Park, also to sort of save
19 the children and have the children to be
20 involved in a jewel that we have in the
21 City.

22 Listening to the enthusiasm and
23 qualities of all the people who are here,
24 it's no doubt that our city is taken
25 seriously. Individually and collectively

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2 the opportunity presents itself to
3 strengthen the ties between our Park and
4 Recreation system. This will be
5 beneficial to our prized possessions, the
6 children of Philadelphia.

7 Philadelphia is rich in natural
8 resources, having Fairmount Park running
9 through our city. Using this as a
10 vehicle, we can enhance the lives of our
11 residents and also attract guests to our
12 city.

13 This project can save our
14 children and show the world how the
15 natural resources here, partnered with
16 the Department of Recreation, will add to
17 the lives and future of our children.

18 And I'd like to say to Madam
19 Chairman that I bring you another sport:
20 Swimming. My children were involved with
21 the PDR program back when Jim Ellis was
22 the coach. And he's no longer there, but
23 he had a successful program which
24 encouraged families to, I guess, support
25 each other, and a lot of children

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2 received scholarships through swimming.

3 At age 18 -- I mean, 16 they were able to

4 participate and be employed by the City

5 as lifeguards, and on to college,

6 swimming for their school, maybe not

7 necessarily in a scholarship area, but to

8 add to the school. And I have two sons

9 that are now -- I won't tell the age.

10 They both went to University of

11 Pittsburgh and they swam during the

12 school years, and they used it as a life

13 skill. And I participated in running the

14 seven miles in the Park. When I served

15 as Vice-President of PDR, we were

16 instrumental in, I guess, bugging the

17 Commissioners at the Park to, I guess,

18 upgrade the facilities for the Kelly

19 Pool, and I was one of the first

20 officials, I guess, from 20 years back to

21 officiate a swim meet there. So I think

22 when people have an interest, that they

23 can really bring out lots of

24 opportunities in the Park.

25 I think that we can witness the

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2 impact of the programs that these -- the
3 programs could have on our children.

4 And also a little background on
5 myself. I'm 19 years serving as
6 President and founder of my own company.
7 We do promotional marketing. I've done
8 golf tournaments and swim meets and also
9 foot races. So these are some of the
10 things we could bring to the Park, and
11 reach out to some of the neighbors to see
12 exactly how they can participate using
13 the facilities in the Park.

14 Thank you for the opportunity.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
16 welcome. Thank you for your testimony.

17 Good afternoon.

18 MR. YIMESGHEN: Good afternoon.

19 My name is Gabriel Yimesghen. I thank
20 you very much for inviting me today.

21 I'm an industrial engineer and
22 licensed engineer in Pennsylvania. I'm a
23 professor right now at Temple University.
24 I teach subjects like project management,
25 project management and statistics. So

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2 I'm here today to give you some of my
3 capabilities. I'm mostly interested in
4 helping the Commission on the technical
5 side. You see, my resume does not have
6 any other -- I did not include any social
7 things that I have done. But I have been
8 involved in many social affairs in my
9 country. I'm from Eritrea, Ethiopia. In
10 fact, here I have been instrumental in
11 developing a center for our country, for
12 our citizens from my country, from
13 Eritrea, and have been involved very
14 heavily. When I was also in college at
15 the University of Michigan, I was playing
16 soccer for the University and also I was
17 assistant coach for the team.

18 So I'm here to help you in the
19 areas of project management, data
20 analysis, systems analysis of that sort.
21 And, of course, I love parks. I have
22 been in many different parts of the
23 world, in Europe and Africa. I've seen a
24 lot of them. And I would like to be an
25 instrumental help to the City to make

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2 better parks for everybody.

3 So we will try to make sure
4 that people can go to park. Parks are
5 very, very, very important parts of
6 entertainment and also very healthy. So
7 that's the kind of thing I'm hoping to
8 achieve here.

9 As a personality, I'm very
10 focused. I'm also goal-oriented. So
11 like in a projects management, you can
12 start something and you have to finish
13 it. I'm also a finisher. So I will be
14 helpful in that area.

15 I have done a lot of social
16 stuff, but my main thing is to be part of
17 the service something. If there's a
18 service that we have to do, I can help on
19 that. If there's a project that has to
20 be done, I could lead on that. So for
21 that purpose, I think I will be very
22 helpful to you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
24 you for your testimony.

