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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

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PUBLIC HEARING
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING,
NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
and
THE HOMELESS

- - -
Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, June 16, 2004, 10:30 a.m.

- - -
RESOLUTION 040273 - Resolution calling on City
Council's Housing, Neighborhood Development and
Homeless Committee to hold hearings on the
redevelopment of the 4600 Block of Sansom Street
between 46th Street and Farragut Street and the
100 Block of 46th Street between Chestnut and
Walnut Streets.

- - -
PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL

- - -
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3 P R O C E E D I N G S

4 - - -

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
6 morning. Thank you for your patience.

7 On March 18th City Council as a body
8 passed Resolution Number 040273,
9 authorizing the Council Committee on
10 Housing, Neighborhood Development and the
11 Homeless to hold public hearings.

12 Today we are taking testimony. We
13 will recess until Monday, the 21st, at 1
14 o'clock, to consider any further action
15 that we may want to take.

16 Having said that, we will ask the
17 clerk to read the title of the bill, and we
18 will ask those who are ready to testify to
19 do that. And we'll start with the
20 administration.

21 THE CLERK: Resolution 040273, a
22 resolution calling on City Council's
23 Housing, Neighborhood Development and
24 Homeless Committee to hold hearings on the
25 redevelopment of the 4600 Block of Sansom

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2 Street between 46th Street and Farragut
3 Street and the 100 Block of 46th Street
4 between Chestnut and Walnut Streets.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
6 The Chair will note that we will not spend
7 a lot of time discussing the 100 block of
8 46th Street between Sansom and Walnut, as
9 we accept the fact that there are issues
10 there that are still under discussion.

11 Now, we're happy if the
12 administration would like to hear from
13 the... If you would like to testify, if
14 you'd like to hear from members of the
15 block first, we're happy to do that.

16 All right. Mr. Winward, maybe we'll
17 call on you to get started.

18 Miss McPhedran, will you testify
19 next?

20 MR. WINWARD: Thank you,
21 Councilwoman.

22 I don't have prepared comments
23 today, other than to say that the
24 Partnership CDC has been working towards
25 the improvement of this area for over two

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2 years at this point.

3 And we have been working with the
4 residents of the neighborhood and other
5 stakeholders to come up with the best
6 solution to what we view as a severely
7 blighted area that's inviting crime, trash,
8 and other typical problems that are
9 inherent in these types of areas.

10 So, I'd rather let the residents
11 speak and some of the other stakeholders at
12 this point.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

14 Miss McPhedran. And while she's
15 coming forward, the Chair also notes when
16 the Mayor signed the NTI Resolution
17 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, it
18 was at this community. It was at the
19 corner of 45th and Sansom Streets where he
20 announced this exciting program to our City
21 and to the world.

22 So we are happy to be here to have
23 this discussion, and note that it is
24 historic, in that it is about where this
25 whole program started. Thank you.

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2 Miss McPhedran.

3 MS. MCPHEDRAN: Hi. My name is Sue
4 McPhedran, and I work for the Reinvestment
5 Fund. As you may know, we're a
6 lender/investor in housing and economic
7 development in the City and region.

8 The subject of today's hearing is
9 the redevelopment of the 4600 block of
10 Sansom Street, one of the most deteriorated
11 sections of University City.

12 It suffers from dilapidated
13 properties, high vacancy rate and crime,
14 and subsidance, probably related to the
15 Mill Creek sewer.

16 It's created a dangerous condition
17 for the neighborhood, and more importantly,
18 for the dozen or so families still living
19 there.

20 Despite the deterioration, it's
21 important to point out that there's
22 significant developer interest in this
23 area.

24 Recently a private developer
25 purchased most of the vacant properties in

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2 the 4400 block of Sansom Street, reportedly
3 with plans to renovate and sell them at
4 market price.

5 TRF has introduced the Partnership
6 CDC to another private developer, who will
7 partner with the CDC in the 4500 block,
8 also to do market rate development.

9 The development entity will buy
10 those properties at market rate from the --
11 at market price from the City. And
12 there'll be a number of affordable homes
13 that will be included in that development
14 on the 4500 block as well.

