

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PUBLIC HEARING

COMMITTEE ON RULES

- - -

Room 696, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, December 9, 2002
10:20 a.m.

- - -

BILLS 020666, 020667, 020668, 020669, 020671,
020672, 020673, 020678, 020679, 020681, 020682,
020685, 020686.

- - -

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY, Chair
COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA VERNA
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DARRELL CLARKE
COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN
COUNCILMAN FRANK DICICCO
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL NUTTER
COUNCILMAN RICHARD MARIANO

- - -

V A R A L L O, Incorporated
Litigation Support Services
Eleven Penn Center
1835 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
(215) 561-2220

1

2

I N D E X

3	BILL 020666	PAGE
	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	5
4	RICHARD REDDING, City Planning Commission ..	13
	BILL 020678	
5	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	19
	RICHARD REDDING, City Planning Commission ..	20
6	BLANE STODDART, The Partnership CDC	20
	DIANNE WORMLEY, University City District ...	23
7	KATE STOVER, Spruce Hill Community Assoc, Sansom Street Community Coalition	25
8	JANE SILVERMAN, Salvation Army	27
	BETTY REVIS, Walnut Hill Community Assoc. ..	29
9	BILL 020669	
	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	31
10	RICHARD REDDING, City Planning Commission ..	35
	ANDREW JEVREMOVIC, Octo Enterprises	36
11	DAVID MCCLELLAN	40
	CLAUDIA SHERON (ph), Point Breeze Development Coalition	41
12	BILL 020686	
13	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	43
	RICHARD REDDING, City Planning Commission ..	44
14	ROBERT ROSENTHAL, Westrum Development	45
	BILL 020668	
15	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	51
	RICHARD REDDING, City Planning Commission ..	59
16	LOIS FERNANDEZ, ODUNDE	60
	ALAN MANDEL, SOSNA	63
17	EVE LEWIS, SOSNA	67
	PHILLIP MARA	69
18	EUGENE MACKEY GUY	70
	ANTHONY MARTELLO	87
19	MS. CLAYTON	103
	ANTHONY IACOBONE	108
20	QUAN MACK	110
	BILL 020672	
21	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	112
	RICHARD REDDING, City Planning Commission ...	113
22	BILL 020671	
	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	116
23	DAVID NAPTON, City Planning Commission	116
	KEN KNIGHT	118

24

25

INDEX (continued)

1			
2			
3	BILL 020685	PAGE	
4	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	121	
5	DAVID NAPTON, City Planning Commission	122	
6	FLOYD ALSTON	123	
7	JORDAN MOHAMMAD AKBAR	125	
8	RICK SAUER, PACDC	128	
9	BILL 020673		
10	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	139	
11	DAVID NAPTON, City Planning Commission	140	
12	GERALD WASHINGTON	141	
13	KEN KNIGHT, Mantua Trade Center	145	
14	COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL	153	
15	BILL 020667		
16	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	160	
17	DAVID NAPTON, City Planning Commission	161	
18	BILL 020679		
19	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	163	
20	DAVID NAPTON, City Planning Commission	164	
21	EVA GLADSTEIN, Phila. Empowerment Zone	173	
22	DARALIA RODRIGUEZ (ph)	184	
23	MALGRAS VELAS (ph)	188	
24	ROSE GRAY, APA	191	
25	JERAMOS SALAS, JR. (ph), Hispanic Association of Contractors and Enterprises	192	
	TOM FORKIN, American Street Erie Avenue Business Association	195	
	THOMAS J. CARBINE, ASEABA	199	
	RON RAMSTEAD	202	
	JIM FLAHERTY, Kensington South NAC	204	
	JAMES HARTLING, Urban Partners	205	
	JORDAN MUHAMMAD AKBAR	208	
	EVA GLADSTEIN, Phila. Empowerment Zone	209	
	BILL 020681		
	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	215	
	RICHARD REDDING, City Planning Commission ...	221	
	PATRICIA SMITH, Neighborhood Transformation .	223	
	ALFRED ESSANDOH, Habitat for Humanity	224	
	REV. WILLIAM B. MOORE	225	
	STEVE KAUFMANN, Suesquehanna Seniors	226	
	SUSANNE STONE, Board of City Trusts	227	
	CAROLYN PLACKE, Project H.O.M.E.	230	
	JORDAN MUHAMMAD AKBAR	231	
	BILL 020682		
	HERBERT WETZEL, Redevelopment Authority	237	
	RICHARD REDDING, City Planning Commission ...	246	
	PATRICIA SMITH, Neighborhood Transformation..	253	

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good morning, ladies
3 and gentlemen. I apologize for the delay. Council
4 Committee on Rules is now in session with a quorum
5 consisting of Councilmember Nutter, Councilmember
6 DiCicco, Councilmember Kenny who is going to act as
7 Chair, Councilmember Clarke, and Council President
8 Verna.

9 The first bill on the list for today is
10 Bill No. 020666, which is an ordinance approving the
11 9th Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the
12 Eastwick Urban Renewal Area, being the area
13 beginning at the point of intersection of the west
14 side of Lindbergh Boulevard with the north side of
15 58th Street, including the 9th Amendment to the
16 Urban Renewal Plan and the 1st Amendment to the
17 Relocation Plan, which provides, inter alia, for a
18 change of the land use and related controls for a
19 7.75 acre site, generally bounded by 73rd Street,
20 75th Street, Turnstone Place, Redwing Place,
21 Meadowlark Place, Lapwing Place and Longspur Place,
22 from residential and related reuse to recreational
23 and related reuse and a change in the land use
24 controls for the Mini-Town Center to permit senior
25 rental apartments.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

2 Who's here to testify on behalf of the
3 bill?

4 Please take the witness chair and
5 identify yourself for the record.

6 MR. WETZEL: Good morning, Mr. Chairman
7 and Members of the Committee. My name is Herbert
8 Wetzel. I'm Executive Director of the Redevelopment
9 Authority of the City of Philadelphia. Mr.
10 Chairperson, with your permission, I'd like to do a
11 little bit of an overview of how we got here today
12 with the 13 ordinances.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please proceed.

14 MR. WETZEL: Under prior situations, the
15 way land was assembled by the Redevelopment
16 Authority was that requests would come in from a
17 variety of sources, either from developers or the
18 District Councilperson's office or from an operating
19 department within the City of Philadelphia. One of
20 the fundamental changes we wanted to make under NTI
21 was to change the manner in which land assembly is
22 conducted. And as you see today, there are 13
23 ordinances that total over 2,500 properties. And
24 I'll describe a little bit about how we got here and
25 how we will operate in the future.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

2 The first thing that we wanted to do is
3 set up a regularized system for doing this kind of
4 business. We created a form that was distributed in
5 June to each District Councilperson. And that form
6 is the form upon which we will accept applications
7 for land assembly.

8 The second sort of principle that we
9 adopted is that we would only accept those forms and
10 review those particular requests if they came from a
11 District Councilperson's office.

12 And in June, we delivered those forms to
13 be completed and we received hundreds of them back,
14 as you can imagine. And what we established was an
15 Interagency Acquisition Review Team that included
16 the Mayor's Office represented by NTI, the Commerce
17 Department, the Planning Commission, the
18 Redevelopment Authority, the Public Housing
19 Authority, the Office of Housing and Community
20 Development, and the Empowerment Zone.

21 What we wanted to do is create a
22 broad-based inter-governmental committee to review
23 these acquisition lists. The committee started
24 meeting in August. And in addition to having the
25 meetings and sitting around the table, we actually

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

1
2 had staff of the Commerce Department and OHCD go out
3 on many of these requests to review -- for example,
4 to make sure that all the lots that are listed as
5 vacant lots are vacant lots, and if it's a vacant
6 structure it's a vacant structure. We didn't want
7 to proceed with an acquisition strategy and have
8 those kinds of errors in there. We, obviously, did
9 not want to condemn occupied structures if that
10 wasn't the plan.

11 This particular team met seven times.
12 We were also highly interactive with District
13 Councilpersons and their staffs during this process
14 and concluded with a set of ordinances that you have
15 in front of you today. This included meeting after
16 the Interagency Review Team concluded its work,
17 meeting with each District Councilperson to go over
18 the recommendations of the Interagency Review Team.

19 This was a real partnership between the
20 Administration and Council to arrive at these. More
21 importantly, this is the first of an annualized
22 process in which we will be delivering ordinances
23 twice a year for land assembly. This particular
24 year, the bills were delivered in October and,
25 obviously, we're having our hearing today.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

1
2 Declarations of Taking will be filed in February for
3 land assembly that you will approve. In the spring
4 we're going to have the same particular cycle, and
5 it looks like what we would be doing right now is
6 introducing and providing ordinances in March,
7 hearings sometime in May, and then the filing of
8 Declarations of Taking in July. And we anticipate
9 this will be the regularized program that we will
10 work with District Councilpersons during the interim
11 period to define a set of takings, prepare
12 ordinances, deliver them to Council, and proceed on
13 a twice-a-year basis.

14 So that is how we arrived at where we
15 are today.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you. You're
17 going to now move to the specifics of the bill?

18 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just a couple
20 overview questions.

21 What is the total current acquisition
22 budget for NTI, as we speak today?

23 MR. WETZEL: The acquisition budget that
24 was approved in the Year One Program Statement was,
25 I believe, 14 million.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And what percentage
3 of the total acquisition budget do the bills before
4 us represent today?

5 MR. WETZEL: I'll get that number for
6 you.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

8 What I would also request in the
9 testimony from the Administration on each bill, if
10 we could talk about the specifics of how many
11 properties are being acquired for each bill so, as
12 you testify, going forward you can give me the
13 number of properties and how many relocations are
14 necessary as a result of the suggested or requested
15 takings. Also, if we could talk about -- and I'm
16 sure part and parcel of the discussion will be which
17 of these parcels of the bills are represented today
18 actually have developers waiting to do work and
19 they're lined up and ready to go and what price, if
20 any, the developers will pay for the parcels they're
21 going to ultimately acquire through this taking, and
22 how many of the parcels we're dealing with today
23 will be land banked, how many parcels we're taking
24 are currently owned by the RDA. That's all I would
25 like to do on a formatted basis so we have a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

coherent record for each bill as to those questions.

At this point now, are there requests from Councilmembers as to what they would like to see in the testimony as you move forward, I would ask them to make them now. Councilman Nutter is not here; I'm sure he has a few. I just wanted to try to set up a format that we could get this information without having to ask the same question over and over again.

Councilmember Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I would also ask that the director provide information with respect to the funding cycles, not necessarily solely with the City, i.e., CDBG dollars, but also PHFA and any other particular NOFAs that may become available during the course of the year, because I'm assuming that our attempts to acquire land will be correlated with the funding sources that will be available fiscal year.

MR. WETZEL: That is correct. Just to answer that question, the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency has a twice a year application process for low income housing tax credits. And the

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

2 way where it's going to be cycling acquisitions
3 would be to be able to have site control for their
4 March applications and for their October
5 applications. So some of the condemnations that
6 we're requesting today, properties would be made
7 available for the March application period at PHFA.
8 And obviously, the ones we do in the spring, we
9 would have site control for the fall application
10 period of PHFA. So we want to sort of time this
11 process to take advantage of that particular
12 resource.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And any other NOFAs
14 that may come, because I know sometimes we don't
15 know ahead of time. But if there's anything that
16 potentially may be coming out of HUD, it would be
17 helpful if you can provide that information.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

20 You will now proceed with testimony on
21 020666.

22 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairman, Members of
23 the Committee, I'm here to speak in support of Bill
24 020666, which would approve the 9th Amending to the
25 Redevelopment Proposal for the Eastwick Urban

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

Renewal Area.

The bill would authorize the Redevelopment Authority to change certain land use designations within the Eastwick Urban Renewal Plan. There are three parcels that will require a plan amendment.

The existing land use for RDA Disposition Parcels No. 5 and No. 8 would be changed from residential to recreation to conform to zoning changes that were approved by City Council. These parcels will be disposed of to the City of Philadelphia Department of Recreation.

Additionally, within the four-acre site generally situated in the rear of Island Avenue in the section of the Urban Renewal Plan pertaining to the Mini-Town Center would be revised to add as a permitted use "Apartments - Senior Rental." This change is necessary to ensure that the land use controls in the Urban Renewal Plan conform to the reuse proposal by the redeveloper, RGV Builders, Limited Liability Corporation.

The aforementioned changes have been reviewed and approved by the Eastwick Project Area Committee. Also, this amendment was approved by the

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020666

2 City Planning Commission at its meeting on October
3 15, 2002.

4 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
5 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
6 consideration of Bill No. 020666 and would ask for
7 the suspension of Council Rules to allow first
8 reading on December 12, 2002. Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
10 Identify yourself for the record.

11 MR. REDDING: Good morning, Mr.
12 Chairman, Madam President, and Members of the
13 Committee. I'm Richard Redding. I'm Acting
14 Director of Community Planning at the City Planning
15 Commission. First of all, let me briefly say that
16 the Planning Commission is pleased to be a part of
17 the Interagency Acquisitions Team that's responsible
18 for many of the bills before us today.

19 Regarding this first bill, No. 020666,
20 I'm here to testify on that bill. It involves
21 changes in the proposed land use and also changes in
22 the controls in Eastwick. The Planning Commission
23 approved this at its Planning Commission meeting of
24 October 15th, and I'm available to answer any
25 questions. Thank you.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
3 Council President Verna.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: All the
5 apartments will be market rate? They're not being
6 subsidized in any way, are they?

7 MR. WETZEL: It is our understanding
8 that these are market-rate rental housing, yes. And
9 the need for the change is that Mini-Town Center is
10 essentially a commercial site and so we need to
11 allow for residential development there.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I don't recall
13 how many apartments they intend to erect. Do you
14 have knowledge of that?

15 MR. WETZEL: I don't have the number,
16 but if you would like, we could find out from the
17 developer.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: No, I have
19 been briefed on it; I simply don't remember at this
20 point in time. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
22 Any other questions for these two
23 witnesses?

24 I also have listed Mr. Scott Mazo and
25 Joe McQuillan. If they're here and would like to

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 testify on this bill -- they're not here?

3 Is there anyone else here to testify on
4 Bill 020666?

5 Please come forward.

6 MR. SAUER: Actually, I should clarify
7 that. My testimony that I prepared raises about
8 four broader issues with regard to the acquisition
9 process, so it's not with regard to the specific
10 properties identified in this ordinance here. Do
11 you want to finish this ordinance first and --

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What I'd like to do,
13 with all due respect, is to try to figure out a way
14 to move some of the less controversial pieces
15 through and then -- I'd like to be as short as
16 possible, but I'm sure we're going spend a few hours
17 here talking about a lot of this stuff. So I'd
18 rather move some of the less controversial pieces
19 through, so if you would be kind enough to wait,
20 we'll call you back.

21 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Okay.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

23 Anyone else to testify on Bill 020666?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, we will

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 now move to Bill No. 020678.

