

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PROPERTY AND
PUBLIC WORKS

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, April 10, 2014
1:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH

BILLS 130907, 130948, 140225, and 140235

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COUNCILMAN HENON: Good

3

afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. The

4

Committee on Public Property and Public

5

Works is now in session.

6

Would the Clerk please read the

7

titles of the bills and resolutions.

8

THE CLERK: Bill No. 130907, an

9

ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of

10

Public Property, on behalf of the City of

11

Philadelphia, to convey to the

12

Philadelphia Authority for Industrial

13

Development a parcel of land bounded by

14

North Delaware Avenue to the east, Spring

15

Garden Street to the south, North Beach

16

Street to the west, and Fairmount Avenue

17

to the north, for further conveyance,

18

under certain terms and conditions; and

19

Bill No. 130948, an ordinance

20

authorizing the Commissioner of Public

21

Property, on behalf of the City, to

22

acquire fee simple title, or a lesser

23

interest in real estate, in parcels of

24

land along the Delaware River and the

25

Kensington & Tacony Trail, under certain

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 terms and conditions; and

3 Bill No. 140225, an ordinance

4 authorizing the Commissioner of Public

5 Property to convey, to the Philadelphia

6 Authority for Industrial Development,

7 parcels of land generally situate at

8 1224, 1226, 1228, and 1230-32 North

9 Mascher Street, for further conveyance,

10 under certain terms and conditions; and

11 Bill No. 140235, an ordinance

12 authorizing the Commissioner of Public

13 Property to convey, to the Philadelphia

14 Authority for Industrial Development, a

15 parcel of land generally situate at 2518

16 East Clearfield Street, for further

17 conveyance, under certain terms and

18 conditions.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.

20 I'd like to recognize that a

21 quorum is present. To my left,

22 Councilwoman Blackwell, Councilman Bill

23 Greenlee, and to my right, Councilman

24 David Oh.

25 Is there anyone from the

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 Administration that is here today that
3 wishes to testify on Bill No. 130907?

4 (Witness already seated at
5 witness table.)

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Would you
7 please proceed. State your name for the
8 record.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:
10 Good afternoon, Chairman Henon and
11 members of the Committee on Public
12 Property and Public Works. My name is
13 John Herzins, Deputy Commissioner of the
14 Department of Public Property, here today
15 to testify in support of Bill No. 130907,
16 an ordinance authorizing the Commissioner
17 of Public Property, on behalf of the City
18 of Philadelphia, to convey to the
19 Philadelphia Authority for Industrial
20 Development a parcel of land bounded by
21 North Delaware Avenue to the east, Spring
22 Garden Street to the south, North Beach
23 Street to the west, and Fairmount Avenue
24 to the north, for further conveyance,
25 under certain terms and conditions.

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 An innovative mixed-use
3 development has been proposed by the
4 purchaser, Gene DeSimone. The current
5 structure will be demolished and an
6 eight-story building will be constructed.
7 The building will house an auto showroom,
8 a cafe, and apartments.

9 The \$1 million proceeds of the
10 sale will be deposited into the General
11 Fund.

12 The Department of Public
13 Property supports this measure and,
14 accordingly, I respectfully ask that City
15 Council approve Bill No. 130907.

16 I am requesting a suspension of
17 the rules so as to allow for first
18 reading at the next session of Council.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
21 Mr. Herzins. I just have a question or
22 two on the bill.

23 What is the development, the
24 construction timeline for the proposal?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS: I

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 have actually Mr. DeSimone here, who
3 could maybe talk about the development.

4 (Witness approached witness
5 table.)

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Please
7 proceed. State your name for the record
8 and then you may begin answering any
9 questions.

10 MR. DeSIMONE: Gene DeSimone.
11 Thank you for having us here.

12 We probably need about ten
13 months due diligence to do the process
14 and finance and the banking, and then
15 it's probably going to take 18 months to
16 finalize. So it will probably be open in
17 spring of 2016.

18 COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay. The
19 appraised value, is it the same as the
20 sales price?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:
22 Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Does anyone
24 from the Committee have any further
25 questions?

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: I appreciate
4 your time. Thank you.

5 MR. DeSIMONE: Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
7 for coming in.

8 Is there anyone here else that
9 wishes to testify on Bill No. 130907?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, thank
12 you.

13 Mr. Herzins, would you please
14 proceed with the next bill.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS: I
16 believe Jim Donaghy is going to testify
17 on Bill No. 130948.