15 In the Reinvestment Fund's view,
16 this section of West Philadelphia is the
17 type of location that should be a high
18 priority for investment for City Council,
19 the administration, and others concerned
20 about market transformation in
21 Philadelphia.

22 Our viewpoint is backed by roughly a
23 hundred thousand dollars of acquisition
24 financing already disbursed for properties
25 in this area, a pledge of grant funding to

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2 investigate subsurface conditions on the
3 4600 block, many hours of staff time
4 assisting the Partnership CDC and
5 identifying development partners, and plans
6 to finance acquisition and construction on
7 a larger scale once development begins.

8 The market is already at work but
9 needs intervention from the public sector
10 in order to tackle this deteriorated
11 section of an otherwise booming
12 neighborhood.

13 Development here can both extend the
14 University City market and, importantly,
15 help to strengthen and stabilize the strong
16 homeowner blocks of Walnut Hill to the
17 west.

18 Failure to act threatens to stop
19 nascent developer interest in its tracks.
20 So, for these reasons we -- you know, we're
21 definitely supportive of development
22 happening here. And we will continue to be
23 at the table with our resources to do
24 whatever we can to see that the project
25 happens.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
3 very much.

4 Are you at liberty to tell us who
5 the other developer is?

6 MS. MCPHEDRAN: Yeah. The other
7 development partner that the Partnership
8 CDC has been speaking with is Charles
9 Lomax. His partnership company is called
10 Northstar KKG, I believe.

11 He's been working some in South
12 Philadelphia, also some development up in
13 Bristol. His father is Dr. Walter Lomax,
14 who you may be familiar with as well.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely.

16 MS. MCPHEDRAN: So, they're in the
17 process of negotiations right now.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
19 very much.

20 MS. MCPHEDRAN: Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: University
22 City District.

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
25 very much.

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2 Beverly Murphy. This is with regard
3 to 4610 Sansom Street. Thank you so much
4 for coming.

5 MS. MURPHY: Thank you for having
6 me.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And for
8 your support over the years.

9 MS. MURPHY: Thank you.

10 My name is Beverly Murphy, and up
11 until a couple weeks ago I owned 4610
12 Sansom Street.

13 My children... I moved to Sansom
14 Street the day after my daughter's second
15 birthday, November 3, 1970.

16 My sisters were the first once to go
17 to the Bartram Tinicum section. My
18 children went to DeSales, to West Catholic,
19 Temple, Northeastern. My sisters went to
20 Cheney, Temple. They married neighborhood
21 kids.

22 I have relatives in the upper half
23 of Sansom Street 4623, 4625. My grandson's
24 paternal grandparents live in 4700. My son
25 and his wife just purchased a house in the

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2 4800 block of Osage. We have a cousin in
3 the 4600 block of Osage, a sister on
4 Catherine Street. I've been in that
5 neighborhood. That neighborhood is my
6 life. My children were reared there.

7 I know the Bookers on Melville
8 Street, the Bailey's around the corner,
9 Miss Theresa, her son, her daughter-in-law.

10 We... When the neighborhood began
11 to change, we marched. We volunteered.

12 We... When the Asians came in, we
13 galvanized, we talked, we had meetings. We
14 just tried to diffuse the problem.

15 When a child was beaten, we had fund
16 raisers. A neighbor in the other part of
17 Sansom Street took him and his mother in.

18 When my child, my son, who had
19 cancer, his neighbors rallied and prayed.
20 When my son got grown, thought he was smart
21 smoking reefer, they told me... They held
22 me so I wouldn't kill him.

23 And this is a neighborhood. It may
24 be decaying now because things have
25 happened. But the people who stayed stayed

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2 because we really thought it was going to
3 come back.

4 And if it can't come back for us,
5 then it is prime area. It's prime real
6 estate. Then it is only justice that we be
7 compensated for these properties.

8 These people don't want -- The
9 people that are left don't want to go, but
10 they can go. They will go. They're not
11 going to go far because they like the
12 neighborhood.

13 But to me it would be... I would
14 want to see the property -- the area come
15 back. As I said, I have relatives there.