25 Good afternoon.

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2 MS. ZALEWSKI: Good afternoon,
3 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown,
4 Councilman Clarke and Councilwoman
5 Quinones-Sanchez. My name is Anita
6 Zalewski. I hail from Mount Airy in
7 Philadelphia and I run a business in
8 North Philadelphia.

9 I was approached for this
10 Commission by Jack Galloway. He is a
11 legend on the river and a Chairman of the
12 Dad Vail Regatta. He's a former Chairman
13 and President of the organizing committee
14 for the World Championship Dragon Boat
15 Races that were held here in
16 Philadelphia. And I must say, I was very
17 flattered and intrigued when he asked me.

18 Upon further reflection, it
19 became clear that I'm in a position to
20 make a real positive difference in
21 Philadelphia's Parks and Recreation
22 system. My experience with the public
23 and private sector has helped me to
24 develop skills that would fit with the
25 social mission of the Commission on Parks

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2 and Recreation. I have business
3 management, marketing and public relation
4 skills. I operate a business, and I meet
5 a payroll.

6 I can offer the Commission a
7 solid education, professional training
8 and volunteer experience in organization
9 and strategy. Also, I have real-life
10 experience operating in and improving
11 operations in a very fragile and finite
12 budget environment.

13 Community leadership and
14 athletic programming are critical skills
15 to include on the Commission, since it is
16 imperative to understand how to drive
17 resident participation. I have over a
18 decade of community activism and cultural
19 and athletic programming. I've run
20 actually a few races that I've organized
21 and put those on, as well as cultural
22 programming.

23 In difficult economic times,
24 you have to have creative solutions. It
25 must be understood that the parks and

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2 recreation are a public opportunity. It
3 is imperative that the City's Park and
4 Recreation system maintain services and
5 access to the citizens of Philadelphia
6 even during this stage of the economic
7 cycle. I believe that a level of service
8 and access must be maintained for social
9 welfare.

10 The capabilities I bring to the
11 Commission include the type of business
12 acumen that will be needed for the Parks
13 and Recreation system to flourish even in
14 lean economic times. I have an advanced
15 degree in public health. It's one of
16 those practices which generally operate
17 in restricted budget environments.

18 Solutions on promoting public
19 health are often punctuated with creative
20 fundraising, lean operating budgets and
21 maximization of resources to deliver the
22 highest public investment.

23 My mission is to maximize the
24 use of the Park for all people, while at
25 the same time preserving it for future

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2 generations.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
4 seconds.

5 MS. ZALEWSKI: I also have
6 familiarity with the City's political
7 structure so that I can work with other
8 community leaders to build consensus
9 about what will maximize the parks and
10 recreation for the citizenry. Most
11 importantly, unlike many others, I
12 conduct no business with the City. My
13 interests are purely directed to the best
14 interest of the Park, the citizens and
15 the Recreation system.

16 Thank you for your time.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
18 for your testimony. Could you or would
19 you leave copies of your testimony? Did
20 you send copies up this way?

21 MS. ZALEWSKI: Can I mail it
22 in?

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
24 Absolutely, yes.

25 MS. ZALEWSKI: I only have one.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Not a
3 problem at all.

4 Okay, then. We thank you all
5 for your testimony.

6 Joanne Zarro, Naomi Williams,
7 Vince Fenerty, Charles Craig, Shawn
8 Lawson, Claudia Phillips.

9 (Witnesses approached witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
12 afternoon, everyone.

13 (Good afternoon.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If you
15 would all please state your name for the
16 record and then we'll start with your
17 testimony.

18 Good afternoon.

19 MR. CRAIG: Good afternoon.

20 Thank you for allowing me a chance to
21 speak with you guys today. My name is
22 Charles Bradford Craig. I'm from the
23 East Park/Girard area, and I would like
24 your consideration for this position.

25 Forgive my pace in advance.

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2 I'm going to try to get a lot covered
3 here.

4 As a city and as a country, we
5 face numerous challenges in the times
6 ahead. We must quickly identify and
7 adopt aggressive sustainable
8 methodologies in our parks, buildings and
9 immediate environment. It is important
10 to lead rather than to follow. You will
11 need a visionary with a set of modern,
12 sustainable experiences and skills to
13 facilitate progress in these areas. I
14 believe I am this person.

15 Currently, I'm the elected
16 Finance Director on the Board of
17 Directors for the Friends of Sedgley
18 Woods Disc Golf Park. During my tenure
19 in this position, I've been instrumental
20 in helping to take Sedgley Woods to new
21 heights. I've seen our membership double
22 in two years up to over 500 people.