3 This is an ordinance approving the
4 Redevelopment Proposal of the Redevelopment
5 Authority of the City of Philadelphia for the
6 redevelopment of the 45th and Sansom Urban Renewal
7 Area being the area generally bounded by Chestnut
8 Street on the north, South 44th Street on the east,
9 Walnut Street on the South and Farragut Street on
10 the west; approving the Urban Renewal Plan and
11 determining that such plan and redevelopment
12 proposal conform to the general locality plan and
13 make adequate provisions for individuals, business
14 concerns and families who are displaced; determining
15 the necessity for changes in and for zoning,
16 streets, alleys, public ways, street patterns,
17 location and relocation of the public utilities;
18 determining that the Urban Renewal Plan and
19 Redevelopment Proposal meet all non-discrimination
20 requirements of Federal, State and local laws and
21 the regulations and policies promulgated with
22 respect thereto; declaring that certain expressly
23 designated and provided for condemnation is not
24 imminent with respect to the Project; and declaring
25 the redevelopment undertakings in the Project to be

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 an important part of the City's program to remove
3 and prevent the spread of urban blight.

4 Please identify yourself for the record.

5 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson, Members of
6 the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel. I'm
7 Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of
8 the City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in
9 support of Bill No. 020667 (sic), which would
10 approve the redevelopment proposal for the Greenway
11 Urban Renewal Area.

12 This bill would authorize the
13 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 42 properties, 35
14 vacant structures and 7 vacant lots, for the
15 purposes of residential development. Neighborhood
16 Restorations Limited Partnership, a developer of
17 affordable housing has expressed an interest in
18 acquiring these properties for a tax-credit rental
19 project to serve low and moderate-income
20 individuals.

21 The acquisition will promote the
22 elimination of blight and result in expanding
23 housing opportunities for low and moderate-income
24 individuals while restoring abandoned properties to
25 the tax rolls.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 This amendment was approved by the City
3 Planning Commission at its meeting on October 12,
4 2002.

5 Mr. Chairman and Members of the
6 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
7 consideration of Bill 020667 and would also ask for
8 the suspension of Rules of Council to allow first
9 reading on December 12, 2002.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Does this also apply
11 to all the bills?

12 MR. WETZEL: Yes. Just to follow-up on
13 your request. This is the -- I don't think this is
14 the Greenway Urban Renewal Area, am I right?

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Sansom, 020678.

16 MR. WETZEL: Well, then I'll do my
17 testimony over. I am sorry. I am out of order, Mr.
18 Chairman.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I can understand
20 your confusion. Don't worry.

21 MR. WETZEL: Would you like me to go
22 back to this one?

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Let's go back and
24 start again.

25 MR. WETZEL: We're going do 020678.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You know what, I
3 don't know if this was your fault or my fault. I
4 read 020678 which is 45th and Sansom.

5 MR. WETZEL: All right. My apologies.

6 Mr. Chairman and Members of the
7 Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel, Executive
8 Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City
9 of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in support Bill
10 No. 020678, which would approve the redevelopment
11 proposal of the Redevelopment Authority of the City
12 of Philadelphia for the redevelopment of the 45th
13 and Sansom Urban Renewal Area.

14 This bill would authorize the
15 Redevelopment Authority to acquire eight vacant lots
16 in order to eliminate blight and support a key NTI
17 objective which is a preparation of land and making
18 it available for future residential development.

19 The properties to be acquired are
20 detailed on the accompanying fact sheet.

21 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
22 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
23 consideration of Bill No. 020678, and would also ask
24 the suspension of Council Rules to allow first
25 reading on December 12, 2002.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
3 for your testimony.

4 Why don't you identify yourself and give
5 your testimony?

6 MR. REDDING: Good morning again. I'm
7 Richard Redding, representing the City Plan
8 Commission.

9 The Planning Commission approved the
10 45th and Sansom Urban Renewal Area at its meeting in
11 October 2002. Previously, the Planning Commission
12 had established a new redevelopment area in the same
13 area. And testifying on this bill, I'm here to
14 testify in favor and I'm happy to answer any
15 questions.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Are there any
17 questions for these witnesses?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, is Mr.
20 Stoddart and Mr. Wingert in the room to testify?

21 Please come forward. Good morning.

22 MR. STODDART: Good morning. Mr.
23 Chairman, Madam President, Councilmembers and
24 special guests, my name is Blane Stoddart. I'm the
25 Executive Director of The Partnership CDC in West

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

Philadelphia. Thank you for giving The Partnership CDC the opportunity to provide comments on City Ordinance 020678, the Urban Renewal Area Plan for 45th and Sansom Street area. This area is in need of great revitalization and The Partnership CDC fully supports this ordinance.

Over the past few years, we've been working with existing residents and various other stakeholders to come up with a strategy to stabilize this neighborhood. Despite our efforts, it's been a struggle to mitigate the problems with abandoned housing and drug trafficking in this area.

Ever since the announcement of the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative from the Mayor's Office, there's been momentum building towards revitalizing this area. If you recall, 45th and Sansom is where Mayor John street signed the NTI bill, kicking off one of the most important campaigns to eliminate and prevent the spread of blight in the history of the City of Philadelphia.

With the support of Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell who brought the Mayor out to 45th and Sansom, The Partnership CDC has proposed a plan to the City Planning Commission and the Redevelopment

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

Authority to revitalize the neighborhood affected by the 45th and Sansom Street Urban Renewal Area.

Nearly 50 properties acquired using funds available through the NTI Program will be redeveloped into housing for homeownership.

The Partnership CDC has already entered into agreement to purchase the first 20 properties privately for immediate development on the 4400 block of Sansom Street. Rehabilitation of these 20 properties is anticipated to begin in the spring of 2003. The Redevelopment Proposal offers nearly 47 additional properties for redevelopment and sale to families of all income levels. The success and flow of this project hinges greatly on the timely acquisition and/or demolition of properties enlisted in the Urban Renewal Plan.

As a major stakeholder in the community, I offer the full support of The Partnership CDC for this bill. I strongly urge passage by City Council and the Mayor, and I look forward to working with the Redevelopment Authority in implementing this plan. Thank you very much.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much for your testimony.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 Any questions for this witness?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, is
5 there anyone else in the room to testify on this
6 bill?

7 Please come forward.

8 MS. WORMLEY: Mr. Chairman, Madam
9 President, and Members of Council, my name is Dianne
10 Louise Wormley, and I am the Director of
11 Neighborhood Initiatives at the University City
12 District.

13 The District's mission is to build
14 effective partnerships to maintain a clean and safe
15 environment and to promote, plan, and advocate for
16 University City's diverse urban community.

17 As a major stakeholder, we have convened
18 a group of people to meet informally for over a year
19 to look at how each organization is working to
20 improve our community. As we discussed our
21 community, it became clear that Sansom Street,
22 particularly from 44th to 46th, is central to all of
23 our efforts, be they small stakeholders or large.
24 For too long these blocks have suffered from benign
25 neglect and have become a center of drug dealing and

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

crime. But rather than giving up, a core group of homeowners, neighbors, and stakeholders have developed a wonderful new playground.

Over the years, many community members, institutional representatives, elected officials, and particularly homeowners on the blocks have stressed the need for comprehensive approach to dealing with these problems. The time has come to deal with the blighted properties and the neglect. The homeowners, community members, and stakeholders are anxious to see the revitalization of this area begin. Timely acquisition and demolition of the properties in the 45th and Sansom Redevelopment Area Plan are essential for the success of any revitalization effort. The properties have been identified. The Partnership CDC is willing to take the leadership development role. The University City District wholeheartedly supports the acquisition and demolition of the properties as the first crucial step towards revitalization of the Sansom Street area. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Any questions for this witness?

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to
4 testify on this bill?

5 MS. STOVER: Good morning.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good morning.

7 MS. STOVER: My name its Kate Stover,
8 and I represent the Spruce Hill Community
9 Association and the Sansom Street Community
10 Coalition. I come here to voice strong support for
11 The Partnership CDC's 45th and Sansom Urban Renewal
12 Area Plan and the 45th and Sansom Redevelopment Area
13 Plan.

14 Our community has been working hard for
15 five years to rejuvenate this area of Spruce Hill
16 around 45th and Sansom streets. We have had
17 long-term problems with crime, including robbery and
18 homicides and rampant drug activity, abandoned
19 housing, and neglectful landlords. We have
20 coordinated with the Police Department and reduced
21 crime significantly, rehabilitated a pivotal corner
22 playground with the help of the Mural Arts Program
23 and Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell's office,
24 organized clean-ups, tree plantings, brought
25 neighbors, businesses, and neighborhood

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

organizations together. But one critical piece of this puzzle has always been missing: A formal organized plan to rehabilitate abandoned, decayed housing and to take control of the dilapidated housing owned by absentee landlords while reusing vacant lots where there are now covered with weeds and trash.

The Partnership CDC brings our community this missing puzzle piece. They have worked hard to produce a viable housing program that will bring more residents and families back to this neglected area. We have incredible Victorian housing stock that needs to be used and lots of people who want to live in our neighborhood.

Please help us reclaim these houses before it is too late and make them into homes. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Any questions for this witness?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, is there anyone else to testify on this bill?

Please come forward.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

2 MS. SILVERMAN: Good morning. My name
3 is Jane Silverman. I'm the Program Director of the
4 Salvation Army Faith and Emergency Relocation
5 Program. It's located on the 4400 block of Walnut
6 Street. Along with Kate, I've been a member of the
7 Spruce Hill Community Civic Association and the
8 Sansom Street over five years.

9 We've worked diligently to revamp an
10 abandoned lot into a tot lot filled with used
11 equipment. With the help of Councilwoman Jannie
12 Blackwell, we managed to install new equipment and
13 new turf that will be dedicated this Thursday, and
14 you're all invited to come at 2:00 for the ribbon
15 cutting of Rainbow Park.

16 It's been a pivotal change in the
17 community. Sansom Street has been devastated by
18 crime, violence, drugs, murders, just total
19 abandonment and a lack of sensitivity to the
20 community. The playground has acted as a core to
21 revitalize the community and bring the neighbors
22 back into a coalition to face the changes that need
23 to occur.

24 As someone who is committed to
25 supporting and protecting my residents who are

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020678

homeless women and families, I find it appalling that we can't provide safer streets and more clear information about streets. For example, Moravian, that is between Sansom and Walnut, is constantly filled with drug dealing, prostitution, trash. We can't get an answer about whether or not it's a street or who owns it or whose responsible for it to make the necessary changes.

We're totally in support of the CDC's move toward Sansom. It's the missing piece, like Kate said, in a puzzle that we've been trying to put together for five years. We've made tremendous strides in coalescing the neighborhood. We now need to do something with the properties that are abandoned. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

Mr. Wetzel, did you testify as to the number of properties in any relocations?

MR. WETZEL: Yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You did? Okay, it's in the record.

Anyone else to testify on this bill?

MR. STODDART: One last person, Mr. Chairman.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

MS. REVIS: Good morning. My name is Betty Revis, and I am President of the Walnut Hill Community Association. And we are in full support of Blane Stoddart's CDC initiative with this project.

Walnut Hill has been involved with the CDC a number of years. The area that we are talking about is one of the worst blighted areas, I think, in the Walnut Hill and Spruce Hill community: Drugs, prostitution, run-down housing. It is one of those situations where you are afraid to drive through after dark. During the day, you can go through and you see people standing around selling drugs openly. So Walnut Hill is in full support of something being done to this blighted area. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Any questions for this witness?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to testify on this bill?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

2 We'll now move to Bill No. 020669, which
3 is an ordinance approving the 2nd Amendment of the
4 Redevelopment Proposal for the Point Breeze East
5 Urban Renewal Area, being the area generally bounded
6 by the southerly side of Washington Avenue on the
7 north, the westerly side of Broad Street on the
8 east, the northerly side of Moore Street on the
9 south and the easterly side of 20th Street on the
10 west, including the 2nd Amendment to the Urban
11 Renewal Plan and the 1st Amendment to the Relocation
12 Plan, which provides, inter alia, for the expansion
13 of the western boundary of the Project Area from
14 South 20th Street to South 25th Street and to the
15 rear property lines on the west side of South Taylor
16 Street between Reed Street and Tasker Street; a name
17 change of the Urban Renewal Area from Point Breeze
18 East Urban Renewal Area to Point Breeze Urban
19 Renewal Area; the additional land acquisition of
20 approximately 41 properties for residential and
21 related uses; the additional land acquisition of
22 approximately 13 properties for commercial and
23 related uses; the provision of certain relocation
24 services, as required by law; a change of the land
25 use and related controls for 2202 to 2238 Alter

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

2 Street to commercial and related uses and declaring
3 that condemnation is not imminent with respect to
4 the Project.

5 Please identify yourself for the record.

6 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson and Members
7 of the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel,
8 Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of
9 the City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in
10 support of Bill No. 020669, which would approve the
11 2nd Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the
12 Point Breeze East Urban Renewal Area.

13 This bill would authorize the
14 Redevelopment Authority to expand and change the
15 name of the Point Breeze East Urban Renewal Area to
16 the Point Breeze Urban Renewal Area. A total of 54
17 properties would be acquired under this bill. In
18 addition, this bill would establish land uses
19 consistent with the reuses proposed for the acquired
20 properties. The boundary expansion and name change
21 for the Point Breeze Urban Renewal Area will make it
22 conform with the City Planning Commission's expanded
23 Point Breeze Redevelopment Area. The current Point
24 Breeze East Urban Renewal Area is bounded on the
25 north by Washington Avenue, on the east by South

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

Broad Street, on the south by Moore Street, and on the west by South 20th Street. This proposal would expand the westerly boundary out to South 25th Street and the rear property lines of the houses on the west side of South Taylor Street between Reed Street and Tasker Street.

Forty-one properties, 21 vacant lots, 19 vacant residential structures, and 1 occupied residential building would be acquired on the 2300 blocks of Cross Street and Greenwich Street for future residential development. The Office of Housing and Community Development and the Planning Commission have worked with area residents to develop a reuse plan that includes affordable housing development and open space. This bill would also establish the land use in this portion of the Urban Renewal Area as "Residential and Related."

Thirteen properties: 3 vacant buildings, 2212-2214 and 2216 and 2218 Alter Street; and 10 vacant lots, 2220-2238, would be acquired to support the expansion of Octo Enterprises. It's an adjacent furniture business that recently relocated to the Point Breeze neighborhood from Manayunk, which is a real interesting relocation activity.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

2 Octo Enterprises would expect to create
3 approximately 30 jobs in association with this
4 expansion. This bill would also establish a land
5 use of commercial and related for the 2200 block of
6 Alter Street to reflect this new activity.

7 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
8 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
9 consideration of Bill 020669 and would also ask the
10 suspension of Council Rules to allow first reading
11 on Thursday, December 12, 2002.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I suspect that if
13 you make no mention of relocation, there aren't any.

14 MR. WETZEL: There is one relocation.
15 Ther's one occupied structure in the Greenwich Cross
16 Street activity.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That is a
18 rental property?

19 MR. WETZEL: I don't know the answer to
20 that, but I can find it out for you. But I think
21 this is what -- you can correct me if I'm wrong.
22 But I think this is what the residents in the
23 neighborhood, working with your office and the
24 Planning Commission, came up with. But we'll try to
25 find the answer to that question for that for you.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There's no other
3 reason than just having the record clear as to if
4 there is a relocation or if there isn't.