16 I cringe when I look at it now. I
17 want to say that I used to live there, and
18 I love it. But I also want it to be fair.
19 And it can be. It's a lovely area. It
20 always has been.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
22 Miss Murphy.

23 And let me say, we have made a
24 commitment to you that we intend to honor
25 to certainly make sure that your specific

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2 issue is resolved. And we say that on the
3 record, that you have worked with us for
4 the past years, at least two years, with
5 regard to your property there. And we
6 intend to make sure that you're protected.
7 And we're working on that?

8 MS. MURPHY: Thank you so much.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
10 Ernest Ransom.

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Wanda tuck.
13 Come forward.

14 Thank you. Good morning. Thank you
15 for coming. Please identify yourself for
16 the record and begin your testimony.

17 MS. RANSOM: My name is Theresa
18 Ransom. Ernest is late getting here, and
19 he asked me to come. My name is Ransom.
20 Thank you for inviting me.

21 I've been living on Sansom Street
22 since 1968. It was a lovely area.
23 Actually, in '68 everything was. But
24 things began to change.

25 I also understand, as far as

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2 building things up and making new homes and
3 all that. I can understand all that, as
4 far as progress is concerned.

5 But what I can't understand is,
6 taking homes from people that have lived in
7 the area for such a long time period.

8 Now, when I was laid off from
9 Gimble's because I worked there, and I also
10 worked at Sterns the majority of any life,
11 they gave us enough money for us to pay
12 cash for this home on Sansom Street.

13 Because what I didn't want to happen
14 to me at the age of 73 is what is
15 happening, and that's being put on the
16 street.

17 I can see people down the Galleries
18 going from table to table, person to person
19 begging for quarters and dimes to get
20 something to eat. I didn't want that to
21 happen.

22 So what I did, I went to Mr. Litey
23 who was one of the neighbors in the block,
24 and I asked him if he wanted to sell the
25 property that I was living in.

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2 And he said yes, he did.

3 So he told me the amount. So,
4 Gimble's just let us work and work and work
5 until we made as much as we possibly could
6 to make ends meet, if we weren't able to go
7 back to work at another job which they did.

8 And so I paid cash for this house.

9 And I just knew that this would not be
10 happening. And come to find out the thing
11 you're trying to avoid is the thing that's
12 facing you.

13 Now again I say, I understand
14 progress and all that, but... And I've
15 said in the very beginning, and I say it
16 now, you guys are going to take it because
17 if you're determined to get it, you're
18 going to take it.

19 But what I don't think is fair is to
20 take it from the people and to leave them
21 in the street.

22 Now, we have a duplex that's
23 livable. It's not going to crash, fall in
24 like everybody's saying it is because you'd
25 be afraid to go into the house, because

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2 they're saying it's under eminent danger.

3 But what I don't want is, I don't
4 want them to take a duplex and give us a
5 room somewhere.

6 What I want is for them, if they're
7 going to take the duplex, to give me
8 another duplex, and the one that I want.

9 I don't want a house converted into
10 a duplex because that's different than
11 duplexes that were built a duplex from the
12 very beginning. And this is what I want.

13 Now, I've found a place at 54th.
14 And I'm saying this because I read this in
15 a booklet that Miss Tucker gave me, at 5421
16 Walnut Street, laid out identical to where
17 you are on Sansom Street.

18 There's a sale sign up on the
19 building, and my friend who's a realtor,
20 works for Century 21, she's tried to
21 investigate it to find out if he's going to
22 sell it, why does... Even CDC told her to
23 get the house for them, and then they would
24 exchange it.

25 The man had or the woman has not

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2 even answered, you know, the response.

3 So... And I went past there yesterday to
4 go to 69th Street. Again the sign is still
5 up, but we don't know what's going on.

6 All we do know is we're packing like
7 they're telling us to do. For what? Where
8 to go? We don't have any idea. And I
9 don't think this is fair. I really, really
10 don't.

11 Now, again I say, because I've been
12 in the area. In '68 I was young then,
13 could work, do whatever I want to do.

14 Now you're getting older, and you
15 can't do it. And I don't think that it's
16 right that for progress that they should
17 take people's homes, put them someplace
18 where they don't want to go, and they're
19 supposed to be happy. I don't see that.