23 This year I wrote and obtained
24 a grant from the Pennsylvania
25 Horticultural Society's Philly Green

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2 re-grant program, and I'm currently
3 writing another one for the Philadelphia
4 Activities Fund.

5 In addition to being a positive
6 presence for nearly 30 years, Sedgley
7 Woods has expanded its mission to include
8 service to the community beyond the scope
9 of just sports. Last year alone, I
10 managed the food drive for the club and
11 we raised 1,200 pounds of canned goods
12 for the Strawberry Mansion Neighborhood
13 Action Center and held two tournaments
14 that raised \$2,000 to fight prostate
15 cancer and to anonymously provide a
16 meaningful Christmas holiday for a needy
17 family. This year's food drive, which I
18 also managed, went to benefit residents
19 of East Park, distributed by our Friends
20 at the East Park Revitalization Alliance,
21 and we also initiated a women's league to
22 encourage gender diversity and founded a
23 youth outreach program, which taught over
24 a hundred neighborhood kids to play disc
25 golf. We are also involved in forming a

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2 steering committee to advance the
3 interest of East Park and adjacent
4 neighborhoods.

5 I consult in the renewable
6 energy market and I'm the Director of
7 Business Development for Infinite Energy
8 Company, where I work for Cassandra
9 Kling. Mrs. Kling wrote the New Jersey
10 State Renewable Energy Program, which to
11 date is the most successful state program
12 on record.

13 Philadelphia has always been a
14 leader, and my vision is for the City to
15 continue that trend by adopting a motto
16 such as "the greenest city in America."
17 It would be well received and it will
18 attract eco-tourism to the City as well
19 as hundreds of green jobs. I'm a member
20 of the Green Economy Task Force
21 Subcommittee, which is part of the
22 Sustainable Procurement group for
23 Philadelphia. I see what Philadelphia is
24 trying to do, but that it is following
25 suit with other cities rather than

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2 leading. We are using San Francisco's
3 model to develop our own. I want other
4 cities to adopt our citywide sustainable
5 model, where we see visible renewable
6 solutions on our open spaces and making
7 all of our Park and Recreation buildings,
8 structures and venues more sustainable
9 and energy efficient. As a LEED trained
10 professional, a U.S. Green Building
11 designation, and a leader in the
12 renewable energy market, I can represent
13 the Commission on these endeavors moving
14 forward.

15 There is a tremendous
16 opportunity for the City to lead the way
17 for the nation on greening the City.
18 Eco-tourism accounts for a large segment
19 of tourism dollars and is rapidly rising.
20 The green jobs created from these
21 projects are enough to stimulate our
22 local economy, and I'm working on several
23 projects currently to that effect.

24 President Obama has stated his
25 goal of doubling the current amount of

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2 renewable energy in three years time.

3 That's pretty aggressive. Pennsylvania

4 has a renewable portfolio standard of

5 eight percent, which mandates by the year

6 2020 eight percent of total energy

7 produced must come from renewable

8 sources. Of that, 850 megawatts of solar

9 must be installed by the year 2021, as an

10 example. We've only got 20 megawatts as

11 it is today, so we've got a pretty

12 challenging and daunting task ahead.

13 Governor Rendell signed his

14 Sunshine bill into law last July. That

15 program will start in the next couple of

16 months.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen

18 seconds.

19 MR. CRAIG: There are countless

20 grants available for energy upgrades for

21 buildings that I can assist with, and I'd

22 like to offer my services for this

23 endeavor.

24 The City of Asheville, North

25 Carolina realizes that they need to lead

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2 rather than follow. I'm working directly
3 with the Mayor of Asheville to help green
4 tech companies come into their corridor,
5 which in turn will create hundreds of
6 green jobs to their surrounding areas.
7 The City of Asheville doesn't want to
8 wait for legislation to change policy.
9 Rather, she, along with me, my boss and a
10 team of congressmen and women, are busy
11 trying to make changes from the bottom up
12 rather than from the top down; that is,
13 we're collectively trying to shape local
14 policy by creating incentives to create
15 renewable energy market where there
16 currently isn't one. Waiting for the
17 state in this case would take too long.
18 The Mayor of Asheville, just like Mayor
19 Nutter, does not want to wait for this.
20 I want to help this Commission and the
21 City of Philadelphia attain some of these
22 superlatives.