5 MR. WETZEL: There is one relocation in
6 this.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

8 Do you have any testimony to add?

9 Any questions?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: There is one
11 vacant property on Greenwich Street and the owner is
12 saying that he would like to rehab it. I think we
13 can afford him the opportunity to do so within 18
14 months.

15 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: If he does not
17 agree to that -- and I think we ought to get
18 something in writing to that effect.

19 MR. WETZEL: We have several options.
20 If Council approves an ordinance such as this
21 ordinance and then the Mayor signs it, it still
22 takes a vote of the Redevelopment Authority Board on
23 a Declaration of Taking and to file that. There are
24 several options: One is in lieu of condemnation we
25 can enter into a rehabilitation agreement with the

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

1
2 owner and give them a specific timetable. If they
3 fail to follow that, we could come back and file a
4 Declaration of Taking later on to enforce it. The
5 other option is, you file the Declaration of Taking
6 and then you revest title under conditions that they
7 rehabilitate the property. So we have two choices
8 that we can enter into. Even if you pass this bill,
9 it doesn't require us to use our eminent domain
10 powers.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

13 MR. WETZEL: Is that a request that you
14 would like undertake?

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Yes. I
16 believe the gentleman may be here. And you would
17 have to get a letter from him or prepare the letter
18 and have him sign it.

19 MR. WETZEL: Fine. Thank you, Council
20 President.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
22 Please identify yourself for the record.

23 MR. REDDING: Good morning. I'm Richard
24 Redding, representing the Planning Commission
25 testifying on Bill No. 020669, in the Point Breeze

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

2 Urban Renewal Area.

3 This involves acquisitions mostly on
4 Cross Street where the Planning Commission performed
5 a role in preparing a community plan for that
6 section of Point Breeze. This bill also involves
7 land use change on Alter Street. The Planning
8 Commission approved it at its October meeting. And
9 I'm available to answer any questions.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

11 Any questions for these witnesses?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to
14 testify on this bill?

15 Please come forward.

16 MR. JEVREMOVIC: Good morning. My name
17 is Andrew Jevremovic. I'm the owner and President
18 of Octo Enterprises. And our building takes up
19 about half of Alter Street where the properties from
20 2212 to 2238 are located. All of the street was
21 abandoned when we arrived there in August of 2000.
22 And you can see by these garbage-filled pictures,
23 that's what we came to. Our building and the rest
24 of the properties had been abandoned for 15 years.
25 The people we bought it from had it for five years,

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

2 never paid taxes, picked it up at sheriff's sale and
3 left it the way it was, accumulating garbage.

4 We came there, not to fight blight, but
5 just to eliminate it; and we've done that. Our half
6 of the street we've cleaned up. We've cleaned up
7 the other half of the street as well.

8 The properties in question, the two
9 structures that are there, we've boarded up. We've
10 kept them safe. We've removed dogs, people, a lot
11 of garbage, and we intend to do the same thing with
12 the rest of the street.

13 You can see some photos, what we have
14 proposed to do. There will be a wall there and not
15 a chain link fence. We are an art-related business
16 and we intend to have something that looks
17 art-related there.

18 We purchased the property August of
19 2000. By June of 2001, we were living in the
20 building and operating our business there. We
21 haven't wasted any time, and we don't intend to
22 waste time with these properties. We intend to get
23 right to it. A couple of the properties, the
24 structures, if they're to be saved, they have to be
25 saved very soon. So we intend to get right on

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

2 those.

3 And since we made it our responsibility
4 to keep the entire street clean, as it helps our
5 business and it helps the quality of life for us,
6 owning these properties would greatly help us in
7 doing that.

8 We need some of this space for parking.
9 We'd like to expand our business, which is wholesale
10 only right now, to also a retail business. Parking
11 would be essential. It's an extremely narrow street
12 with no parking.

13 We've also fixed up part of the
14 building -- it's rather large -- for rental spaces.
15 And we have other businesses in the building now.
16 We have a photographer, we have a design studio, and
17 we have an artist who all rent space from us. The
18 building will eventually have 11 rental spaces as
19 well as a large showroom for the furniture business.

20 One of the buildings we'd like to
21 acquire would be a good workshop space for the
22 business. It's got a cement floor, it's perfectly
23 suited. And the lot's perfectly suited for, not
24 only parking, but also we'd like to expand our
25 business to a garden business. We have a partner

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

2 who is interested in helping us with that. And it
3 would help facilitate all of those things.

4 The last people who bought some of those
5 properties at sheriff's sale never paid taxes, left
6 the garbage there. We wish we had the money to buy
7 it; we don't. Our business, we've taken our capital
8 and we put it right into that street. And we've
9 received some wonderful help from our Councilwoman
10 and from other departments in the City. And we'd
11 like to continue to do what we've been doing there.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Great. Thank you
13 for your testimony and thank you for your vision and
14 commitment to the City. I think you had a pretty
15 nice story in the paper recently about your
16 business.

17 MR. JEVREMOVIC: The gentleman, I just
18 saw him.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anthony?

20 MR. JEVREMOVIC: He didn't say anything
21 so he doesn't have to hide from me.

22 (Laughter.)

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you again.

24 MR. JEVREMOVIC: Thank you very much.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

testimony on this bill?

Please come forward.

MR. MCCLELLAN: Good morning. My name is David McClellan. I'm a citizen voter and a neighbor. I've lived in the neighborhood since 1978 and have watched it really plummet. When Andrew and River bought their building, it was a real hell hole. And I've watched one other furniture business that I dealt with which was Ellsworth Street move out to the Northeast precisely because the neighborhood was insupportable. To tell you the truth, my wife and I have also thought about moving. But to see somebody young with vision come in and literally single-handed clean up a neighborhood and keep it clean merely by vigilance, by attention, by calling the sanitation police, by prohibiting dog-fighting in the street, by stopping prostitution each morning literally by coming out on the street and saying, "Please stop this. I live here. I don't want you conducting your drug business or your prostitution on my street."

That's precisely what Philadelphia needs: Young people with vision, with vigor.

I'm wholeheartedly approving of this

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020669

1
2 ordinance to transfer the property to them. As a
3 taxpayer and voter, I'd love to have people come in
4 and I'd love to support them in doing this. Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And that will
7 keep you in the City, will it not?

8 MR. MCCLELLAN: Yes. Actually, I moved
9 to Philadelphia because I came to Drexel for
10 graduate school and I never intended to live here.
11 But I've grown to love the City, and I've bought and
12 renovated my own house and I'd like to see other
13 people do it. As a constituent of yours,
14 Councilwoman Verna, I'm happy to be here, but I need
15 help and I need people like Andrew and River to help
16 me do that.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: He's done a
18 marvelous job; he really has. Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to
20 testify on this bill?

21 MS. SHERON: Good morning. My name is
22 Claudia Sheron (ph), the President of the Point
23 Breeze Development Coalition and the Executive
24 Director of South Philadelphia Homes. I come here
25 to support the new venture, and I pray that we get

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020686

2 ventures like River and Andrew because they've done
3 an excellent job in the 2200 block of Alter Street.
4 And we'd like to, you know, direct more people to
5 come down into Point Breeze.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Claudia, I
8 want to publically thank you for working so hard
9 trying to help us form this NTI Program in Point
10 Breeze. You've given us an awful lot of your time,
11 effort, and energy, and I want you to know how much
12 we appreciate it.

13 MS. SHERON: You're quite welcome.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to
15 testify on this bill?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, we will
18 now move to Bill 020686, which is an ordinance
19 approving the redevelopment proposal of the
20 Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia
21 for the redevelopment of the Brewerytown Urban
22 Renewal Area being the area generally bounded by
23 Oxford Street on the north, 30th Street on the east,
24 Girard Avenue on the south, 33rd Street on the west
25 and the Amtrak Railroad right-of-way on the

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020686

1
2 northwest; approving the Urban Renewal Plan and
3 determining that such plan and redevelopment
4 proposal conform to the general locality plan and
5 make adequate provisions for individuals, business
6 concerns and families who are displaced; determining
7 the necessity for changes in and for zoning,
8 streets, alleys, public ways, street patterns,
9 location and relocation of public utilities;
10 determining that the Urban Renewal Plan and
11 Development Proposal meet all non-discrimination
12 requirements of Federal, State, and local laws and
13 the regulations and policies promulgated with
14 respect thereto; declaring that certain expressly
15 designated and provided for condemnation is not
16 imminent with respect to the Project; and declaring
17 the redevelopment undertakings in the Project to be
18 an important part of the City's program to remove
19 and prevent the spread of urban blight.

20 Please identify yourself for the record.

21 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson, Members of
22 the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel, Executive
23 Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City
24 of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in support of
25 Bill No. 020686, which would approve the

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020686

2 Redevelopment Proposal of the Redevelopment
3 Authority of the City of Philadelphia for the
4 redevelopment of the Brewerytown Urban Renewal Area.

5 A total 17 properties, 12 vacant lots
6 and 5 vacant structures, Brewerytown Urban Renewal
7 Area. Westrum Development Company has expressed an
8 interest in acquiring these properties from
9 Redevelopment Authority for potential residential
10 and commercial redevelopment.

11 This amendment, which would result in
12 the enhancement of the community, was approved by
13 the Planning Commission at their meeting of October
14 15, 2002.

15 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
16 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
17 consideration of Bill No. 020686 and would ask the
18 suspension of Council Rules to allow first reading
19 on December 12, 2002.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you for your
21 testimony.

22 Please identify yourself.

23 MR. REDDING: Good morning. I'm Richard
24 Redding representing the Planning Commission,
25 testifying on Bill 020686, involving the

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020686

2 Redevelopment Proposal for Brewerytown Urban Renewal
3 Area.

4 The Planning Commission did approve this
5 at the October meeting. And prior to that, the
6 Planning Commission prepared a blight certification
7 study and amendments of the Redevelopment Area Plan
8 to facilitate this action.

9 I'm here to answer any questions if you
10 need me. Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you much very
12 for your testimony.

13 Any questions for these witnesses?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to
16 testify on the bill?

17 Please come forward.

18 MR. ROSENTHAL: Good morning, Mr.
19 Chairperson, Members of the Committee. My name is
20 Robert Rosenthal. I'm the Vice President and
21 Director of Land Acquisition for Westrum Development
22 Company. I'm here today to speak on behalf of
23 Ordinance 020686.

24 Westrum Development Company is a
25 privately-held real estate development company

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020686

specializing in market-rate housing. Specifically,
our focus going into the new millennium is to build
market-rate houses in the City of Philadelphia.

We have made quite an investment in the
Brewerytown area that this ordinance is subject to
and have acquired many properties at arms-length
transaction, and the properties that are subject to
this ordinance were ones that we were unable to
purchase through an arms-length transaction.

We, therefore, respectfully request that
this ordinance be passed in order to obtain these
properties, which are integral in creating the
development and redevelopment of this area into up
to 600 to 800 market-rate houses.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
for your testimony.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Did you say
600 to 800?

MR. ROSENTHAL: Six to eight hundred,
yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilmember
Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I apologize, Mr.
Chairman. I was slightly distracted, so I missed

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020686

2 the tail-end of the gentleman's -- either his
3 testimony or response to a question. Could you say
4 what you said again, please?

5 MR. ROSENTHAL: I said that we've made
6 many acquisitions in this area, and the 17
7 properties are integral for us in order to develop
8 additional houses, which could be as many as 600 to
9 800, not necessarily on these 17 properties, but in
10 relationship to the entire properties that we're
11 looking at.

12 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Build as many
13 as you'd like. I was just trying to understand how
14 --

15 MR. ROSENTHAL: I may not be speaking
16 that well this morning.

17 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Because that would
18 be a very tall building. Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
20 Councilmember Clarke.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
22 Chairman.

23 Mr. Rosenthal, good morning. Could you
24 clarify the specifics of the types the property? I
25 think that may be one of the reasons. When you talk

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020686

about 800 properties traditionally, you're thinking about several acres. Can you talk about the specifics whereas some of the properties may be multiple-family units, properties like that; not to talk about the specific locations, but just the type of houses so people have a better sense of what you're talking about.

MR. ROSENTHAL: The type of housing that we would like to build is townhouses and the conversion of existing warehouse buildings into condominiums for units. So the property is vast, as you can see, and there would be a mix of uses based on the character of the neighborhood and the existing neighborhood that exists to blend it in with the residents that live there. We're not looking to build a high-rise. It's close to 12 to 14 acres that we've obtained site control of.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just one question generally. I know you've had successful projects both in Councilmember Nutter's district and Councilmember O'Neill's district. And it's likely you will be able to obtain these 17 properties, but

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020686

2 would you be doing this -- obviously you've been
3 doing the acquisition privately. Without the 17
4 properties, you would still be doing this kind of
5 development or planning to do this kind of
6 development?

7 MR. ROSENTHAL: Well, we believe in
8 order to develop in the City as we did in Councilman
9 Nutter's district as well as Councilman O'Neill's
10 that we need a large number. In both of those
11 districts, it amounted to 72 houses and they were
12 single family.

13 In Council President Verna's district,
14 we'll be redeveloping the Kapart (ph) housing site
15 into 220 homes.

16 In this neighborhood, we believe we need
17 large-scale housing to change the flair of the
18 neighborhood to bring market rate to the area. And
19 in order to do that, these 17 properties, although
20 if you were to take them one each you couldn't put
21 the number of houses, but they're puzzle in order
22 to --

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: How many acres does
24 the 17 properties represent?

25 MR. ROSENTHAL: I couldn't give you an

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 answer to that question.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just curiosity.

4 Any other questions for this witness?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to

7 testify on this bill?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, thank
10 you very much for your testimony.

11 MR. ROSENTHAL: Thank you for your time.
12 And we request the passage.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

14 Bill No. 020668, which is an ordinance
15 approving the 13th Amendment of the Redevelopment
16 Proposal for the South Central Urban Renewal Area,
17 being the area beginning at the intersection of the
18 southerly side of Washington Avenue projected and
19 the easterly side of Delaware Avenue, including the
20 13th Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan and the
21 12th Amendment to the Relocation Plan, which
22 provides, inter alia, for the additional land
23 acquisition of approximately 24 properties for
24 residential and related uses; the provision of
25 certain relocation services, as required by law; a

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 change of the land use and related controls for the
3 north side of Washington Avenue between South
4 Chadwick Street and South 19th Street from
5 residential and related to commercial and related
6 uses and declaring the condemnation is not imminent
7 with respect to the Project.

8 Please identify yourself for the record.

9 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson and Members
10 of the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel,
11 Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of
12 the City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in
13 support of Bill No. 020668, which would approve the
14 13th Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the
15 South Central Urban Renewal Area.

16 This bill would authorize the
17 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 24 properties to
18 support key NTI goals, eliminating blight, promoted
19 market-rate residential development and changing
20 land use to reflect existing conditions.

21 A total of four properties, two vacant
22 lots, one vacant building and one occupied building,
23 would be acquired for residential development by
24 Universal Community Homes in construction with
25 SOSNA. The properties, which are located near South

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 17th Street and Carpenter Street, are integral to
3 their plan to construct 24 new ownership units for
4 sale to low and moderate-income families.

5 Three properties, all vacant lots
6 located at 2310-2314 Grays Ferry Avenue, would be
7 acquired for redevelopment as affordable senior
8 housing by ODUNDE.