20 And that's all I have to say. And I
21 do want a duplex. And I want it just like
22 mine, the way it's laid out, because there
23 are some in the area. And I don't need
24 anything with steps. I can't take steps
25 any more. But that's what I want.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
3 Ms. Ransom?

4 MS. RANSOM: So, if you can help us.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
6 Miss Ransom. We're doing our best.

7 We have talked with the individuals
8 involved, City representatives, as recently
9 as this morning.

10 Some of them have gone out as
11 recently as this morning to tour the area.
12 And believe me, they have assured us, and
13 the Partnership CDC has assured us that
14 they have been working with you, and that
15 you'll be satisfied.

16 MS. RANSOM: Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: When this
18 process is over.

19 And we thank you so much for coming.
20 We're always available. And certainly I
21 want to make sure that you're happy and
22 you're satisfied.

23 MS. RANSOM: Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
25 Miss Tuck, 4617 Sansom Street.

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2 Next is Betty Reavis, Walnut Hill
3 and the Partnership CDC Board.
4 I see Horace isn't here. And I see
5 Tracy is here. So, after this will be
6 Tracy Gibson.
7 Is anyone here from Travelers Aid?
8 (No response.)
9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.
10 Francis Kloos? Thanks.
11 Anybody here from Spruce Hill. Kate
12 Stover. Thank you.
13 Thank you very much. Please
14 identify yourself, and thank you for being
15 here.
16 MS. TUCK: Good morning, Miss
17 Blackwell.
18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
19 morning.
20 MS. TUCK: My name is Wanda tuck,
21 and I reside at 4617 Sansom Street.
22 I am here today because my life is
23 being turned upside down. The Neighborhood
24 Transformation Initiative, as I understand
25 it, is to rid the neighborhood of blight

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2 caused by abandoned homes, cars and vacant
3 lots, and bringing it to a viable
4 community.

5 If this is true, then it is long
6 overdue. I have lived through a
7 neighborhood transformation. I have gone
8 through the good times and bad times. Now
9 I'm asked to leave when the best is yet to
10 come.

11 I purchased my home in October 1974.
12 The block was magnificent duplexes. Each
13 building was occupied with two families,
14 black and white families that lived in
15 harmony.

16 There were plenty of children that
17 played in the street and had a good time.
18 The children and families formed lifelong
19 relationships.

20 Then as families opted for home
21 ownership, they moved from the block. The
22 owners allowed the buildings to stay vacant
23 and in disrepair.

24 The City did nothing to prevent the
25 decay of the neighborhood. With the vacant

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2 homes came squatters, drug activity,
3 prostitution and crime.

4 Finally, three of the houses were
5 cleaned and sealed. The two end houses on
6 my side of the street were demolished, and
7 a lot was left which became a dumping
8 ground.

9 The house next to me, 4619 Sansom
10 Street, became a City-owned property. The
11 family that was supposed to renovate the
12 property started a fire in 1993 that caused
13 extensive damage to my house.

14 My family and I had to temporarily
15 relocate for two years while the
16 renovations, costing my insurance company,
17 over \$40,000 took place.

18 I have been back since 1995 living
19 next to a burned-out shell that the City
20 has not attempted to make safe.

21 They only boarded the doors and
22 windows. They left the roof and side of
23 the house open and exposed to the elements
24 that has caused parts of the house to fall
25 into the breezeway.

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2 Now City Planning has done a study
3 that says my block should be left as open
4 space or rebuilt.

5 Private contractors see this area as
6 desirable for building because of the
7 location, close to Center City, accessible
8 to more than one form of transportation,
9 close to the University of Penn, Children's
10 and VA Hospitals, Drexel, Penn, and
11 Community College, shopping areas and
12 supermarkets, all the reason why I moved
13 there.

14 I'm being asked in a short time
15 frame to leave my home and find something
16 else that is functionally comparable which
17 is virtually impossible.

18 There is nothing available that
19 gives me the space I now have. It's close
20 to Center City where I work or accessible
21 to more than one form of public
22 transportation.

23 The City has systematically devalued
24 the area in order to offer the lowest
25 possible price, and employ the tactic of

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2 violations to force us out of prime real
3 estate.