23 I realize the Parks and
24 Recreation Commission faces more
25 challenges other than sustainability and

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2 renewable energy, but that's why you're
3 assembling a team rather than one
4 individual. I do bring community
5 involvement, together with Fairmount Park
6 leadership experience, but, more
7 importantly, I bring well over 15 years
8 of very successful professional
9 experience to this Commission. The
10 Commission will be forced to deal with
11 these issues in the short term, and you
12 need a leader in this area to represent
13 you moving forward.

14 Thank you again for your
15 consideration.

16 Lastly, I'd like for everyone
17 to look above. We're not leading. This
18 is a prime example of how Philadelphia
19 can set themselves apart. This is a
20 public space, and we're bleeding money
21 with incandescent light bulbs. It's not
22 a good example to set, and I'd like to be
23 a part of the changes for our green
24 buildings moving forward.

25 Thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do you
3 have copies of your testimony?

4 MR. CRAIG: I handed up 20.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It is up
6 here? Okay.

7 MR. CRAIG: I left it in a book
8 format.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So your
10 testimony -- okay. Thank you.

11 Good afternoon.

12 MR. FENERTY: Good afternoon,
13 Councilwoman. Thank you for allowing me
14 to testify. I did not prepare any
15 written testimony. My name is Vince
16 Fenerty. I am the Executive Director of
17 the Parking Authority. I'm known to all
18 members of this Committee.

19 I've applied for this
20 Commission for a few reasons. I've
21 attained a lot in my goals at the Parking
22 Authority. I've been a community leader
23 for 28 years. And my particular interest
24 is keeping the recreation centers open
25 and the pools open. And I became

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2 interested in this when I read about it
3 online and on the Internet.

4 My goal would be to find unique
5 ways to raise money through corporate
6 sponsors, through private individuals to
7 help sustain the recreation centers and
8 the pools in Philadelphia. And I know
9 you're aware that I have begun that
10 through Parking Wars with the Parking
11 Authority last year by raising \$73,000
12 through our television show and \$110,000
13 this year for the Mayor's pool program.
14 And that was by just going to Hybrid
15 Films and to the A&E network and
16 explaining to them the needs for the
17 City. There was no contract that said
18 that either of these corporations had to
19 pay the Parking Authority for its reality
20 show. We went to the producers of the
21 show last year, explaining the needs of
22 the City for the Kixx program with the
23 recreation centers, which was going to be
24 cancelled, and, again, this year with the
25 play for the pools. And we were

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2 successful in getting some donations from
3 those two individuals that sponsored our
4 show. And I'd like to continue to work
5 with the Commission, if selected, and
6 hopefully find unique ways to keep the
7 recreation centers modern, to keep the
8 pools open and assist City Council and
9 the Mayor and the new Commission
10 Director, Mr. DiBerardinis, in ways to
11 keep the children with places to go
12 during the summer and winter.

13 That's my goal. Nothing fancy.
14 I'd like to be part of Philadelphia's
15 future and volunteer my services for free
16 in my spare time.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
18 for your testimony.

19 MR. FENERTY: Thank you.

20 Good afternoon.

21 MS. PHILLIPS: Good afternoon.

22 I'm very happy to be here and be a part
23 of this process.

24 I have a Master's Degree in
25 Landscape Architecture --

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Your name.

3 MS. PHILLIPS: Oh, I'm sorry.

4 Claudia Goetz Phillips.

5 I have a Master's in Landscape
6 Architecture and a Ph.D. in Environmental
7 Design and Planning. For the last 12
8 years, I have taught and/or directed
9 landscape architecture programs at Morgan
10 State University in Baltimore and now at
11 Philadelphia University, which is in East
12 Falls, and both of those programs,
13 through my leadership, had missions of
14 sustainable urban design.

15 Throughout my career, I have
16 been very active in serving my community
17 in various ways and at all scales,
18 locally, statewide, nationally and
19 internationally. I have served on
20 several Boards at the local and
21 international levels and I have served on
22 numerous committees for a variety of
23 governmental and community organizations
24 at all levels.

25 For example, I'm a Council

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2 member for the newly developed National
3 Academy of Environmental Design, which is
4 very similar in scope to the National
5 Science Academy. I am currently
6 President of an international
7 organization, the Council of Educators in
8 Landscape Architecture. And locally I am
9 on the Friends of the Wissahickon Board
10 and serve on the -- and chair the
11 Outreach Committee.

12 Prior to moving to
13 Pennsylvania, I was in Baltimore and I
14 served on the State of Maryland's
15 Governor's Commission on Environmental
16 Justice and Sustainable Communities,
17 which was a government appointment.