9 Three properties, vacant lots, located
10 at 759 and 761 South 20th Street and 1907 Fitzwater
11 Street, would be acquired and redeveloped as open
12 space for adjacent property owners.

13 Fourteen properties would be acquired
14 for redevelopment as market-rate housing under a
15 plan developed by Universal Community Homes and
16 Fannie Mae for the Southwest Center City area.

17 Finally, the amendment would also revise
18 the proposed land use along the north side of
19 Washington Avenue between South Chadwick Street and
20 South 19th Street from Residential and Related" to
21 "Commercial and Related" to reflect existing
22 conditions.

23 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
24 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
25 consideration of Bill No. 020668 and would ask the

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 suspension of Council Rules to allow first reading
3 on Thursday, December 12, 2002.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Council President
5 Verna.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman.

8 For the record, I would like to state
9 that my office will work closely with the RDA and
10 the community to ensure that no takings will occur
11 on properties where there are live development
12 plans. We do understand that very clearly?

13 MR. WETZEL: Yes, ma'am.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Any other questions
16 for Mr. Wetzel?

17 Did you understand? You looked puzzled.

18 MR. WETZEL: No, I'm not puzzled. I
19 think I understand the Councilwoman. It was similar
20 to her previous question. If there's a live party
21 who has acquired a property or has a property
22 that's willing to rehabilitate that property --

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Or in the process
24 of redevelopment.

25 MR. WETZEL: Right, or in the process of

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 doing so, we might enter into a rehabilitation
3 agreement to ensure that and withhold the eminent
4 domain aspect of it pending their completion of the
5 property. Am I correct in that?

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Not to be too
8 specific, but you said "we might." I think she said
9 you will.

10 MR. WETZEL: We will.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilmember
12 DiCicco.

13 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you, Mr.
14 Chairman.

15 Mr. Martello is in the back. He owns a
16 property in the area.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: He's on the list.

18 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: He's on the list to
19 speak? Okay. He wanted to make sure that he's part
20 of that rehabilitation agreement as well.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Any and all
22 properties that are on the list, we will follow that
23 procedure.

24 MR. WETZEL: The experience, Councilman
25 DiCicco, and his office worked with us in the Martin

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1 Luther King taking, and I think we ended up with
2 about 13 properties being re-vested and
3 rehabilitated as a result of that. But I think the
4 good news is if the owner does really do it, there's
5 not an issue. But if the owner doesn't make the
6 repairs or doesn't rehabilitate it, we still have
7 that in our pocket. And if you so said move
8 forward, we could move forward.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Since this
11 list had been prepared, it's my understanding that
12 some of these properties may be in the process of
13 being sold. So we would certainly want that sale to
14 go forward. Why would we take the property?

15 MR. WETZEL: I think I received a fax
16 from SOSNA that had a list of properties. Some of
17 those were under active agreements of sale. I think
18 the issue is whether or not they're included in the
19 Declaration of Taking. And they do not have to be
20 included in that if your office so requests that
21 they not be included in that. I think what it does
22 give us, though, is the hammer if somebody doesn't
23 fix up their property, we can go back and use this
24 power.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That's

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

entirely different. But I believe that if there's an opportunity for the properties to be sold at a far more market value than we would be taking it for, I think the City benefits.

MR. WETZEL: Absolutely. And we will continue to work with your office as this moves forward.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please do.

MR. WETZEL: And we will only file a Declaration of Taking on those properties that your office supports.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
Any other questions for Mr. Wetzel?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yes.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
Chairman.

Just two quick questions. One, in the part of your testimony where you make reference to Fannie Mae, can you tell me a little bit about that proposal? I'm intrigued by the Fannie Mae component of this. What exactly are they doing?

MR. WETZEL: Fannie Mae has created a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 number of partnerships around the United States in
3 different cities. There's one I'm familiar with in
4 Washington, D.C, around Howard University where
5 they've partnered with a local non-profit to
6 essentially redevelop an area. Essentially, Fannie
7 Mae has chosen to partner with Universal Community
8 Homes and bring whatever resources -- and I think
9 that's in the process of being defined right now --
10 that Fannie Mae can to assist Universal in
11 redeveloping that particular community.

12 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Are those resources
13 financial in nature?

14 MR. WETZEL: I think part of it is
15 financial. I think what Fannie Mae is in a position
16 to do is to bring special mortgage products, for
17 example, to bring some kind of maybe unique home
18 improvement loans, to able to maybe lend more than
19 the fair market value in a purchase rehab loan
20 situation. But I think they're in the process of
21 working through the variety of issues in terms of
22 this relationship. But as you know, Fannie Mae is a
23 huge corporation and has a lot of resources. And I
24 know we're pressing them to do the maximum amount
25 that they can do. But I think it's in the process

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 of negotiation right now. But they have been -- let
3 me be clear about that. They have selected
4 Universal as a partner and are actively working with
5 them as a partner.

6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Are you aware as to
7 whether or not there is any opportunity for other
8 development entities to participate with Fannie Mae
9 or in that same fashion or is it a situation where
10 there's an exclusive designation?

11 MR. WETZEL: Obviously, I cannot speak
12 for Fannie, but I think what they want to do is
13 engage in a specific relationship in a target area.
14 Maybe after they've had success, look elsewhere.
15 But I think what they want to do is concentrate
16 their resources in one area.

17 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Last question for
18 the moment, and I know there will be other
19 opportunities for questions, but the thought just
20 occurs to me, I see the maps on the big boards over
21 there continue to change. Mr. Brown is doing an
22 excellent job keeping us informed as to what's going
23 on. Are those available in a smaller scale,
24 user-friendly size that we might actually be able to
25 see each of the individual proposals as well as a

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 city-wide map?

3 MR. WETZEL: Yes, we can do that. We
4 will reproduce those for the Members of the
5 Committee.

6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Just give it
7 to the Chair and then everyone can get a copy.

8 MR. WETZEL: Okay.

9 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
12 Please identify yourself and proceed.

13 MR. REDDING: Hello again, Mr. Chairman,
14 Madam President, and Members of the Committee. I'm
15 Richard Redding representing the Planning Commission
16 testifying on Bill 020668. This involves the
17 Redevelopment Proposal for South Central Urban
18 Renewal Area, proposing acquisitions and proposing a
19 change in land use along a portion of the Washington
20 Avenue corridor.

21 The Planning Commission approved it at
22 its October meeting. And I can answer questions, if
23 you'd like. Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Any questions for
25 this witness?

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

4 Ms. Fernandez, are you going to testify?

5 I saw you moving towards the front.

6 MS. FERNANDEZ: Good morning. I'm Lois
7 Fernandez, President of ODUNDE. ODUNDE has been
8 around for 27 years. We're South Philadelphia all
9 the way. Like Councilwoman Anna Verna who's been
10 there lifelong, her father and my mother were
11 politicians together. Jim Kenney, other politicians
12 who lived lifelong South Philadelphia. That's the
13 way we feel about South Philadelphia with ODUNDE,
14 that we're there, we will be there.

15 We come here today to ask for the
16 Council's support in the bill for the acquisition of
17 2310, 12, 14 Grays Ferry Avenue. We want to fulfill
18 a dream, a dream of building a congregate housing.
19 We've bumped it down from assisted to congregate
20 housing for senior citizens there in Grays Ferry
21 right off of 23rd and South Street.

22 The number of senior citizens in our
23 area, like across this country, is growing. Our
24 area has been undergoing gentrification for the past
25 40 years. Many of our elders can no longer afford

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 to stay in there. This Council has had people come
3 in front of you talking about their taxes, and as
4 Councilwoman Verna who has been supportive of us
5 throughout our 27 years can attest to, we in South
6 Central have fought that fight. What we got slapped
7 with about 20 years ago was a six-year equalization
8 plan. It's been a long, hard struggle there in
9 South Central with us, which we still call South
10 Philly.

11 I'm just asking you all to give this to
12 ODUNDE because we deserve it. We have paid our dues
13 there. We have given to this City a cultural
14 organization that is known not just across this
15 country, but throughout the world. ODUNDE wants to
16 move on to a higher ground by building this complex
17 for senior citizens called the Oshune Village (ph).
18 We intend for that to be such an attraction that it
19 will be a tourist attraction also for what we intend
20 to build there. We are not being emotional about
21 it, but we know what our plans are. It will
22 represent, truly, Philadelphia, what we plan to
23 build there.

24 At this time, our plans, which are
25 subject to change, are 14 or 16 units for senior

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

housing on those three lots. We own the lot next to it, 2308, which we acquired in 1998. We got that right in the nick of time because, as most of you know, the property in our area has blown out of the roof.

For properties across the street from where I live and Fitzwater Street to go 350,000 is criminal because our young people like my children cannot afford to buy in their own neighborhood. This is nothing new. I know, Jim, you can attest to that, those who live in Penns Port, Queens Village, they can attest to that. Young people cannot buy property.

What we're saying is, we want to provide for those seniors to remain in our area who have been there. That part of South Philly is their life.

Again, we ask you to support this bill, to extend to ODUNDE and to give us control of 2310, 12, 14 Grays Ferry Avenue.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

Any questions for Ms. Fernandez?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 for your testimony.

3 Would you like to identify yourself,
4 please?

5 MR. MANDEL: Good morning I'm Alan
6 Mandel, I'm the Treasurer and Zoning Chair for
7 SOSNA, South of South Neighborhood Association.
8 SOSNA supports the efforts of ODUNDE to acquire
9 properties at 2310, 12, and 14 Grays Ferry Avenue.
10 One of the purposes of this acquisition is
11 affordable housing for seniors, and we believe that
12 this is one of the most important needs in our area.
13 Rents, sale prices, and real estate taxes have risen
14 at an alarming rate in the area, and senior citizens
15 are one of the most vulnerable groups in the area.

16 We are certain that when this senior
17 citizen complex opens, there will be a long waiting
18 list of applicants because the number of moderately
19 priced rental units in the area has dwindled very
20 quickly.

21 In addition, we've also been talking to
22 ODUNDE about a commercial anchor on the first floor
23 of that senior citizen complex. And we've talked a
24 little bit about doing a museum which would be named
25 after W.E.B. Du Bois, who was a resident of our

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

neighborhood a hundred years ago. He was one of the first modern sociologists, and his book The Philadelphia Negro from a hundred years ago is still required reading in many sociology courses. We think that a Du Bois Museum for history and tourism on the first floor of this complex would do a great deal to strengthen and re-invigorate the 23rd and South Street Business District.

Council President Verna was very instrumental in terms of the acquisition of the Royal Theater to help the business district on the eastern end of South Street. And we've got a weak business district on the western end as well, and we think a museum for history and tourism would be an improvement. And many of the empty stores there might be filled.

Our neighborhood of South of South Street boasts a rich historical legacy from the Naval Home, which served as the first US Naval Academy before Annapolis, to key sites in African American history to architectural landmarks from a century ago. Our neighborhood can make a significant contribution to the tourist industry in Philadelphia. Unfortunately, the neighborhood South

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 of South Street has frequently been omitted from
3 many tourist maps in Philadelphia, and we hope to
4 correct that oversight.

5 We hope that ODUNDE's museum and exhibit
6 space on the first floor would present exhibits on
7 key personalities from our area, such as Du Bois and
8 also Marian Andersen, and we hope to showcase the
9 cultural legacy of our area with an exhibit on South
10 Street, which for many decades was the heart of the
11 African American community in terms of commerce,
12 culture, music, and entertainment. So please
13 support this bill.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
15 for your testimony.

16 MS. FERNANDEZ: May I add something,
17 Jim?

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Sure. Am I going to
19 tell you no?

20 (Laughter.)

21 MS. FERNANDEZ: I want to thank you for
22 your support through the years, too, Councilman
23 Kenney.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: My pleasure.

25 MS. FERNANDEZ: ODUNDE has been in close

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 contact with Universal Company. Universal Company
3 has offered their support on this because this is a
4 project that we need support on and we need
5 expertise on. We've also got support from
6 Congressman Chaka Fattah who said that he will go
7 into the federal funding next year for ODUNDE. We
8 do not have hard numbers now, so we certainly cannot
9 ask Chaka for X amount of money because we're not
10 certain how much the project will cost us. But we
11 have talked with Dwight Evans, our own State
12 Representative Howard James, and of course we have
13 the support of our Council President Anna Verna from
14 the very beginning.

15 So we just, again, would like to say to
16 Council that we are getting ready for this project
17 and we look for your full support and for the
18 passing of the acquisition and control of these
19 properties.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you again.
21 Thank you very much for your testimony.

22 Are there others to testify on this
23 bill?

24 Please come forward.

25 Good morning.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 MS. LEWIS: Good morning Chairperson,
3 Council President Verna and Members of the City
4 Council. My name is Eve Lewis. I am the NAC
5 Director of the South of South Neighborhood
6 Association. SOSNA is the NAC or Neighborhood
7 Advisory Committee for the Census Tracts 13, 14 and
8 19 within the South Central Urban Renewal Area. We
9 have a contract with OHCD to provide NAC services in
10 our service area.

11 Generally speaking, SOSNA supports
12 condemnation as a means of eliminating blight only
13 where a public purpose is being served and only
14 where there does not exist a living owner with
15 current plans to develop a property. The prospect
16 of condemnation can be helpful in spurring owners to
17 accelerate their plans of development.

18 With respect to 2310, 2312, and 2314
19 Grays Ferry Avenue, we support the efforts of ODUNDE
20 to acquire these properties with a goal of
21 developing affordable senior citizen housing with a
22 possible W.E. DuBois Museum for history and tourism
23 on the first floor. We believe that this
24 development will help to anchor and reinforce the
25 business district around 23rd and South Streets and

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 provide quality affordable housing at the same time.

3 With respect to 1702 and 1704 Carpenter
4 Street and 1037 South 17th Street, we support
5 condemnation for the 17th Street homeowner
6 development, but we ask that 1000 South 17th Street
7 be removed from the condemnation list because the
8 property owner's daughters live upstairs above the
9 closed bar.

10 With respect to 705, 707 and 709 South
11 15th Street, this ground is currently a beautiful
12 garden. SOSNA is working with Council President
13 Verna's office to save gardens and open space in our
14 neighborhood, and we oppose condemnation of these
15 properties until the Gardens and Open Space Task
16 Force has examined the matter.

17 With respect to 1907 Fitzwater Street
18 and 759 and 761 South 20th Street, we understand
19 that the RDA has purchasers for this ground.

20 With respect to all other properties, we
21 support condemnation and acquisition by Universal
22 Community Homes only if there is no living owner
23 with current plans for development.

24 Thank you so much.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 for your testimony.

3 Sir, would you like to testify?

4 MR. MARA: Yes. I'm Phillip Mara, I'm
5 the owner of 1630 and 1632 Bainbridge Street. These
6 two lots adjoin my property. My taxes are paid on
7 time.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

9 MR. MARA: My properties are under
10 agreement, and these are the plans. The developer
11 had to leave early. The neighborhood Zoning
12 Committee has approved the plan, and the developer
13 is awaiting the zoning application to be approved.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Can we see the
15 plans, please?

16 MR. MARA: Yes. The properties are
17 under agreement, and I'm requesting that the threat
18 of condemnation and removal be taken away.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are they
20 single-family dwellings?