4 My remedy would be to temporarily
5 relocate my family, then allow us to come
6 back to our block. We have lived through
7 the good and bad times. Now let us enjoy
8 the better. Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
10 very much.

11 Again, Miss Tuck, let me say that we
12 are working to... It was not the Mayor's
13 idea, nor is it mine, to not try to improve
14 and save some of the blocks.

15 You know, the three blocks on Sansom
16 Street, some are ready to fall. And we
17 were really trying to save the
18 neighborhood.

19 Certainly I'm not a party to
20 anything that would try to hurt people or
21 try to displace them.

22 So, we certainly thank you for
23 coming. And we'll work with you. And we
24 have been assured that you'll be satisfied
25 when this process is complete.

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2 And we do thank you. And we're
3 always here. We're always available.
4 Thank you, Miss Tuck.

5 MS. TUCK: Thank you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Betty
7 Reavis, Walnut Hill resident and
8 Partnership CDC Board Chair.

9 Thank you so much for coming and for
10 all your work in the community.

11 MS. REAVIS: You're welcome.

12 Good morning, everyone.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
14 morning.

15 MS. REAVIS: My name is Betty
16 Reavis, and I am the President of the
17 Walnut Hill Community Association.

18 Walnut Hill is one of seven
19 community organizations located in the
20 University City area of West Philadelphia.

21 These community groups are well
22 organized and are very concerned about
23 their neighbors and their environment.

24 Walnut Hill's boundaries are 45th
25 Street east, 52nd Street west, Market

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2 Street north, and Spruce Street south.

3 For the most part Walnut Hill's
4 neighborhoods are in good condition, but we
5 are really concerned about the 4600 block
6 of Sansom to Farragut.

7 This is truly a severe blighted
8 area, a real eyesore in our neighborhood.
9 These houses were built over the old Mill
10 Creek.

11 They are slowly sinking and have
12 structural problems. Therefore, they are
13 also dangerous to live in.

14 But there are two houses that are
15 still occupied, and we are hoping that
16 these people can be adequately relocated to
17 areas that they desire.

18 Walnut Hill strongly supports the
19 demolition of these houses located on
20 Sansom west of 46th to Farragut.

21 And depending on the results of the
22 soil analysis that is being done in that
23 block, we're hoping for construction of new
24 housing. If new housing cannot be built,
25 due to negative results of the soil

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2 analysis, perhaps a park can be considered.
3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
5 very much. We thank you for your
6 leadership and your commitment to the
7 community, to its residents, and to the
8 revitalization. Thank you very much.

9 Tracy Gibson.

10 Thank you for being here, Tracy, and
11 for your work over the years. Please
12 identify yourself for the record and begin
13 your testimony.

14 MR. GIBSON: Thank you, Miss
15 Blackwell.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

17 MR. GIBSON: My name is Mr. Tracy
18 Gibson. I am the block captain for the
19 4600 block of Sansom Street, and the second
20 vice president of the Walnut Hill Community
21 Association.

22 In a letter to Mayor Street before
23 he was reelected, I had mentioned a 12-year
24 moratorium on property tax increases so the
25 people can stop losing these houses because

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2 of the insidious gentrification process
3 which I think is part of what's going on on
4 the 4600 block of Sansom Street.

5 I'm very concerned that the... And
6 I think the neighbors are concerned, that I
7 have talked to, that they will be able to
8 build there, even though the Mill Creek is
9 there at 46th and Sansom.

10 I was told by an architect and an
11 engineer that it would be possible that
12 metal girders could be built, and that it
13 would be possible to build there.

14 And I think it would be a wonderful
15 idea if some of the people who are already
16 living on below Farragut, between Farragut
17 and 46th would be able to re-move into
18 those homes at a reasonable cost to the
19 City and a reasonable cost to them.

20 Some of them don't even have
21 mortgages at this point, I don't believe.

22 So, I sent -- I've been advocating
23 for people in this area for quite some time
24 now. I sent you photographs of the
25 buildings as they were falling down, and

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2 I've tried to even though there's only a
3 few people living in that half of the
4 block, I've tried not to treat that half of
5 the block as a stepchild but as a full --
6 full members of the block there.