18 THE CLERK: No, no.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: 140225.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:
21 Sorry. Good afternoon, Chairman Henon
22 and members of the Committee on Public
23 Property and Public Works. My name is
24 John Herzins. I'm the Deputy
25 Commissioner of the Department of Public

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 Property here today to testify in support
3 of Bill No. 140225, an ordinance
4 authorizing the Commissioner of Public
5 Property to convey to PAID parcels of
6 land generally situate at 1224, 1226,
7 1228 and 1230 to 32 North Mascher Street,
8 for further conveyance, under certain
9 terms and conditions.

10 L&M Real Estate Development
11 will purchase this property for \$275,000
12 and will develop the property into
13 single-family housing.

14 The proceeds from the sale will
15 be deposited into the General Fund.

16 The Department of Public
17 Property supports this measure and,
18 accordingly, I respectfully ask that City
19 Council approve Bill No. 140225.

20 I am requesting a suspension of
21 the rules so as to allow for first
22 reading at the next session of Council.

23 Thank you. I'll be happy to
24 answer any questions.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 Mr. Herzins. Just real quick question.

3 What was the prior use of the property?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:

5 It was used as a parking lot.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: And again

7 I'm going to ask this question

8 consistently. How does the sale price

9 compare to --

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:

11 That's the appraisal price.

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: Same

13 appraisal price? A hundred percent full

14 value.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:

16 Correct.

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: Anyone from

18 the Committee have any further questions?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: Is there

21 anyone here that wishes to testify any

22 further on 140225?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: None?

25 Hearing so, thank you.

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 Mr. Herzins, would you please
3 proceed with the testimony for Bill No.
4 140235.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:

6 Good afternoon, Chairman Henon and
7 members of the Committee on Public
8 Property and Public Works. My name is
9 John Herzins, Deputy Commissioner of the
10 Department of Public Property, here today
11 to testify in support of Bill No. 140235,
12 an ordinance authorizing the Commissioner
13 of Public Property to convey, to the
14 Philadelphia Authority for Industrial
15 Development, a parcel of land generally
16 situate at 2518 East Clearfield Street,
17 for further conveyance, under certain
18 terms and conditions.

19 The Police Athletic League has
20 provided free educational, athletic,
21 recreational, and cultural after-school
22 and summer programs at this site since
23 1962. The building also serves as the
24 organization's headquarters. With the
25 acquisition of the building and some

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 planned renovations, PAL will be able to
3 expand and improve on their programs for
4 Philadelphia's youth.

5 Public Property supports this
6 measure and, accordingly, I respectfully
7 ask that City Council approve Bill No.
8 140235.

9 I am requesting a suspension of
10 the rules so as to allow for first
11 reading at the next session of Council.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
14 Mr. Herzins. I have a few questions.
15 Was this building originally leased to
16 PAL and, if so, how long was the lease
17 for?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:
19 It's been leased since 1962.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: So is the
21 building or the parcel given to PAL at a
22 nominal fee?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS:
24 Yes. It will be conveyed nominal.
25 They're going to have a fundraising

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 campaign to make improvements to the
3 building.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: So you're
5 having a fundraising plan. So what types
6 of renovations? Is there a renovation
7 plan for the building?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER HERZINS: I
9 think I have two members here from PAL.
10 We have Sylvia Nissenbaum and Ted Qualli.
11 Would you like to hear from them about
12 their plans?

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Sure. I'd
14 love to hear it.

15 (Witnesses approached witness
16 table.)

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: If you would
18 please state your name for the record and
19 you may begin with the question.

20 MS. NISSENBAUM: Yes. Good
21 afternoon, and thank you for allowing us
22 here. My name is Sylvia Nissenbaum. I'm
23 the immediate past Chairwoman of the
24 Police Athletic League of Philadelphia.

25 MR. QUALLI: And my name is Ted

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 Qualli. I am the Executive Director of
3 the Police Athletic League.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: So you could
5 tell me the types of plans that you have
6 in the future here for the building and
7 what kind of renovations.

8 MS. NISSENBAUM: We currently
9 occupy what was formerly a police
10 headquarters since 1962. On the top
11 floor we run the Rizzo PAL Center, which
12 is a neighborhood center for hundreds of
13 children. On the main floor we operate
14 the administrative offices, and in the
15 basement we have storage and our
16 wrestling program.

17 Right now we are at maximum
18 capacity in terms of being able to add
19 any staff. We already have people
20 sitting in the hallway and in the kitchen
21 due to lack of office space. Our lease
22 includes the building next door, which
23 was a former firehouse, and that's where
24 the bulk of the renovations would occur.
25 They're basically two open spaces on the

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 first floor and second floor that we
3 could renovate for office space and allow
4 us to grow as an organization and,
5 therefore, provide many more services to
6 children throughout Philadelphia.

7 MR. QUALLI: And so we would
8 move much of the administrative staff
9 from the one building to the other,
10 allowing us to expand services at the
11 Rizzo PAL Center itself.