21 MR. MARA: Yes.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: They are?

23 MR. MARA: Yes.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And they're
25 going to be restored that way?

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 MR. MARA: Yes. It's two lots, so
3 they're going to build them.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: New
5 construction?

6 MR. MARA: Right.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I would assume that
8 the same direction would be to work with your office
9 to determine --

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Definitely.
11 And you have been.

12 MR. MARA: Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You're welcome, sir.
14 Please identify yourself.

15 MR. GUY: Good morning. My name is
16 Eugene Mackey Guy. I recently acquired 1732-34
17 South 15th Street, which runs from 15th Street to
18 Hicks Street. It is my understanding that 731, 733,
19 and 735, I'm not sure which of those properties are
20 actually mine, but there are no physical properties
21 on 731 or 733 Hicks Street. That is a part of my
22 property, 732-34 South 15th.

23 I have plans to demolish the present
24 structure and build a house for myself, and Hicks
25 Street put a two-car garage.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 Additionally, I recently acquired 1509
3 South Christian Street, which I intend to rehab for
4 my daughter. She will have the first floor. That,
5 too, is a property that runs for two street fronts.
6 I think it's Christian and, I'm not sure, Watts
7 Street. Whatever that first small street is. It is
8 zoned for five apartments. It is my intent to
9 renovate the first floor for my daughter and put two
10 dwelling units above that to help her sustain the
11 property.

12 So I respectfully request that those two
13 properties be taken off of the list. And more
14 particularly, I don't know how to define Hicks
15 Street, but that is also a part of my property.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you have
17 the addresses for Hicks Street?

18 MR. GUY: It's 731, 733 and 735, which
19 are listed in the bill. I'm not certain which of
20 those three properties, but two of them actually are
21 a part of my property.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We'll
23 certainly check into that.

24 MR. GUY: There's no such address as
25 731-33 Hicks.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you. We
3 will check into it. Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilmember
5 Nutter.

6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman. I just have a point of information. I
8 probably need to ask Mr. Wetzel, given some of the
9 testimony that we've just had.

10 Mr. Wetzel, a couple issues have been
11 raised. And the Councilmembers involved are
12 obviously actively involved and I think, actually,
13 most of them are here. I just have a procedural
14 question which is: Properties appear to be listed,
15 at least in the materials that we have, by specific
16 address, which in the whole scheme of things,
17 compared to some previous discussion that we've had,
18 that is obviously a positive component here. The
19 question is: In the approval of any of these
20 various bills for redevelopment areas, and now we're
21 hearing requests that some of the properties be
22 removed, would that need to be done in the course of
23 this hearing or are we approving specific property
24 addresses or are you telling us what addresses the
25 Authority may go after subsequent to the broad and

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

general approval that any of these either redevelopment areas or urban renewal areas, should they be approved? Tell us a little bit about the process here.

MR. WETZEL: The process starts -- if we make the assumption there's an existing Urban Renewal Area, the process starts where the Redevelopment Authority's Board essentially adopts a Redevelopment Proposal, and that's why you'll see "the 13th amended proposal, the 14th amended proposal" because each time we take a series of properties, the Redevelopment Authority's Board must approve a redevelopment proposal. It then must go before the City Planning Commission because the Planning Commission is the entity that creates both the redevelopment area and the redevelopment area plan. They want to measure that proposal in the context of the plan that was adopted by the Planning Commission. Only then does it come over in the form of an ordinance. But state statutes require that we list every address that we would propose to take under that redevelopment proposal. So you cannot give us blanket power nor could we ask for blanket power to take properties in any urban renewal area.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 Each time there's a taking, it must be address
3 specific. And therefore, we're only granted to use
4 our eminent domain powers on those specific
5 addresses within that specific urban renewal area.

6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I understand
7 that, and thank you for the explanation. What I'm
8 trying to get to, though, is you have provided and
9 you are in accordance with the statute
10 address-specific legislation. My question is -- I'm
11 not getting into any of the specifics of anyone
12 who's come to table because they'll deal with their
13 district councilperson. But the question arises, a
14 person has come to the table and said, "There's
15 something going on here;" for instance, and then the
16 Council President said earlier that we're not moving
17 on any property that has development, that's a live
18 activity. There's another man with an agreement of
19 sale. Whatever the issue is. What I'm trying to
20 understand is, by way of approving these bills, how
21 does a person get out of or off of the list since
22 you have to provide us with a list that's specific
23 by address? You can't take the property unless it's
24 on the list. I'm now trying to understand how do
25 you get off the list. Is it in the course of this

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 hearing? Is it subsequent in a conversation or
3 negotiation? I just want to understand the
4 particulars.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Maybe you
6 ought to explain the three-step process. I think
7 that would help.

8 MR. WETZEL: Yes. And I can direct you
9 to what happened in the Martin Luther King area
10 where 13 properties were re-vested under re-vestment
11 agreements to the owners who agreed to rehabilitate
12 the properties. And as a result of that
13 rehabilitation, no condemnation activity would take
14 place on the property. And essentially, there's two
15 options. One is, we can enter into rehabilitation
16 agreement or a construction agreement that says,
17 you're saying you're going to build two new homes on
18 these two lots. If you do that, then we will take
19 no action.

20 Or we could proceed and condemn the
21 properties and re-vest title under an agreement that
22 requires you to do what you say you're going to,
23 issue your Certificate of Completion of Work and
24 we're out of it.

25 So the point is, you're authorizing us

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 to take action, but generally, we're going to be
3 working with the district councilperson on a
4 case-by-case basis, entering into rehab agreements
5 or re-vesting title. And I think this comes about
6 where you have dynamic real estate markets.

7 I think we undertook the Martin Luther
8 King condemnation before the Towers came down.
9 Shortly after the Towers came down, people were
10 coming out of the woodwork who had owned properties
11 for, Councilman, I think some of them like 10 years
12 or 12 years, were speculating on vacant structures
13 in that area. And as soon as the Towers came down,
14 the market shifted so dramatically, they were
15 saying, you know, "I want the opportunity to fix
16 this house up and sell it." And in 13 cases in the
17 MLK taking, we re-vested title to owners who
18 rehabilitated their properties.

19 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. I'm not one
20 to ever be picky.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Not on a
22 Monday, anyway.

23 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Not on a Monday
24 anyway.

25 (Laughter.)

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: You said earlier
3 something to the effect that generally you'll be
4 working with the district councilperson. What does
5 "generally" mean?

6 MR. WETZEL: It means more than
7 generally. We have to come back to continue to do
8 land assembly, and it would be rather foolish on our
9 part to alienate any district councilperson and
10 expect to come back and see support from that
11 councilperson.

12 The objective here is to eliminate
13 blight. It can be done in the private market, we
14 would be foolish to spend our resources to acquire
15 properties that would then turn around and be sold
16 to another private party. If the owners of
17 properties are willing to step forward and
18 rehabilitate or construct with private resources,
19 then we should back off. We should support that and
20 back off from that. But in many cases, this spurs
21 people to fix up their properties and puts that
22 little extra bit of pressure on people to do
23 something about it.

24 But I agree that if the private sector
25 is willing to move on real estate, then we should

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 not spend our valuable and scarce resources
3 acquiring it. But we should use our powers to nudge
4 and push people along to do what they say they're
5 going to do.

6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand. Thank
7 you.

8 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I think the
10 question was asked why can we not simply delete the
11 addresses from this. I don't think you've quite
12 answered that. And I'm asking the question because
13 I think I know the answer.

14 MR. WETZEL: The answer is we'd have to
15 start the process over again for the ordinance.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And isn't it a
17 matter of state law also?

18 MR. WETZEL: Yes, state statutes prevent
19 us -- once our Board adopts the proposal, the
20 Planning Commission approves and it comes over here.
21 The only way to change it is to go back to the
22 beginning of the process. And that would be
23 starting all over again. You can't just take one or
24 two out. You've got to do a whole new proposal.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 MR. WETZEL: Under state statutes.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
4 Councilman Cohen.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: What happens in the
6 event -- with all the shoulds and it doesn't make
7 sense to do so-and-so, but let's say we disagree as
8 to how it plays out. Who has the final word, if we
9 enact this day?

10 MR. WETZEL: If you enact an ordinance,
11 the Redevelopment Authority's Board, in essence,
12 would have the final word.

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, are you saying
14 that --

15 MR. WETZEL: But understand that there's
16 two acts of Council involved in --

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Excuse me. I'm
18 sorry. I hate to interrupt, but there's a sign in
19 the door as we come in that all cell phone and
20 beepers would either be put on vibrate or be turned
21 off. It really is distracting when people are
22 testifying and asking questions and things are
23 constantly going off. Most pagers and cell phones,
24 I do believe, have vibrate capabilities. So I would
25 ask anyone who has one on to either vibrate it or

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 turn it off. Thank you.

3 Sorry to interrupt.

4 Councilman Cohen.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Would Mr. Wetzel

6 please proceed with his answer?

7 MR. WETZEL: The ordinance would

8 authorize the Redevelopment Authority to proceed to

9 take any or all the properties that are listed in

10 the ordinance. There's another aspect of this. The

11 Redevelopment Authority in order to dispose of those

12 properties still has to come back to City Council.

13 But that doesn't prevent -- what you're suggesting

14 is that the Board could act even if it didn't care

15 whether or not it was going to dispose of the

16 property.

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, it's been known

18 the different bureaucrats, including Members of City

19 Council, in good faith will arrive at different

20 conclusions. We may see the request of the last

21 witness as being reasonable, and the Redevelopment

22 Board may come to a different conclusion. Based

23 upon the facts that you gave us, maybe he left the

24 property for a number of years undeveloped. Now he

25 sees it's worth doing. He wants to do it. You say

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 it's too late. And say we're all acting in good
3 faith. Are you saying that the State has taken away
4 the power of City Council to make the final
5 decision?

6 MR. WETZEL: No. What I'm suggesting is
7 that to alter the ordinance that's in front of you
8 now would be to, essentially, start the process over
9 again, which means our Board would have to approve a
10 redevelopment proposal minus the properties you
11 wanted to remove, would have to go to the Planning
12 Commission. It would have to come back as a new
13 ordinance.

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That might be able to
15 be done within a few days.

16 MR. WETZEL: No. The advertising
17 requirements alone under the statutes -- for
18 example, for this hearing, we had to advertise three
19 times, the last ad 10 days before this hearing. So
20 the advertising requirements alone are a little over
21 a month. Our Board would have to act. The Planning
22 Commission meets once a month, so you'd have to get
23 to the Planning Commission at a meeting, and then do
24 the advertising requirements. So this would
25 probably come back here sometime in February or

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 March if we had to redo it.

3 I would only suggest this, and there are
4 no guarantees when it comes to trust, but unless he
5 says otherwise, I think, Councilman DiCicco, every
6 one of those requests for re-vestments were honored.
7 Am I correct in that?

8 I mean, we share a common objective
9 here, and that is to manage the scarce resources.
10 And if owners are going to come forward and fix them
11 up, we've been willing to do that and I think we did
12 that 13 times in the Martin Luther King taking. And
13 that's essentially what we would do. But you're
14 right, it's not a guarantee.

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Seems to me maybe
16 there could be a case where the properties that are
17 being taken are going to be affected as to their
18 development by the passage of two or three months.
19 Three or four months, it would seem to me, to
20 preserve the power of Council, it might well be
21 worthwhile waiting for those three months. And I'm
22 asking for your response to that.

23 MR. WETZEL: I think it's a matter of
24 choice. And that is, if you want to wait the time
25 period to do this, the problem is you could come

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

back here with a revised ordinance and then there could be two other property owners who've made a decision to come forward, and this process, you know, could be recycled over and over again.

But I think what we've done is established a process whereby the District Councilperson -- if somebody calls us up and says they want to re-vest, they want to rehabilitate the property, we have generally called the District Councilperson up and said, "Here is this individual, we want them to talk with you," and then you tell us whether it makes sense to re-vest title to this property. And in every case where -- in the Martin Luther King taking, which is the most recent taking in what became a dramatic real estate market, in every case where the District Councilperson, Councilman DiCicco, said to the Redevelopment Authority, "Re-vest title," we re-vested title.

And I'm going to be real honest with you about it. We would be foolish to not be cooperative with District Councilpersons because our ability to assemble land is dependent upon your approval of ordinances like this. It doesn't make any sense.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: But there's seven

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 Council-at-Large members. We believe we have
3 certain rights. We believe our views -- and my good
4 friend Councilman DiCicco and I have sparred on
5 occasion with respect to properties in his district,
6 and I find him cooperative. But nonetheless, as a
7 Councilman-at-Large, I find it troublesome when
8 people say we're just going to let the District
9 Councilman decide it, because there could be
10 occasions when the District Councilman and a
11 Councilman-at-Large may have different opinions.
12 They will, within the process of City Council, work
13 out their differences. But yet, it ought to be
14 Council, I believe, that makes that decision and not
15 the Redevelopment Authority.

16 You're saying to me that the only one
17 you're interested in is 1 of 17 Members of City
18 Council. And generally speaking, that's not the way
19 the Council operates. We try to preserve the rights
20 of the District Councilmember. I want to make
21 clear, all of us Councilmembers-at-Large and other
22 District Councilmembers respect highly the judgement
23 of the District Councilmember where the properties
24 are located. But at certain occasions, I guess I
25 may have clashed, temporarily at least, with a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 number of District Councilmembers. I don't want to
3 re-invoke the memory, but Councilman Nutter, my dear
4 friend and colleague, but we've been in court on
5 opposite sides on matters within his property
6 because he saw something as a local problem, I saw
7 it as an overall problem. And both of us, I
8 believe, acted in good faith. But we finally
9 resolved that matter within the protocols of City
10 Council. I would not like to have seen that issue
11 decided by people outside of City Council saying
12 they favor either the District Councilmember or City
13 Councilman-at-Large. So I think it would be best if
14 we can work out some process that both save the
15 time, if that were possible, and also preserve
16 Council's rights. If you could research it and tell
17 us what can be done to do that, I think you'd be
18 moving everything forward quickly.

19 MR. WETZEL: I can actually answer that
20 now. And that is that if you want to remove any
21 property from any of these ordinances, we must start
22 the process over again. And the problem that that
23 creates is we can do that, and then someone else
24 comes forward three or four months from now on one
25 address in a taking, and then we would have to go

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 back and start it over again.

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, if the
4 Councilmember learned about that, the Councilmember
5 might have a different view than the Redevelopment
6 Authority would have as to the second request or if
7 a good faith request ought to be honored. I don't
8 believe the Redevelopment Authority ought to be the
9 body that makes that decision on the second claimant
10 without that claimant having an opportunity to come
11 before City Council and having a decision made by
12 this body. I guess that's what the issue is, who
13 has the ultimate power. And it's -- and here are
14 two bureaucrats, you and me, arguing as to whether
15 it ought to be your body or our body. And I think
16 that since you have to come to us for approval in
17 general, I think we ought to have the final say and
18 citizens ought to be able to come to the City
19 Council, if necessary, to have their case accorded
20 full justice. It might be we would agree with your
21 decision, or we might not. We ought to have the
22 responsibility for making that decision.

23 Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Madam
24 President.