18 I have the qualifications to
19 serve on the Departments of Parks and
20 Recreation Commission because I have the
21 experience to do so based on my long
22 record of such service at all levels.

23 I was extremely pleased that
24 Michael Nutter was elected Mayor, largely
25 because of his understanding of the

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2 importance of planning, whether a
3 long-term master planning process,
4 neighborhood enhancement or park
5 development/restoration. I likewise
6 totally support the Administration's
7 development of an Office of
8 Sustainability.

9 I think that it is evident from
10 my application that I totally embrace the
11 concept of sustainable urban design where
12 parklands are considered vitally
13 important for human health and
14 well-being. Our parklands purify the air
15 and water, store and infiltrate storm
16 water, provide wildlife habitat and they
17 equitably provide necessary active and
18 passive recreation amenities for all our
19 citizens and visitors. And I truly look
20 forward to assisting and advising the
21 Park and Recreation Commissioner in
22 promoting and supporting and enhancing
23 the image of the Fairmount Park
24 Commission and other City parks and
25 recreational facilities.

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2 One of the things that we do at
3 Philadelphia University and I did at
4 Morgan State is, all our projects that we
5 do are for real community groups and
6 particularly schools. One school --

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
8 seconds.

9 MS. PHILLIPS: One school
10 example, we worked with Philadelphia
11 Military Academy, which I don't know
12 whether you're aware of that. It's 100
13 percent asphalt. I asked them when we
14 met with them how much of the land that
15 we could redevelop or take up the
16 asphalt. They said all of it. We did a
17 totally sustainable master plan for that
18 school, which they're now using to raise
19 money.

20 Another thought I had was to
21 use the universities as design advisors
22 to the Commission, take up the asphalt at
23 all our elementary and high schools that
24 are in the area and use them as stepping
25 stones to the larger -- and linkages to

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2 the larger park system.

3 Thank you very much.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
5 very much.

6 Mr. Fenerty, the Parking Wars
7 effort, is that a sustainable -- is it a
8 one-shot opportunity or is that going to
9 last for a while?

10 MR. FENERTY: The Parking
11 Authority has one more year after this
12 season, which is being filmed now, on its
13 contract with A&E to allow them to do
14 filming. So there would be one more year
15 of opportunity for them to renew their
16 commitment to Philadelphia through the
17 pool program or whatever program that the
18 Mayor's Office would be in need of for
19 next season. And we would hope this
20 series keeps going. It does show a good
21 side and sometimes a bad side of the
22 City. Sometimes my officers get a little
23 too rough. The first season was a little
24 rough. The second season was a lot
25 better. But it's a good show. Our

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2 officers like being on it. It shows how
3 rough their job is sometimes. But there
4 is opportunity for another season if how
5 it goes, as long as A&E renews Hybrid
6 Films if the season is successful this
7 year.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
9 thank you very much.

10 MR. FENERTY: Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
12 all for your testimony.

13 (Thank you.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Michelle
15 Robinson, June O'Neill, John Sheahan.
16 And I'm delighted to take any other name
17 I don't have on this list that may have
18 arrived after we started.

19 Please have a seat at the
20 witness table. If you have testimony,
21 we'd take that as well.

22 (Witnesses approached witness
23 table.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
25 afternoon, everyone. Please state your

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2 name for the record and you're welcome to
3 proceed, sir.

4 MR. LAWSON: Thank you very
5 much. My name is Shawn Lawson. What I
6 am is the General Manager and
7 Vice-President of Bustleton Services,
8 Incorporated. What we are is a tree,
9 fence and landscaping contractor in the
10 City of Philadelphia. I was born in
11 Germantown Hospital, raised in Oxford
12 Circle and currently reside in Northeast
13 Philadelphia.

14 What I have is 20 years of
15 contracting experience, and I've worked
16 for numerous agencies with the City,
17 Fairmount Park, Capital Programs, the
18 Pennsylvania and New Jersey Department of
19 Transportation, School District of
20 Philadelphia. These are just to name a
21 few. And what I've done with these
22 agencies is, I bid on work and then jobs
23 that we were low bidder on, we were
24 awarded, and we installed everything that
25 needed to be done on that process of the

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2 job.

3 Excuse me. I'm very nervous.

4 One of the things I did for
5 Fairmount Park for the past 20 years and
6 with the Rec Department is installed
7 backstops, ball fields, perimeter fences,
8 the sodding, the E&S control, anything
9 and everything that was ever built with
10 the Rec Department with the play
11 equipment, with the safety surfaces, I
12 have hands-on experience.