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: Are you
13 properly staffed for the expansion with
14 the programs?

15 MS. NISSENBAUM: Yes. Yes. We
16 are constrained at the moment to add
17 additional staffing until we get
18 additional office space. So as soon as
19 we get the office space and renovate it,
20 we would be able to add the necessary
21 staffing.

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: And I'm
23 going to say I know firsthand from
24 visiting Rizzo and a lot of the folks in
25 the district, you have a history of doing

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 a fantastic job --

3 MS. NISSENBAUM: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- with the
5 community, and the kids are throughout
6 the City. So, I mean, your programs are
7 phenomenal, and I think the expansion is
8 really going to serve the community
9 great. So I want to -- kudos to the PAL
10 organization and the officers that are on
11 the ground. I'm glad to see that the
12 wrestling program has taken off. That's
13 a little near and dear to my heart, but
14 all the other programs that you have
15 there are just well deserved for this
16 type of renovation and expanding the
17 programs.

18 MS. NISSENBAUM: Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Are you
20 going to be expanding the programs or
21 just the existing programs are just
22 getting too large as far as capacity?

23 MR. QUALLI: A little bit of
24 both. We're in the process of developing
25 a five-year strategic plan that will

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 hopefully see more kids in more centers
3 for more hours in the day. We have
4 approximately 15,000 youth enrolled right
5 now, and basketball star, our biggest
6 attraction, but we have cultural and
7 educational programs. And so over the
8 course of this five-year plan, we hope to
9 see programming improve, more staff so we
10 can lower the ratios of adults to kids so
11 that we have more adults in the centers
12 with the kids, always under the
13 supervision of a Philadelphia police
14 officer, but someone with an educational
15 background or able to support the
16 mentoring programs. And so a little bit
17 of both.

18 COUNCILMAN HENON: With the
19 lack of play with some kids these days, I
20 think it's critical and would love to
21 talk to you about some programs, maybe
22 some things that I may be able to help
23 supplement and maybe we could participate
24 and be partners in as we move forward and
25 as you grow. So I appreciate you coming

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 in here. Thank you for your questions.

3 Does anybody from the board

4 have any other questions here -- from the

5 Committee?

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Actually,

7 Mr. Chairman, you said exactly what I was

8 going to say. I know specifically what

9 the Rizzo PAL does and what PAL does in

10 general. I have one in my own

11 neighborhood, the Cozen PAL, which does a

12 terrific job. So as the Chairman said, I

13 think if you're able to expand, you'll

14 even provide more service to the kids,

15 which we certainly need. Thank you.

16 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 MS. NISSENBAUM: Thank you very

18 much.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON:

20 Councilwoman.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I

22 can't let them talk about their PAL

23 center without me saying something, but I

24 will tell you, we had a PAL center that

25 closed when they closed one of my

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 schools, Wilson School. So we're
3 fighting over my PAL center. So if it
4 doesn't work where we're trying to go
5 now, I have another center that needs it
6 desperately, and I have people who came
7 to me about two blocks out of my district
8 asking me for a PAL center that's in
9 Curtis Jones' area. So there's no lack
10 of wanting them. We appreciate all you
11 do.

12 MR. QUALLI: Thank you,
13 Councilwoman.

14 MS. NISSENBAUM: Thank you very
15 much.

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, thank
17 you for your time. Thanks for coming in.

18 Lastly, is there anyone here
19 from the Administration that wishes to
20 testify on Bill No. 130948.

21 (Witness approached witness
22 table.)

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
24 afternoon. Would you please state your
25 name for the record and proceed with your

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 testimony.

3 MR. DONAGHY: My name is James
4 Donaghy. Good afternoon, Chairman Henon
5 and members of the Committee. As I said,
6 my name is James Donaghy. I'm here to
7 present testimony in support of Bill No.
8 130948. This bill authorizes the
9 Commissioner of Public Property, on
10 behalf of the City, to acquire real
11 estate along the Delaware River for the
12 purpose of incorporating the land into
13 the Kensington and Tacony Trail section
14 for public use and recreation.

15 I am providing testimony on
16 behalf of the Philadelphia Commerce
17 Department, the Parks and Rec Department,
18 and the Delaware River City Corporation.
19 These organizations and others are
20 working together to guide and facilitate
21 implementation of the North Delaware
22 Greenway and Trail Plan. This plan, when
23 implemented, will enhance the City's
24 quality of life, support investment,
25 economic growth and new community

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 development, provide recreational
3 opportunities, public open space, create
4 a sustainable riverfront environment, and
5 once again provide public access to our
6 beautiful Delaware River.