25 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mr. Chairman, let

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 the record reflect based on the comments that
3 Councilman Cohen made with regard to times that
4 we've clashed, the record should note that every
5 time I've been up against Councilman Cohen, I have
6 lost.

7 (Laughter.)

8 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I just want to
9 advise other Councilmembers as to what the
10 likelihood of success is going forward. Thank you.

11 (Laughter.)

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
13 Any other questions for Mr. Wetzel?

14 Mr. Martello, please identify yourself
15 for the record.

16 MR. MARTELLO: My name is Anthony
17 Martello. I'm here mainly --

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anthony, just pull
19 the microphone forward.

20 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. Wetzel, I just
21 want to remark that none of my statements indicated
22 anything but satisfaction with the way generally
23 that you performed in the Redevelopment Office.
24 You've brought in a whole new tone and I found you
25 to be very cooperative and I think that's the

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 feeling of all the Members of the Council, even
3 though we have this stark difference of opinion.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Mr. Martello.

5 MR. MARTELLO: My name is Anthony
6 Martello. I'm here mainly due to the fact that I
7 received a phone call from someone notifying me that
8 my property was one of the properties on this list.
9 I received no notice from anyone. I never saw any
10 of these ads. And if it wasn't for that phone call,
11 this thing may have happened and I wouldn't have
12 been aware of it.

13 I've owned this property for 21 years.
14 I pay the taxes every year on it. The rental
15 license has been paid every year. It's a four-unit
16 building. I had some trouble with this building at
17 the end of last year where some drug activity was
18 going on in there. I evicted the people through the
19 legal process; it took me three months to get them
20 out. I immediately cleaned the building out,
21 boarded it up. They broke in again. I took over
22 possession again, fixed the entire building.

23 This building needs minimal, minimal
24 work to rent these four units. Instead of renting
25 it, I said, "Let me try to sell it." I've had it up

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 for sale for the last couple of months. And now I
3 decided to rent it. Basically, it's only been
4 vacant for about seven or eight months.

5 I'm just curious how this ever got on
6 this list and why I didn't receive any notice. I
7 get the tax bill from the City, so it's not too hard
8 to find me.

9 I just wanted to express my concern.
10 I'm probably not the only one who doesn't know that
11 their properties are on this list.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Did you happen to be
13 reassessed this go-around, or no?

14 MR. MARTELLO: No.

15 And also, I'd like to add the fact that
16 I think everyone in the room knows this is a very
17 desirable area right now. And if you listed these
18 properties for sale, they'd probably all sell
19 immediately. You'd have a line of people trying to
20 buy them. So I don't understand the whole system.
21 I wanted to say that.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Mr. Wetzel, would it
23 be possible for you to come back and explain, if
24 you're following Mr. Martello's line of testimony
25 and question, I guess, within that testimony as to

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 what the City could do, what the Redevelopment
3 Authority or the City could do to better notify
4 residents as to their intentions.

5 MR. WETZEL: Under the statutes, we're
6 required to run three advertisements prior to the
7 public hearing. And essentially, we have no power
8 at all to exercise our eminent domain until an
9 ordinance is passed. And therefore, we really can't
10 notice anybody because we have no authority to do
11 anything.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Your ability is to
13 notify someone's intent to.

14 MR. WETZEL: Right. The reason for the
15 public advertising -- and listen, I understand not
16 everybody reads the newspapers, but we obviously
17 have to advertise in general circulation. We
18 advertise in the Legal Intelligencer in case there
19 are attorneys handling estates and things that see
20 these addresses pop up. But technically, we have no
21 power whatsoever to act until the ordinance is
22 passed. And then on that basis, we can notify an
23 individual. Again, you're not telling us to
24 condemn, you're only authorizing us to condemn. And
25 until our Board acts, we have not used eminent

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 domain power. So it is the public ad and the public
3 hearings that are essentially the public process
4 under the State statutes.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman Nutter.

6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman.

8 But in that regard, Mr. Wetzel -- and I
9 actually do my best to read the paper every day. I
10 don't necessarily -- I've never really found the
11 legal notice section either that interesting or that
12 funny. I'm kind of a general news and a little bit
13 of comics, a little bit of sports person myself.

14 I don't think anyone's questioning
15 whether you placed the ads, whether you took all the
16 legal steps required. But I think it still does beg
17 the question, I mean, if you can put a notice in the
18 newspaper -- I'm assuming that's Daily News,
19 Inquirer, Legal Intelligencier. I mean, you're
20 talking about papers that cover -- Daily News is
21 what, 150,000; the Inquirer is maybe 200,000;
22 Intelligencier, I have no idea. But I mean, close
23 to 4 or 500,000 could possibly see this. In that
24 context, you're saying you can't send some kind of
25 general letter, notice, copy of the ad to a person

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 who might actually be directly affected just in case
3 they didn't happen to get a Daily News, an Inquirer,
4 or an Intelligencier that particular day?

5 MR. WETZEL: Councilman, I'm going to go
6 back and -- to my knowledge, we cannot. I'm going
7 to go back and have this reviewed by our general
8 counsel.

9 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: How can you legally
10 authorize to put an ad in a paper of general
11 circulation, which I'm sure is the requirement, but
12 you can't tell the individual whose address happens
13 to be listed in the same notice? I mean, that's
14 bizarre.

15 MR. WETZEL: And I'm going to have that
16 research done. But my sense of this is, the issue
17 is over essentially de facto condemnation activity.
18 And if we send a specific notice -- we're
19 advertising an ordination. We're not advertising a
20 condemnation.

21 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I understand
22 that. But you're also required to send us at some
23 point, at least leading up to the hearing,
24 address-specific application. The ad is not address
25 specific.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 MR. WETZEL: Oh, yes, it is. Every
3 address is in the ad.

4 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So --

5 MR. WETZEL: I'll be glad to do the
6 research for you.

7 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: There just can't be
8 a difference between your ability to put an ad in a
9 newspaper with someone's address in it and not be
10 able to send them some general notice saying, "By
11 the way, you might want to read the paper tomorrow
12 because your address is going to be in the
13 newspaper. We're not sure what it's about, we're
14 not sure what we're going to do, but you might want
15 to cough up 60 cents and check it out." I mean,
16 come on.

17 MR. WETZEL: I'd be glad to do the
18 research for you.

19 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I mean, you can't
20 notify 500,000 people in the general region but not
21 tell the person whose house might be affected.
22 Because the other 499,000 probably don't care about
23 it.

24 All right. Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Obviously, as a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 result of this discussion, we're going to attempt to
3 figure out a better way. It doesn't solve your
4 problem. I mean, obviously, you know about it now
5 and we'll take whatever action is necessary with
6 Council President's office to eliminate that address
7 from the list, but we thank you for bringing it to
8 our attention so we hopefully get some mechanism in
9 the future.

10 MR. MARTELLO: Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilmember
12 Clarke.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I just
14 want to ask Mr. Wetzel one question. I recall a
15 particular development in my district, the West
16 Poplar development, you were Deputy Director then at
17 the time at the Redevelopment Authority, or were you
18 the Director?

19 MR. WETZEL: I was Director of the
20 housing programs, yes.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: As I can recall,
22 there was a taking in that particular neighborhood.
23 And somewhere down the line -- and I don't recall
24 exactly how that process happened -- some of the
25 properties that had been targeted for acquisition

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

were, in fact, not acquired and residents were allowed to stay. Was that done as a result of a re-vestment or was it just simply the Redevelopment Authority decided to not ultimately take those properties? How did that happen?

MR. WETZEL: I can check that out for you. I don't know the specific answer for that. It could have been either way. It could have been simply that the Councilperson indicated that this particular property and this particular owner should not be a part of the Declaration of Taking, and therefore, we would have never condemned it. It doesn't mean -- we still probably have the power sitting there through an existing ordinance, but we have not acted on that. So I can check that out for you, and we'll get back to you.

The answer is we never proceeded to file a Declaration of Taking on those properties.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So you didn't file, but the ordinance originally listed the property as, okay, it was authorized to take but you didn't file a Declaration?

MR. WETZEL: That's correct. In other words, if an ordinance has passed, it could result

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 in -- if there were 10 addresses, it could result in
3 10 different Declarations of Taking if you so wanted
4 it to. Or five on five properties and five that
5 never move forward, for example.

6 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: What's the time
7 line, assuming the ordinance passes, that you would
8 ultimately file a Declaration of Taking?

9 MR. WETZEL: For these ordinances -- and
10 we already, obviously, have some addresses that are
11 not going to move forward. It is our intention to
12 file these Declarations of Taking in February.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So there's
14 traditionally a period of two or three months before
15 you proceed with the ultimate --

16 MR. WETZEL: You got it.

17 And in addition to that, even if we file
18 a Declaration of Taking and there's something that
19 results afterwards, that's where we get into
20 re-vestment of title.

21 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So there's more than
22 enough time if there's an objection from an
23 individual to notify, not only the District
24 Councilperson, but also the At-Large Members so that
25 discussion can be had prior to the ultimate

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 notification to take?

3 MR. WETZEL: Absolutely. Right.

4 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
5 Chairman.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman Cohen,
7 did you have another question?

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes. My general
9 statement about satisfaction with the work of Mr.
10 Wetzel remains unabated even though he reminded me
11 of another longstanding irritant that the law, or at
12 least the way the Redevelopment Authority interprets
13 the law, does permit this kind of shake-up.
14 Suddenly where people owned property for a long
15 time, feeling it's their own, even if they've
16 neglected it or we think they've neglected it, and
17 suddenly they find somebody wants to take the
18 property away and Government acts in an arbitrary
19 way, says, "Well, we've published something in the
20 newspaper somewhere, you should have known about it
21 as a homeowner."

22 I think it's really incumbent for us to
23 respect the rights of homeowners, particularly those
24 in neighborhoods, those where the people are
25 relatively low income, don't have access to lawyers,

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 don't have access to other rights. And I think we
3 ought to respect them and never take any action
4 against them without being ready to prove that we
5 notified them that an action might be taken against
6 them.

7 And I would like your comments, sir,
8 about that and what would have to be done to make
9 that possible.

10 It's never seemed to me to be
11 satisfactory for a Redevelopment Authority to say,
12 "We met all the legal requirements," even though
13 requirements, as they currently exist under state
14 law, do not require homeowners to be informed.
15 Because I think that State law lacks adequate due
16 process rights. And I don't think we ought to
17 follow in Philadelphia laws which take away rights
18 or threaten the rights of homeowners without giving
19 the homeowners ample time to take action to protect
20 themselves.

21 I think that's what Councilman Nutter
22 was raising in his questions. Is that right
23 Councilman Nutter?

24 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yes.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And that's when it

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1 reminded me. And I think that the laws need
2 overhauling badly if they permit in the City of
3 Philadelphia action against homeowners without the
4 homeowners -- you know, threatening their ownership
5 without the homeowners knowing plenty of time in
6 advance and having the opportunity to take such
7 action as they deem necessary to protect their
8 interests.
9

10 What is your comment, Mr. Wetzel?

11 MR. WETZEL: Councilman, as I indicated
12 to Councilman Nutter, I'm going to go back and look
13 at the statutes, not just looking for limitation but
14 also looking for, is there an opportunity that and
15 would it be legal for the Redevelopment Authority to
16 send out a notice of the public hearing to the
17 individual addresses versus the ad itself.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, that might not
19 be enough to the individual, unless maybe he went to
20 law school, wouldn't even know what the notice is
21 about. He might look at it and say, "This is not
22 relevant."

23 I mean a letter saying it is the
24 intention or preliminary intention or we may be
25 thinking about -- something general which tells a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 homeowner that his ownership rights may be
3 threatened in one way or another or changed and give
4 that owner a phone number to call or advise him if
5 he wishes to, he may wish to consult with counsel or
6 explain whatever you think his rights are, but let
7 him know that his rights are being threatened. It's
8 the civil equivalent of the Miranda ruling where the
9 Supreme Court is held in criminal matters that
10 people threatened by criminal action have to have
11 certain rights read to them. Seems to me that ought
12 to at least apply in civil discourse between
13 citizens and their government.

14 MR. WETZEL: And I've agreed, at the
15 request of Councilman Nutter, to come back with a
16 report on what are the options.

17 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Okay. And you're
18 including those thoughts?

19 MR. WETZEL: Yes. I think what is the
20 broadest range of options that are available within
21 the context of the law, because I think --

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: No --

23 MR. WETZEL: Let me finish.

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: -- that's not my
25 question, Mr. Wetzel.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 MR. WETZEL: I'm not looking at the
3 minimal, I'm looking for the maximum that we could
4 do and still meet the requirements.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I'll yield to
6 Councilman Nutter.

7 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you,
8 Councilman Cohen.

9 I don't want to prolong the point, but I
10 would not, also, like, Mr. Wetzel, that my question
11 be taken in the more narrow context, although you
12 want to maximize for the broadest use within the
13 law. If there is the circumstance -- I mean, State
14 law may not provide for this opportunity. So what
15 I'd also like you to do is look at the other side of
16 that question, which is, if there is something that
17 we in this body can or should do if we are not
18 preempted by State law, if at the end of the day it
19 makes sense to have this kind notification, you're
20 not sure within your rules or regulations or if the
21 State law is silent as to whether or not we can make
22 or cause you to provide this kind of notice, then
23 maybe Council should pass an ordinance requiring
24 that kind of notice. And if it doesn't violate
25 state law, if we're not preempted from legislating

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

in this particular area, then we should do that.

So I think between, certainly, Councilman Cohen and myself, and not speaking for other Members of the Committee who I know also care about these kinds of issues, I think we'd like you to look at it in the broadest possible way, not from just a legal side, but say, "What should we do? What kind of notice should we provide?" Check the State statutes to see whether that's allowable; if not, why not? Or require it by the Code, and then we would take action in that particular area.

So I don't want to be limited by what you can do. I want to think as broad as possible. If we can put ads in the newspaper, then how do we notify the person specifically who doesn't necessarily buy that newspaper; and not, "Well, we've done everything according to the statute." That's not the place where I want to end up.

MR. WETZEL: And that I wasn't my response. I think I was looking at the statute as the minimum.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand.

MR. WETZEL: And that if the law is silent on other aspects of it, I think it opens up

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 opportunities. So I'd like to come back with a
3 report to you on what those opportunities might be.

4 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you very much.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just let me ask one
6 question. Bill 020668, who else is to testify on
7 this bill?

8 I'm going to let the stenographer take a
9 five-minute break. She's been working very hard and
10 we're going to give her a few minutes and we'll come
11 right back.

12 (Brief recess.)

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Can I have your
14 attention please? The Committee is now back in
15 session.

16 Please identify yourself for the record.

17 MS. CLAYTON: The property that we are
18 speaking about is 1000 South 17th Street as well as
19 1702 and 1704 which are lots. The one in
20 particular, 1702 is gated off and has been a part of
21 the property there for a very long time. We also
22 have an adjacent property 926 South 17 Street. My
23 mother has been there operating a business and
24 owning properties for over 50 years. And I'm the
25 youngest of seven.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1 Like the gentleman was saying, Mr.
2 Nutter, it's ridiculous that you have to go through
3 political -- you kept evading the question of
4 sending. Just like the gentleman that came, if we
5 didn't get a phone call, we would not have known
6 either. And it's just as simple as sending a
7 letter. What type of procedures need to be gone
8 through for that?