13 With PHA what I've done is, I'm
14 currently working on the Sparkle program.
15 I'm familiar with working with the
16 management and hiring local residents and
17 instilling them in with my crews and
18 teaching them and at the same time
19 compensating them for the work that we're
20 doing. I feel that's good.

21 I've worked with the University
22 of Penn installing green roofs. I have
23 an extensive knowledge in that field, and
24 I am an ISA certified arborist, and I
25 know everything about trees, the planting

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2 trees, installing fences, as I was
3 saying, in the ball fields.

4 I think what I bring
5 differently to the Commission is somebody
6 that has hands-on experience, somebody
7 that they can turn to and say, Has
8 anybody did this before, and I can say, I
9 have. I can bring ideas. I can keep
10 costs down. I can get the environment
11 involved.

12 And I've listened to everybody
13 today and I probably know that I am on a
14 list of people -- I am the dark horse,
15 but I think I bring something that is
16 very necessary to the Commission.

17 Thank you very much.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So let me
19 underscore that. You indicated your
20 interest by completing the application.
21 You showed up. You offered testimony.
22 You have ideas. You bring skill sets.
23 So you are not a dark horse.

24 MR. LAWSON: Thank you very
25 much.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
3 you for your testimony.

4 MR. LAWSON: Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
6 welcome.

7 Good afternoon.

8 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon.

9 My name is Michelle Robinson and I'm an
10 architect, and my strength is developing
11 visions and implementation methods.

12 With respect to this
13 Commission, I would envision a
14 three-prong approach that focuses on
15 people, money and natural resources.

16 With respect to people, I
17 believe it's important that the
18 Commission, in order to properly serve
19 the citizens, must work to understand the
20 details. It's important that we
21 understand who is using which resources
22 and how they are using them and involve
23 the stakeholders in developing a
24 strategic plan. That strategic plan
25 then, without delay, should be broken

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2 down into strategic objectives with
3 measurable and obtainable goals.

4 The second part of this prong
5 is money. In terms of financial
6 strategy, I would push for the same
7 strategy that I've used in projects,
8 local, state and national level. And for
9 the Commission, my guidance would be to
10 develop a financial strategy that
11 increases our independence from the
12 City's budget and revenues. I think it's
13 imperative that the Commission promptly
14 establish a finance subcommittee and
15 develop a financial strategy that
16 establishes the Commission as an
17 able-bodied and indispensable assistant
18 to the Parks and Recreation system.

19 Policies should be established
20 regarding revenue production, general
21 fundraising, partnership agreements,
22 asset acquisition, financing of historic
23 facilities and conservation measures.

24 The simple act of developing these
25 policies will engage the Commission in

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2 discussing and researching the very ideas
3 that I believe will be presented by
4 stakeholders.

5 While I am not advocating a
6 slow-moving train to the finish line, I
7 am emphasizing the irreplaceable
8 character of Philadelphia's physical
9 natural infrastructure and developing
10 policies that support our assets, which
11 brings me to the third prong of what I
12 believe the Commission's platform should
13 be, and, that is, the natural resources.

14 As a public body that is
15 entrusted with guiding the City's Parks
16 and Rec Department, we can never, ever
17 lose sight of the unique and
18 irreplaceable value of our Park and Rec
19 systems' natural resources. And we must
20 remember and never dismiss the idea that
21 the City's residents are also a natural
22 resource of the system.

23 The Commission should develop
24 plans for Parks and Rec to leverage the
25 volunteerism, the non-profit activities

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2 and the community engagement found
3 throughout this city. The Commission
4 should further explore the development of
5 partnership organizations such as the
6 friends groups and the advisory councils
7 in order to capture the energies of these
8 people and their interest.

9 These partnerships will also
10 serve as a conduit for educating the
11 public about the Park and Rec system and
12 resources and as a marketing and
13 development tool for the City.

14 In conclusion, I would like to
15 leave you with the knowledge that I have
16 the experience with all these tasks. I
17 have led state and national corporations
18 in the development of statewide, regional
19 and local programs, and I have
20 successfully led the process of
21 stakeholder identification, organization
22 of public stakeholder meetings and
23 subsequent policy development and
24 implementation.

25 Over the years through my

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2 public service as a volunteer, I've
3 brought nearly a million dollars in grant
4 monies to organizations for parks,
5 playgrounds, historic preservation, urban
6 reforestation.