7 And I notice recently that rents in
8 the area of 46th and Walnut there having a
9 big large building there, and they're
10 talking about rents of \$895 a month which
11 is, you know, out of reach for a lot of
12 people.

13 So, you know, that's what I'm
14 concerned about largely, is the
15 gentrification process and how people can
16 begin -- how the City and the City Council
17 and the Mayor can begin to take hold in
18 that, and also keep people in the City who
19 have traditionally been here so they can
20 take full advantage of the City and the
21 jobs that are here. That's really all I
22 have to say.

23 I just want to thank the City
24 Councilwoman for having this hearing.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

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2 Thank you, Tracy, for your work over the
3 years. Thank you very much.

4 MR. GIBSON: Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Francis
6 Kloos, is it? Travelers Aid.

7 Next is Kate Stover.

8 MS. KLOOS: Good morning, Miss
9 Blackwell.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
11 morning.

12 MS. KLOOS: Thank you for very much
13 for having me.

14 I just wanted to say that we have
15 quite a few families in their transitional
16 housing program in this area, but we're
17 committed to working with the City.

18 We've worked on the tot-lot and a
19 lot of our children have worked on the
20 mural project. We're very committed to
21 that area for the City, and we'll work with
22 the community and the City. We have been
23 for a number of years.

24 So we just want to say that we're
25 committed to working with the City, but it

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2 would really greatly impact our agency and
3 our families that are now living there.

4 But we continue to work with the
5 community and the City, in order to be able
6 to have affordable housing for our
7 families.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
9 very much.

10 We know of the work that Travelers
11 Aid does and of your location on the
12 Kirkbride Center, Blackwell Campus. And we
13 thank you for your work, and the work of
14 the youngsters in that area. Thank you
15 very much.

16 MS. KLOOS: Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Certainly.

18 Kate Stover. Good morning.

19 MS. STOVER: Good morning.

20 My name is Kate Stover, and I am
21 representing Spruce Hill Community
22 Association.

23 But even more importantly, I am
24 Chair of the Sansom Street Community
25 Coalition which is a group of individuals

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2 and organizations that have been working in
3 this neighborhood for about seven years.

4 We have a vision to bring back the
5 neighborhood the way a lot of these
6 residents have been talking about already
7 this morning.

8 We think that this neighborhood is
9 redeemable. We have been working with the
10 Police Districts in the area, and we have
11 been working with other stakeholders to
12 make the streets clean and safe.

13 We have worked to bring the
14 playground back. And now the next step
15 really is to improve the housing.

16 4400 and 4500 are already being
17 worked on, and I think will in the next few
18 years, make a really wonderful
19 neighborhood.

20 4600 really needs to be looked at.
21 Right now there are abandoned houses, clean
22 houses that have been boarded up, and
23 houses that are half demolished leaving
24 debris in the area.

25 What we see for a vision is, if

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2 possible, to build mixed income housing in
3 this neighborhood, to provide housing for
4 residents who are already there who would
5 like to remain, and to bring this
6 neighborhood back.

7 It is a marvelous space. It's close
8 to public transportation. It is near other
9 kinds of services, such as supermarkets.
10 And it is a neighborhood which really needs
11 to be redeemed.

12 And we're looking for support from
13 the City to help with the community and the
14 other stakeholders to bring this
15 neighborhood back to where it should be.
16 Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
18 Miss Stover.

19 Are there any other members of the
20 community who would like to testify?

21 Miss Califano?

22 Mr. Wetzel. Thank you.

23 Mr. Koons, would you like to come up
24 as well. Thank you.

25 Please identify yourselves to the

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2 record and begin your testimony. And thank
3 you for being here this morning.

4 MS. CALIFANO: Good morning,
5 Councilwoman Blackwell.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
7 morning.

8 MS. CALIFANO: My name is Catherine
9 Califano. I am Deputy Secretary of the
10 Office of Housing and Neighborhood
11 Preservation.

12 The Office of Housing and
13 Neighborhood Preservation is committed to
14 acquiring all of the properties on the 4600
15 block of Sansom Street, between south 46th
16 Street and Farragut Street.