10 Also, I'd like to thank Mr. Nutter, as
11 well as the gentleman on the end, Mr. Cohen for
12 their interest in the people in general.

13 Another thing, the eminent domain list,
14 it kind of was going around the mulberry bush as to
15 when it would be removed, simply removed. He kept
16 stating that there's a process. After you know that
17 somebody owns the property, it's occupied, what else
18 do you need to know to remove it. What he was
19 saying about the ordinance or a code or whatever
20 needs to be done, I support that as well. This is
21 not something that's just a fly-by-night thing
22 because any time you get a letter in the paper
23 stating that the property that you've taken care of
24 over 50 years may be possibly taken, the first thing
25 you want to know is for what reason. The second

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 thing you want to know is, do I have to spend money
3 to get lawyer? For what?

4 And you can check the records, the taxes
5 have been paid each and every year for over 50
6 years. It should never have even been put on the
7 list.

8 And my mother is elderly, and you never
9 how these types of things affect you physically.
10 And nobody will address that because if you go into
11 bad health because of worry, then, oh, well, that's
12 your problem also.

13 So something as simple as a letter would
14 be helpful, and I would suggest and appreciate if
15 Council would take the authority to do that as
16 opposed to leaving the Redevelopment Authority in
17 charge of that.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, first of all,
19 I'm glad that you did receive a phone call and you
20 were able to come in here and express your concern
21 and also work with Council President Verna's office
22 on some arrangement to have that property removed
23 from that list or not condemned.

24 Secondly, I think you've heard, from the
25 discussion, from the questions from Councilman Cohen

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

1
2 and Councilmember Nutter, that the Redevelopment
3 Authority will get back to us with some clear plan
4 as to how they're going to notify people. And I
5 would suspect that if that's not acceptable to the
6 Council, there will be legislation probably
7 forthcoming quickly to make sure that there's a
8 process in place to have that done. And I'm sure
9 that most, if not all, Councilmembers in this body
10 will support that.

11 MS. CLAYTON: I also heard him speak of
12 a process to bring your property up to code. What
13 code? Because if you have not been issued Licenses
14 and Inspections which is the department that handles
15 that, who decides what code needs to be brought up
16 to par?

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I think what would
18 happen in the particular situation that exists now,
19 if you would enter into a rehabilitation agreement
20 through the Council President or your District
21 Councilperson's office, then they would tell you
22 what the requirements were to get your property up
23 to speed so that it would be in compliance with City
24 law.

25 MS. CLAYTON: Well, that's what I'm

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 asking. If it wasn't up to compliance, wouldn't
3 L&I, Licenses and Inspections, have something to do
4 with issue, or that's irrelevant?

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: They would be
6 involved, but they probably have not inspected that
7 property for a number of years, or if ever, and,
8 therefore, don't have an open file on it. So
9 there's so many properties in the City and so few
10 inspectors that they probably never get around to
11 doing what they're supposed to do all the time. But
12 I think that once we work our way through this
13 process, at some point there will be some process in
14 place that addresses those questions.

15 But as far as your particular property
16 is concerned right now, the process in place is the
17 District Councilperson with the Redevelopment
18 Authority and attempting to get a agreement to get
19 it pulled out.

20 MS. CLAYTON: As opposed to the
21 property, as opposed to lots that we do also own
22 right behind it?

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Same thing applies.
24 So Council President Verna's office will be happy to
25 start that process for you. But in the meantime,

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 your overall question, your longer-term question is,
3 how do you keep this from happening in the future
4 for people not be notified? You have to find out
5 about it last minute and be upset over the fact that
6 something may be happening in their properties. So
7 we do hear you.

8 Thank you very much for coming in and
9 for your patience.

10 Is there anyone else to testify on this
11 bill?

12 MR. IACOBONE: Good afternoon. My name
13 is Anthony Iacobone, I've been a resident of
14 Philadelphia for a number of years.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry. You have
16 to pull that microphone right directly in front of
17 you.

18 Could you spell your last name for the
19 stenographer?

20 MR. IACOBONE: My last name is spelled
21 I-A-C-O-B-O-N-E.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

23 MR. IACOBONE: I've been a resident of
24 the 30th Ward for a number of years, a homeowner for
25 the past two, and I live at 1760 South Harshaw

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

Street.

The property is in question that I wish to acquire directly behind and adjacent to my home. They are two parcels that the homes on them were demolished and there are no homes on them currently. Since the homes were demolished, they've been a target for short dumping. I've had them cleaned several times. I've cleaned them myself.

What I'd like to do now is use the properties -- secure the properties for parking and a garden for myself. When I secure the properties, I'd like to have some green-scape on the outside of the parcels. What my ultimate goal is to sort of counteract the effects of blight on this particular block and to make the block a little bit more attractive and to encourage future development by showing an interest in this particular section of the City.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much. Have you been in contact with Council President Verna's office on this process?

MR. IACOBONE: Yes, I have.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Great. I'm sure that will be accomplished. And thanks for taking

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020668

2 the time to come in and testify. Thank you.

3 Is there anyone else to testify on this
4 bill?

5 Just as an aside -- excuse me for a
6 second.

7 Mr. Wetzel, I think as an aside, we
8 probably could have saved a lot of time today if
9 there was some process in place to notify and to
10 tell them what their recourse was. I think this is
11 a good example as to concerned people coming in and
12 taking valuable time out of their day. And time
13 here to testify could have probably been avoided if
14 we, in the future, if we have some process like that
15 in place. Thank you.

16 Yes, sir. Please identify yourself.

17 MR. MACK: My name is Quan Mack.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Could you please
19 spell your first and last name for the stenographer?

20 MR. MACK: Quan, Q-U-A-N; M-A-C-K, last
21 name.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

23 MR. MACK: The property in question is
24 707 South 15th Street. I just wanted to know what
25 is the process to get it taken out?

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020672

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Have you had any
3 discussion with District Council --

4 MR. MACK: No, I haven't.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What I would
6 suggest, before you leave today, talk with Kathy
7 Murray here and they will tell you what the process
8 is to get that moving. Thank you. Sorry you had to
9 come on your workday today to do this, but we
10 appreciate it.

11 Anyone else to testify on this bill?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, we will
14 now move to 020672, which is an ordinance approving
15 the 1st Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for
16 the Parkside National Register Historic District
17 Urban Renewal Area, being the area generally bounded
18 by Parkside Avenue and Girard Avenue on the north;
19 the Conrail freight railroad right-of-way line
20 running east of and parallel to 38th Street on the
21 east; the railroad right-of-way line of the former
22 Pennsylvania Railroad on the south; and Belmont
23 Avenue on the west, including the 1st Amendment to
24 the Urban Renewal Plan and Relocation Plan, which
25 provides, inter alia, for the additional land

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020672

1
2 acquisition of approximately four properties for
3 residential and related uses; the provision of
4 certain relocation services, as required by law and
5 declaring that condemnation is not imminent with
6 respect to the Project.

7 Please identify yourself for the record.

8 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson and Members
9 of the Committee. My name is Herbert Wetzel,
10 Executive Director of Redevelopment Authority of the
11 City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in support
12 of Bill No. 020672, which is the 1st Amendment of
13 the Redevelopment Proposal for the Parkside National
14 Register Historic District Urban Renewal Area.

15 This bill would authorize the
16 Redevelopment Authority to acquire four properties,
17 all vacant lots for residential development. The
18 properties will be offered to Parkside Historic
19 Coalition, which has been active in providing
20 affordable housing in the area.

21 This acquisition and its subsequent
22 residential development will support key NTI goals
23 of eliminating blight, assembling land for
24 redevelopment and restoring abandoned properties to
25 the tax roles.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020672

2 This amendment was approved by the City
3 Planning Commission at its meeting on October 15,
4 2002.

5 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
6 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
7 consideration of Bill No. 020672 and would ask the
8 suspension of Rules of Council to allow first
9 reading on December 12, 2002.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

11 Please identify yourself for the record.

12 MR. REDDING: Hello again. Good
13 afternoon, Mr. Chairman and Members of the
14 Committee. I'm Richard Redding representing the
15 Planning Commission, testifying on Bill No. 020672,
16 involving the Parkside National Register Historic
17 District Urban Renewal Area.

18 This redevelopment proposal involves a
19 small number of acquisitions for residential and
20 related use. It was approved at our Commission
21 meeting in October.

22 I'm happy to answer any questions.

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

24 Any questions for these witnesses?

25 (No response.)

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020672

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, is
3 there anyone else to testify on this bill?.

4 MR. REDDING: Mr. Chairman, I'll be
5 going back to my office for an hour. And in my
6 absence, David Napton, my colleague, will be here.
7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Fine. Thank you.

9 Since there is no one else to testify on
10 the bill, is there any specifics as to what the
11 development is? I understand it's generally
12 residential, but is there a developer?

13 MR. WETZEL: Actually, the Parkside
14 Historic Coalition, James Brown, who's been
15 responsible for a number of the properties that have
16 been restored on Parkside Avenue is leading this
17 particular coalition. My sense of this in talking
18 to them is that they want to create homeownership
19 opportunities on these four lots.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry.

21 MR. WETZEL: My sense is that they're
22 interested in creating homeownership on these four
23 lots. And as I mentioned, James brown is active in
24 that particular community and has been involved in
25 the restoration of a number of properties on

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020671

2 Parkside Avenue.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: All right. Thank
4 you.

5 Anyone else to testify on this bill?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, we will
8 now move to Bill No. 020671, which is an ordinance
9 approving the 1st Amendment of the Redevelopment
10 Proposal for the Sarah Allen Urban Renewal Area,
11 being the area generally bounded by the centerline
12 of Westminster Avenue on the north, the centerline
13 of 40th Street on the east, the centerline of Aspen
14 Street on the south, and the centerlines of
15 Lancaster Avenue and Holly Street on the west,
16 including the 1st Amendment to the Urban Renewal
17 Plan and the Relocation Plan, which provide, inter
18 alia, for the additional land acquisition of
19 approximately 14 properties for residential and
20 related uses; the provision of certain relocation
21 services, as required by law; and declaring that
22 condemnation is not imminent with respect to the
23 Project.

24 Please identify yourself for the record.

25 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairman, Members of

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020671

the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzels, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in support of Bill No. 020671, which would approve the 1st Amendment Redevelopment Proposal for the Sarah Allen Urban Renewal Area.

This bill would authorize the Redevelopment Authority to acquire 14 vacant lots for land banking in order to eliminate blight and support key objectives of NTI, which is make land available for open space and recreation uses.

The properties to be acquired are detailed on the accompanying fact sheet.

Mr. Chairperson and Members of the Committee, I respectfully request favorable consideration of Bill No. 020671 and would ask the suspension of Council Rules to allow first reading on December 12, 2002.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

Please identify yourself for the record.

MR. NAPTON: My name is David Napton, and I'm here representing the Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Mr. Chairman and Committee Members.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020671

2 As you just heard from Mr. Wetzel, Bill
3 020671 is intended to acquire some properties in the
4 vicinity of 41st and Parrish Streets in the Sarah
5 Allen Urban Renewal Area and in the Belmont
6 neighborhood of West Philadelphia.

7 Of these approximately 14 properties,
8 they are intended for residential and related uses,
9 including recreation. And this may be done by the
10 existing Friends Rehab Program, Incorporated, which
11 has done redevelopment in the area. And renovated
12 housing would also be related to that already
13 completed project.

14 The Planning Commission approved this
15 redevelopment proposal you have before you today on
16 October 15, 2002.

17 If you have any questions, I'll do my
18 best to answer them.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

20 Any questions for these witnesses?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to
23 testify on this bill?

24 Sir, please come forward.

25 MR. KNIGHT: Good afternoon. Thank you,

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020671

1
2 Mr. Chairman and the guests that are here today. My
3 name is Ken Knight. I have a long-time history of
4 working in the Belmont community as well as the
5 Mantua community. But what I want to talk
6 specifically about is the Belmont community.

7 First of all, in picking up on what was
8 said earlier in reference to RDA and the process of
9 notifying people, that is not a thorough process at
10 all. And along with that, we had an individual
11 right there at Ogden and 41st whose house was
12 packaged. This individual was away for some time.
13 When he came back, he found his house just being
14 developed and he didn't own the house anymore. So I
15 appeal to this body. I think that we need to be
16 proactive. We need to come up with that ordinance.
17 When we come up with all these other ordinances, we
18 should have that ordinance. When we talk about RDA
19 -- and there again, when I think about RDA, my mind
20 goes back to the Convention Center, the Parking
21 Authority, and these other authorities that have now
22 been taken over by the State. And I'm saying that
23 as an honored body here, this Council body, we need
24 to be proactive. We don't need the State to come in
25 and right this wrong. We need to right this wrong.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020671

2 It's unconscionable to me that RDA cannot just send
3 somebody just a plain old simple letter. And then
4 if the person's not home, go next door. A lot of
5 our people -- and there again, we don't retire and
6 we don't go to Florida, but a lot of us do spend
7 some time away. I myself, I go to the Caribbean
8 when it's cold. I'm just here because of the
9 urgency of this matter.

10 But I'm saying to you that we have to
11 stop this. What RDA is doing in the Belmont -- and
12 there again, I'm going to be talking a little later
13 on the Mantua community. It is really a travesty.
14 No, it's not our 40 acres, but it's all we have and
15 we want to fight for it and we want to keep it. And
16 I think it's a tremendous wrong being done when a
17 person comes home and finds their home is not even
18 there no more. I mean, it's been torn down, all
19 because somebody didn't just send them -- there
20 again, as Councilman Kenney was saying, just a
21 postcard. It don't have to be on a letter, just a
22 simple little card notice, contact us. But there
23 again, I say with all these other ordinances that
24 we're entertaining today, we need as good people, as
25 Councilman Cohen was talking about poor people and

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

representing these neighborhoods, we need to have that ordinance for RDA to contact these people by way of letter, postcard, some carrier pigeons, I don't care what it is. But the point is that these people gotta be notified. Plain and simple. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much, sir, for your testimony.

Anyone else to testify on this bill?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, the next bill -- and I appreciate everyone's patience and waiting, we just have a large number of bills today and we can only take them one at a time.

The next bill is Bill No. 020685, which is an ordinance approving the 10th Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the Cecil B. Moore Avenue Urban Renewal Area, being the area generally bounded by 15th Street on the east, Jefferson Street on the south, 19th Street on the west and Montgomery Avenue on the north, including the 10th Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan and the 6th Amendment to the Relocation Plan, which provides, inter alia, for the additional land acquisition of approximately 145

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

properties for residential and related uses; the provision of certain relocation services, as required by law and declaring that condemnation is not imminent with respect to the Project.

Please identify yourself for the record.

MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson and Members of the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in support of Bill No. 020685, which would approve the 10th Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the Cecil B. Moore Avenue Urban Renewal Area.

This bill would authorize the Redevelopment Authority to acquire 145 properties. A total of 139 properties are vacant lots and will be acquired as part of land banking strategy for the Cecil B. Moore Acquisition Zone, an area of North Philadelphia bordered by North Broad Street on the east, North 21st Street on the west, Montgomery Avenue on the north, and Master Street on the south.