7 By way of reference, I've left
8 you some examples of my projects, a
9 charrette to redevelop an entire downtown
10 known as Coatesville, a statewide bicycle
11 plan and some examples of before and
12 after re-greening projects that I've
13 spearheaded here in the City.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
15 you for this. Thank you very much.

16 MS. ROBINSON: You're welcome.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
18 afternoon.

19 MR. SHEAHAN: Good afternoon.
20 My name is John Sheahan and currently I'm
21 Divisional Vice-President of Plymouth
22 Nursery and Landscape. It's a
23 family-owned operation. My grandfather
24 started it roughly 60 years ago.

25 So the division that I'm in

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2 charge of is pretty much commercial
3 landscape development as well as
4 landscape maintenance, and I feel that
5 background gives me the knowledge to at
6 least provide a little insight as far as
7 costs, the bid process and maybe even
8 reduce the costs in regards to
9 maintenance or tree purchases, things of
10 that nature.

11 As far as why I applied for
12 this position, first and foremost, I felt
13 the need to give back to the City. I was
14 anxious and incredibly excited to
15 volunteer in any capacity. And the idea
16 that I had was community gardening,
17 specifically vegetable gardens. In these
18 hard economic times, I think creating
19 those with the available space would
20 enable communities to kind of get
21 together, bond and really help themselves
22 in this time of need, and I think it's a
23 great building block, and there's many
24 variables that you could add to that,
25 incorporating high schools to sponsor

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2 them, have kind of after-school programs
3 for informative measures, but all kind of
4 on a voluntary basis. And what I like
5 most about this particular idea is that a
6 garden really doesn't cost that much to
7 get going. A pack of seeds and some soil
8 and a little bit of hard work and you can
9 get that going and reap the benefits.

10 So in closing, I'd like to
11 thank you once again for this
12 opportunity. Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
14 you all very, very, very much. Thank
15 you.

16 If there is anyone else here
17 whose name we called and you were not
18 here and you'd like to join us and offer
19 testimony, you're welcome now to do so.

20 Please come forward. You may
21 have missed the earlier ground rules,
22 which are we will ask that you limit your
23 testimony to three minutes, and then we
24 may or may not have questions from
25 members of the Committee.

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2 (Witness approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
5 afternoon.

6 MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon,
7 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown. Good
8 afternoon, Councilman Clarke,
9 Councilwoman Quinones. My name is Naomi
10 Williams and it is a privilege to address
11 you today and offer comments in support
12 of my application for nomination to serve
13 on the Philadelphia Commission on Parks
14 and Recreation.

15 While my resume highlights my
16 experiences in a number of the areas
17 mentioned within the Member's
18 Qualifications section of the Charter
19 amendment, I would like to take this time
20 to elaborate more on why my work history
21 makes me an ideal candidate for the
22 Commission.

23 First, there's my experience in
24 real estate, which encompasses a working
25 knowledge and understanding of natural

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2 lands management, watershed management,
3 environmental protection laws, the Public
4 Trust Doctrine, eminent domain and
5 conveyance theories.

6 Second, I possess skills in
7 business, finance, neighborhood
8 revitalization, community leadership and
9 fundraising gained through progressively
10 responsible work and volunteer
11 experiences that would be beneficial in
12 the undertakings of the Commission on
13 Parks and Recreation.

14 Third, I have extensive
15 experience in qualitative and
16 quantitative marketing techniques,
17 advertising and public relations.
18 Additionally, I have a personal
19 dedication to physical fitness which I
20 have shared with my involvement with an
21 advocacy for community sports, recreation
22 and other athletic programming. But
23 overall, I feel that it is my honesty,
24 vision, compassion, strong work ethic and
25 can-do attitude that are the main

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2 qualifications that I would bring to the
3 Commission.

4 I have a strong desire to serve
5 the Commission because in these difficult
6 economic times, the Commission will be
7 called on to do more with less. As a new
8 entity that stands in neither -- it
9 stands in either the unique position of
10 having no legacy to live up to nor no bad
11 decisions or choices of its predecessors
12 to either cure or live down. The
13 Commission must first examine the current
14 state of affairs, including its budget,
15 existing uses and recommendations that
16 may also have been shelved but have the
17 potential to become viable. Also, I feel
18 strongly that those programs that
19 integrate recreational activities and
20 Park preservation should be promoted.

21 Many youth, our biggest
22 resource, are not actively involved with
23 environmental concerns because we neglect
24 to make them shareholders.