17 We will assist Partnership in
18 several ways. A resolution is prepared for
19 Council introduction on Monday, to provide
20 a grant to Partnership CDC to acquire 4615
21 and 4617 Sansom Street.

22 In addition, we are prepared to
23 bring an ordinance to Council in the fall
24 to acquire the remaining privately-owned
25 parcels on the block.

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2 Lastly, we are committed to working
3 with Partnership to devise and support a
4 development plan for both the north side
5 and the south side of the 4600 block.

6 In addition, through the Department
7 of Licenses and Inspections, they are
8 prepared to demolish the vacant -- the
9 structures on Sansom Street, 4612 through
10 and including 4620 Sansom Street on the
11 south side, 4613 through and including 4619
12 Sansom Street on the north side.

13 Demolition will commence on Monday
14 of next week on the south side only.

15 With regard to the north side, 4613
16 and 19 are eminently dangerous. However,
17 the decision to demolish 15 and 17 was
18 driven by the fact of cracked rear walls
19 which would likely crumble as 13 and 19 are
20 demolished. In order to save those
21 structures, the cost could approach \$50,000
22 per property.

23 Given these facts, it was determined
24 that all four properties would be
25 demolished at once. And the timing of

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2 demolition will depend upon the speed with
3 which partnership CDC arranges for the
4 relocation of the residents in 15 and 17.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
6 certainly are asking for your commitment.
7 We've already spoken with Mr. Wingert to
8 ensure that we want your commitment to let
9 the Ransoms and Miss Tuck, as well as Miss
10 Murphy know that we are working with them
11 to make sure that they are satisfied with
12 the progress of development in this block.

13 MS. CALIFANO: The Redevelopment
14 Authority will assist Partnership in
15 providing technical assistance on
16 supporting these relocations and the
17 acquisition of these properties.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let me say
19 because Mr. Gibson mentioned
20 gentrification. And we find that... You
21 know, my commitment is to deal with
22 homeless people, housing development, home
23 improvement.

24 And certainly it is unfortunate
25 that, given the market today, that it has

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2 become, in fact, gentrification for some
3 people.

4 My commitment certainly is to help
5 people improve their housing stock, to help
6 the City move forward, and it was to
7 preserve this neighborhood.

8 Passing this every day and noticing
9 that it was a neighborhood in trouble, it
10 was a neighborhood in crisis, we tried to
11 approach the City about improving the
12 quality of homes.

13 But certainly it was not to the
14 detriment of people who live there or
15 people who have had housing over the years.

16 We just want to make our position
17 clear because sometimes, as many of you
18 know, we have our battles. We fight.

19 We never fight with Mr. Wetzel and
20 Mr. Koons. We do with Miss Califano. But
21 we don't have fights because we are
22 interested in making sure that neighbors
23 feel that they are protected, and that in
24 the event that a move occurs if they are
25 satisfied with what comes out of it and

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2 feel that they are made whole, as whole as
3 one can be when you're not living in the
4 same property, but we want to make sure
5 that you are satisfied.

6 And so, having said that, we thank
7 you very much for your testimony, and
8 certainly thank you very much. We thank
9 you.

10 Is there anyone else here who would
11 like to testify?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So we thank
14 you all for testifying. We will have a
15 discussion among ourselves, and with the
16 City. And should we need to say more, we
17 will do that Monday at the close of
18 Council; should not, we'll just announce
19 that that hearing will continue subject to
20 the call of the Chair.

21 I think that we have tried to make
22 it a positive hearing, to go as far as we
23 could, in terms of airing everybody's
24 concerns, and certainly in terms of letting
25 all of us know that we're committed to

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2 making sure that this neighborhood
3 improves, and that the people there are
4 protected.

5 Having said that, we say thank you
6 very much.

7 Again, this Committee is recessed
8 until Monday, June 21st, at 1 o'clock.

9 Thank you all.

10 (Public hearing continued to Monday,
11 June 21, 1:00 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me upon the public hearing of The Philadelphia City Council, taken on June 16, 2004, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

DAVID A. DEIK, RPR and
Commissioner of Deeds

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