7 The Delaware River City
8 Corporation has been very active during
9 this past year. The 1.6-mile Port
10 Richmond Trail section was opened last
11 fall. The 1.7-mile Delaware Avenue
12 extension, which includes the trail, is
13 under construction. The 2.2-mile Baxter
14 Trail section is being bid, and
15 construction is expected to begin by mid
16 summer. And the 1-mile Kensington and
17 Tacony Trail section, Phase 1, is
18 scheduled to be bid by late summer, with
19 construction anticipated by late fall.

20 This bill will provide the
21 authority to create an unobstructed
22 1.6-mile trail running from the old
23 Frankford Creek in the south to Princeton
24 Avenue in the north. The trail will run
25 through the new 4.5-acre riverfront

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 Lardner's Point Park. All of these trail
3 sections are part of an 11-mile Delaware
4 River Greenway and Trail and will
5 ultimately be a key connection in the
6 larger East Coast Greenway.

7 The bill will provide for
8 continuing authority to acquire land by
9 purchase, condemnation or otherwise to
10 allow for the completion of the
11 Kensington and Tacony Recreation Trail
12 section. The authorization under this
13 bill covering much of the same land is
14 about to expire, so new authorization is
15 needed. Passage of this bill will enable
16 the City, working with its partner, the
17 Delaware River City Corporation, to
18 continue its important work of
19 revitalizing the riverfront.

20 I urge you to support this
21 bill, and I'd be happy to answer any
22 questions at this time.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
24 Mr. Donaghy. I have a question. Where
25 are we at with the acquisition piece?

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 MR. DONAGHY: The acquisition?

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Yes.

4 Weren't there -- I believe there were two
5 properties that were presenting some
6 issues.

7 MR. DONAGHY: Yes. There were
8 two that are -- we have already filed
9 courts for -- filed in the courts for
10 condemnation of the southern property,
11 and we're moving to initiate the
12 condemnation process on the northern
13 property. While we were doing this work,
14 we've also discovered that there's two
15 other properties that are in dispute.
16 There's some questions, and we believe
17 that we're going to be able to make
18 offers on those and to acquire those
19 without the need to take it through the
20 court system.

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: And this
22 northern DRCC trail, the northern part of
23 the trail, and access to the river, more
24 passive recreation for the communities
25 with the streets leading down to our

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 waterfront from Allegheny Avenue north, I
3 mean, we're down to the final stretch
4 here, is that correct, as far as --

5 MR. DONAGHY: Yes. Allegheny
6 Avenue north to the Poquessing Creek,
7 which of course, as you know, is the
8 Bucks County line, and all but two
9 sections are in final design, moving to
10 construction, and both of those two
11 sections are under study for trail
12 alignment and construction documents as
13 of this year. So they're still probably
14 another 18 months away from completion of
15 that phase, but it's all moving forward,
16 and you're correct.

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: We're on
18 schedule as far as completing, starting
19 another in the design phase,
20 groundbreaking, shovel ceremony, people
21 walking and talking. And I know we had a
22 great cleanup at the Lardner's Point, I
23 believe, over the weekend with the Philly
24 Cleanup.

25 MR. DONAGHY: That's correct.

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: So good job
3 there. I was glad to be a part of that.

4 I have no further questions.
5 Anybody from the Committee?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: Is there
8 anyone here that wishes to testify on
9 Bill No. 130948?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN HENON: With that
12 being done, thank you for your testimony.

13 MR. DONAGHY: Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: Since no one
15 else is here, this concludes our public
16 hearing. We will now go into our public
17 meeting.

18 The Chair recognizes Councilman
19 Greenlee as we move all four bills. The
20 Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
22 you, Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.
23 130948 be reported out of this committee
24 with a favorable recommendation.

25 (Duly seconded.)

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: All those in
3 favor?

4 (Aye.)

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: The ayes
6 have it.

7 Councilman Greenlee.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
9 you, Mr. Chairman. I move that the
10 following three bills be reported out of
11 this committee with a favorable
12 recommendation and that the rules of
13 Council be suspended to allow for first
14 reading at our next session of Council:
15 Bill Nos. 130907, 140225, and 140235.

16 (Duly seconded.)

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: The ayes
18 have it.

19 With that being said, we have a
20 second. Bills are reported out with a --
21 Bill No. 130907, 140225, 140235 all moved
22 with a favorable recommendation and
23 suspension of the rules as to be heard at
24 the next Council session, and 130948
25 reported out with a favorable

1 4/10/14 - PUBLIC PROPERTY - BILL 130907, etc.
2 recommendation.

3 Thank you all for coming.

4 This concludes the hearing and
5 meeting on Public Works and Public
6 Property. Thank you for coming.

7 (Committee on Public Property
8 and Public Works concluded at 1:55 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, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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direct control and/or supervision of the
certifying reporter.)

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