25 In closing, I believe that I

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2 should be nominated to be a member of the
3 Philadelphia Commission on Parks and
4 Recreation because I am passionate about
5 the capacity of this city and this being
6 a vehicle for change.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
9 very much for your testimony.

10 MS. WILLIAMS: Thank you,
11 Councilwoman.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Anyone
13 else to offer testimony on Resolution No.
14 090057?

15 Please, sir, you'd like to
16 offer testimony?

17 MR. SUDLER: Yes.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
19 come forward.

20 (Witness approached witness
21 table.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
23 afternoon, sir. You'd like to state your
24 name for the record.

25 MS. SUDLER: Aaron Sudler,

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2 S-U-D-L-E-R.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

4 You're certainly welcome to proceed with
5 your testimony.

6 MR. SUDLER: I'm a resident,
7 born and raised in Philadelphia, West
8 Philadelphia, Mantua section. And I know
9 my testimony is valid because I'm an
10 artist for over 25 years. Right now I'm
11 enrolled in the Hussian School of Art
12 down by the Bourse, inside the Bourse,
13 third floor, across the street from the
14 Liberty Bell.

15 I'm an advocate throughout the
16 City of Philadelphia in regards to
17 equality and civil union. Reverend Al
18 Sharpton sent me an invite just recently
19 to attend the National Action Network,
20 which will be April 1st through the 4th
21 out in New York at the Sheraton Hotel.
22 It's a conference that involves many
23 leaders across the country. Now, I'm
24 going out there. I don't know how
25 everything will play out, but I'm going

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2 out there on my testimony in regards to
3 conceptual thinking and how the people of
4 Philadelphia are affected through trial
5 and error.

6 Now, I'm deeply concerned in
7 particular with the bridges. There's two
8 bridges of Girard Avenue, 41st and 40th
9 of Girard Avenue, that's been closed for
10 over -- one of them been closed for over
11 15 years. It is not clear to the people
12 that I represent in regards to why
13 they've been closed for so long. No one
14 seems to want to speak out. I'm here to
15 speak out because I'm in a position to do
16 so.

17 Like I said, I'm a great
18 artist, and I'm conceptually bringing an
19 insight in regards to what's troubling
20 each and every person throughout
21 Philadelphia.

22 I hear everything, from this to
23 that, because I'm involved, from North
24 Philly to South Philly, to Southwest to
25 Northeast. I'm a resident of Broad and

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2 Erie right now. That's where I stay at.

3 But at the same time, I'm always at the

4 barber shops and beauty salons throughout

5 the whole entire city, and what affects

6 them behind their -- they feel like the

7 need to smoke and to do all these

8 different things, to drink, it's

9 basically because of -- they feel like

10 they've been left out of the equation

11 when it comes down to infrastructure,

12 what Barack Obama always speaks about.

13 So I'm just here briefly, just

14 walked in on this, as to bring a light on

15 cause and effect. And if we really have

16 desire to bring Philadelphia to a certain

17 level, we must consider the people who is

18 affected -- who are affected.

19 Now, a lot of meetings are held

20 behind closed doors. They're not

21 publicized, but they're publicized after

22 the fact. I noticed that through the

23 media. I'm always involved in trying to

24 figure out where the meetings are

25 located, where they're being held, where

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2 they're being conducted, but I hear it
3 after the fact through the media. So I
4 just want to bring that to your
5 attention.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
7 seconds, sir.

8 MR. SUDLER: Okay. In closing,
9 I would like to let everyone know that if
10 the people are involved, not after but
11 before, we can grow, we could get
12 opinions and we can move forward into
13 this infrastructure that this new
14 Administration definitely has in mind.

15 Thank you very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do you
17 have copies of your testimony you'd like
18 to send in? Do you have it now? And if
19 you do not have it now --

20 MR. SUDLER: I can send it. No
21 problem.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
23 welcome to do that.

24 MR. SUDLER: Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're

1 3/26/09 - PARKS - RES. 090057

2 very welcome.

3 Anyone else to hear testimony

4 on Resolution No. 090057?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: With that

7 said, the City Council Committee on

8 Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs

9 will be recessed until the call of the

10 Chair. I want to thank the Council

11 colleagues and all of those that offered

12 valuable testimony on this resolution.

13 (Committee on Parks, Recreation

14 and Cultural Affairs recessed at 3:45

15 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter on March 26, 2009, and that
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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of the same by any means, unless under the
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