It is an area that has been strategically selected due to its high vacancy rate and redevelopment potential. A total of 6 properties, vacant structures, will be acquired in

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

2 support of the last phase of the Cecil B. Moore
3 Homeownership Zone.

4 This amendment, which will result in the
5 enhancement of the community was approved by the
6 Planning Commission at their meeting on October 15,
7 2002.

8 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
9 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
10 consideration of Bill No. 020686, and would also ask
11 the suspension of Council Rules to allow for a first
12 reading on December 12, 2002.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

14 Yes, sir.

15 MR. NAPTON: Mr. Chair and Members of
16 the Committee, David Napton representing the
17 Philadelphia City Planning Commission. I'm here to
18 speak also on Bill 020685 in the Cecil B. Moore
19 Urban Renewal Area.

20 As Mr. Wetzel mentioned, this is a bill
21 providing for acquisition of 145 properties in the
22 Cecil B. Moore Urban Renewal Area, most of which,
23 the great bulk of which, will be for the NTI,
24 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative Acquisition
25 Program and a smaller number for the finish-up of

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

2 the Cecil B. Moore Homeownership Program.

3 The Planning Commission reviewed this
4 Redevelopment Proposal on October 15, 2002. And I'm
5 here to answer any questions that I can on that.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

7 Any question for these witnesses?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, do we
10 have anyone in the audience who would like to
11 testify?

12 Please identify yourself for the record.

13 MR. ALSTON: Good morning. My name is
14 Floyd W. Alston. Chairman Kenney and Members of the
15 Rules Committee, I am here in support of an
16 ordinance approving the 10th Amendment of the
17 redevelopment proposal for the Cecil B. Moore Urban
18 Renewal Area.

19 For the past 13 years, Beach Interplex,
20 Inc., the Consortium, and Cecil B. Moore
21 organizations, various CDC, block groups, public
22 agencies and businesses have been coordinating their
23 individual and collective efforts to comprehensively
24 improve the quality of life of individuals and
25 families in the Cecil B. Moore area.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

I see this ordinance approving the 10th Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the Cecil B. Moore Urban Renewal Area as a continued opportunity to move the renewal of this area to the next level of progress. Affordable housing, economic growth, and improved human service will be enhanced by the approval of the ordinance.

Allow me to take this opportunity to thank all the participants in the consortium of Cecil B. Moore organizations, the many city and quasi-city agencies, and yes, the Philadelphia City Council for past support, as we witness the renaissance of the Cecil B. Moore area. Thank you very much.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much. Mr. Alston, should I assume that your testimony also applies to Bill No. 681, which is also part of that general area?

MR. ALSTON: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much. Any questions for Mr. Alston?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much for your testimony.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

2 Sir, could you please identify yourself
3 for the record?

4 MR. AKBAR: I'm Jordan Mohammad Akbar.
5 I lost a property in the 2100 block of Diamond
6 Street, and I wasn't notified, just like the other
7 people had testified earlier.

8 My question is -- I'm attempting to find
9 out about the rapacious law of bureaucratic
10 scavengery. I'm interested in the origin of the
11 RDA; its origin, its funding, and what makes it an
12 authority and whether or not these agencies -- I
13 know the origin of Government Administration. And I
14 also want to differentiate between leadership and
15 representation and my basic fundamental rights, and
16 I need to ask Mr. Wetzel where can I obtain
17 information of the origin of the RDA, its function
18 and its fundings, et cetera?

19 MR. WETZEL: I'd be glad to supply that
20 information. I'm just going to ask the gentleman
21 for his phone number and his name and address, and
22 I'll get him this. It's essentially created under
23 Pennsylvania statutes, and I can get that
24 information for him.

25 MR. AKBAR: What is its funding?

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

2 MR. WETZEL: If you'd like, I can answer
3 his specific question now or I can give him a
4 report.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I think if he'll
6 take the report and forward the information as
7 requested. I don't know whether or not you're
8 prepared to go into long history of what the
9 legislative intent of the Pennsylvania Legislature
10 was when they created it, but I'm sure you will in
11 due diligence provide all the information necessary.

12 MR. WETZEL: I will.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: If there's other
14 specific questions, I'll be happy to --

15 MR. AKBAR: Well, I'm also interesting
16 in, in light of what's happening today with the
17 construction industry -- I also represent ICUE,
18 which is Independent Contractors United for Equity.
19 I'm also opposed to Administration tap dancing when
20 a citizen comes forward and play the old ping pong
21 game. I'm attempting to get myself back on the back
22 burner. I've been off the stove for a while.

23 Mr. Cohen, Mr. Longstreth -- Jim Tiune
24 was my main man in '83. I put the legislation
25 through for Mohammed's Collective Buying Program,

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

2 and with the endorsement of the whole Council.

3 But there's some very, very -- things
4 that are bordering on the line of criminality here
5 as relates to notifying people, et cetera, and all
6 those type things. And I'm interesting because I'm
7 addressing not the meager minds of men. I want the
8 record to reflect that we're interested and we're
9 more than qualified to be a part of whatever is
10 going on early on as opposed at sessions like this.

11 I'm not going to take it any further at
12 this particular point. I'll contact Mr. Wetzel and
13 also Darrell. I can talk with Darrell.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Yes, sir, and I
15 appreciate you're being here and your questions. I
16 just think that the length of the answer is going to
17 be such that it needs to be done in a --

18 MR. AKBAR: I've been here this long. I
19 mean, don't give me the boot so --

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sure you can
21 understand the problem.

22 MR. AKBAR: I understand.

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, sir.

24 Is there anyone else to testify on this
25 bill?

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

2 I think it may be appropriate, Mr.

3 Sauer, you had some general comments you wanted to
4 make earlier as we move into other Model Cities and
5 Mantua and others. So if you can just make your
6 comments now, we can move on.

7 There's no one else to testify on
8 020685?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you. Please
11 identify yourself and attempt to make your comments
12 in general terms. Thank you.

13 MR. SAUER: Thank you, Chairman Kenney
14 and Members of Council. My name is Rick Sauer and
15 I'm the Executive Director of the Philadelphia
16 Association of Community Development Corporations,
17 which is a city-wide association of CDCs and
18 organizations involved in neighborhood
19 revitalization.

20 We're glad to see that property
21 acquisition issues related to the implementation of
22 the City's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative
23 are being addressed. The acquisition properties
24 using NTI bond funds is a critical step in the
25 City's request to take a more proactive approach to

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

land assembly. And I think the City's been taking a number of other steps as well, such as obtaining passage of State Legislation to facilitate acquisition, expanding urban renewal areas, and developing a computerized system to track properties through the process.

While insufficient to achieve neighborhood transformation by themselves, both adequate funding for acquisition and streamlining the City's current acquisition process are both necessary if the City is going to be successful in spurring new development in our neighborhoods and revitalizing these neighborhoods through NTI.

I want to focus my testimony on just four sort of broader points. Most of the people coming up here today are testifying on specific properties that are up before the Council on various ordinances. But I think it's also important to raise some larger issues as the City moves forward now with the NTI acquisition process.

And the first issue I want to bring up is that of balancing acquisition funding for land banking versus specific development projects. The City is correct in that they are moving in a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

1
2 direction where they want to land bank properties so
3 they can be more proactive in responding to future
4 development opportunities. Right now, you approach
5 the City with a project you want to do, they have to
6 start of a, step one, go out acquire those
7 properties before you can move forward with the
8 project. If they actually had more properties in
9 their inventory where they could assemble fully
10 developable sites, it could really speed up the
11 process and spur new development.

12 At the same time, though, there's a
13 critical need to support acquisition for specific
14 development projects in the shorter term so that we
15 are doing a better job of addressing the need for
16 housing among Philadelphia's residents. And then we
17 can also keep up the momentum that's already going
18 on in a number of our neighborhoods towards
19 revitalization.

20 What we can't do is sort of try to
21 change the process from one being more reactive to
22 one being more proactive just overnight because
23 there's a lot of things that gets lost in that
24 transition. So we need to strike an appropriate
25 balance between those two approaches. So while we

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

do need to start land banking properties, we also need to be advancing acquisition for specific development projects right now.

I think it's approximately 2 and a half thousand properties before you guys today in these ordinances, about \$15 million dollars in acquisition requests using NTI bond funds. And sometimes it's a little bit difficult to differentiate what the exact purpose of the acquisition is and the information we have, but there's somewhere around maybe a dozen housing projects out of all those acquisitions that are going forward. Maybe there are some additional land banking being done for future projects down the road that a specific developer has not been identified yet, but there's only about a dozen or maybe a little bit more actual housing projects that acquisition is being done for now, and maybe about half of those for CDC projects.

So that concerns me in that we do need to be building new affordable housing, new -- if we want to encourage new market rate oriented housing, we need to be doing that in the next couple years now. And as we know, the development process takes quite a bit of time. So things we're acquiring now

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

1
2 are not going to be completed projects for another
3 year or two or even longer. So we need to start
4 being more aggressive in acquiring properties for
5 actual projects. And we urge Council, if they're
6 not going to be doing that this round, this fall
7 acquisition round, that when the spring 2003
8 acquisition round comes up that there's actually
9 more acquisitions for specific CDC housing
10 development projects.

11 The second issue I wanted to bring up is
12 that of creating a functional land bank. When NTI
13 was announced back in April 2001, whenever it was,
14 the City stated that it planned to consolidate
15 ownership of publicly held surplus properties that
16 are currently held by a variety of different public
17 agencies at one single entity called the
18 Philadelphia Land Bank. That's really important
19 because right now, if you go out to try to get all
20 the acquisitions you need for your project, the RDA
21 may have some properties or they can acquire some
22 properties on your behalf. The Philadelphia Housing
23 Authority will have others scattered site housing
24 projects in their neighborhood. And just going
25 through that whole process adds a lot of complexity

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

and a lot of time and a lot of cost to getting the properties you need to move a project forward.

So I believe that the City's new Secretary of Housing and Neighborhood Preservation has experience with the Atlanta Land Bank, which has been held up as a model elsewhere, and that should be instrumental in helping the City implement its own functional land bank.

As mentioned, as part of this process, it's really critical that surplus properties currently owned by other public entities be consolidated into one entity.

I think also it's important, with all the land banking that is going on, that the City really have of a coherent strategy for stabilizing and maintaining the vacant land that it will be land banking so that it doesn't continue to be sort of a blighting influence on our neighborhoods, that they develop a clear policy for disposing of the properties they land bank.

The third issue is with regard to funding for acquisition. I think it was mentioned earlier that the total allocated in NTI bond funds for acquisition over the five-year period is 50

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

1 million. Today, you have -- and the City, I think,
2 in Year One approved 10 to \$14 million in
3 acquisition. We already have more of that before
4 you today, more than \$14 million. And likely, given
5 whatever is going to come forward in the spring
6 round, we could be approving acquisition for over
7 \$30 million worth of acquisitions in Year One of
8 NTI, which we certainly support moving up the
9 acquisition time line. There's been sort of a delay
10 in some acquisitions, but sort of begs the larger
11 question is, how our future acquisitions are going
12 to be paid for? If we end up spending that
13 \$50 million in the next year and a half, what
14 happens two years from now to fund acquisition
15 activity? Are we going to re-allocate additional
16 NTI bond funds, whether they're private activity
17 bond funds or other funds? Is the City going to
18 find another source of funding to support
19 acquisition?
20

21 So that's a larger issue that as the
22 City sort of grapples with funding for acquisition
23 in Year One of NTI, I hope they'll be taking a look
24 at the longer-term issue.

25 And then finally, the connection between

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

1
2 acquisition and project financing. Having site
3 control is a necessary condition for applying for or
4 obtaining financing from a number of different
5 funding sources, both public and private. And CDCs
6 are uniquely positioned to partner with and leverage
7 resources from these different sources. But if the
8 City isn't actively supporting acquisition for
9 specific development projects, then these sponsors
10 of these projects can't go and apply low-income
11 housing tax credits. They can't apply for
12 Homeownership Choice Program Funding. They can't
13 apply for Section 202 Funding. They can't go to a
14 bank. They can't go the Federal Home Loan Bank to
15 get funds.

16 In some cases, on the acquisition
17 request forms, what the City is asking project
18 sponsors to do is to identify what their funding
19 sources are for that particular project. Well, if
20 you can't go get that funding until you have site
21 control, which means you need to have the
22 acquisition process going already, it's very
23 difficult to get your project selected for
24 acquisition. And so while it's certainly reasonable
25 for a group to have a very good idea of what funding

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

sources they're going to get funding for their project from, sort of requiring that up front makes it all the more challenging.

A key goal of NTI, actually, is to leverage resources from other sources. So the City's not just putting its own dollars in these projects, and it makes a lot of sense. I think one thing we're seeing, though, as a result of sort of a low level of acquisition activity over the last few years as NTI gets ramped up to go, is that we're missing out on a lot of opportunities to leverage those other resources.

In the last round that the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency just concluded for its low-income tax credit allocations, there was about \$6 million in tax credits left on the table because there weren't projects there ready to use them. Likewise, this year the City did not submit an application for Home Ownership Choice Program Grant from the State's Housing Finance Agency, which could have brought substantial new dollars to the City to support home ownership housing development.

So as we think through the strategy of what acquisitions we're doing and we could use those

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020685

1
2 acquisitions to leverage other resources to support
3 neighborhood transformation, we really encourage the
4 City, both City Council and the Administration, to
5 put a higher priority on acquiring properties that
6 can enable current projects to move forward.

7 And I guess one final comment, and that
8 is, while we certainly agree that the City needs to
9 strengthen its residential real estate markets,
10 there's also a need to ensure that long-term
11 residents that have lived in the neighborhoods for
12 years and have been struggling to revitalize these
13 neighborhoods have really stuck with it through the
14 thick and thin, that they're the ones that really do
15 end up benefiting from neighborhood transformation
16 and NTI implementation. And CDC's are uniquely
17 positioned to help make that happen. We want to see
18 the City support their projects and make sure that
19 NTI is a success. Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
21 for your testimony.

22 The next bill for consideration is Bill
23 020673, which is an ordinance approving the 10th
24 Amendment of the Redevelopment proposal for the
25 Mantua Urban Renewal Area, being the area beginning

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1
2 at the intersection of 40th Street and Spring Garden
3 Street, including the 7th Amendment to the Urban
4 Renewal Plan and the Relocation Plan, as amended,
5 which provides, inter alia, for the additional land
6 acquisition of approximately 715 properties for
7 residential and related uses; the additional
8 acquisition of 46 properties for commercial and
9 related uses; the provision of certain relocation
10 services, as required by law and declaring that
11 condemnation is not imminent with respect to the
12 Project.

13 Mr. Wetzel, also, there was one other
14 question I had asked to be included with each bill,
15 which I don't know whether you've done it or not,
16 but you can do it in writing to the Chair if you
17 would, and that's how many parcels in the bills
18 today are being land banked.

19 MR. WETZEL: Okay. I think I have, but
20 will go through the testimony and see if there's
21 some missing.

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Actually, if you
23 just compile it all, it would be helpful.

24 MR. WETZEL: We'll put a schedule land
25 bank and project specific and side yards.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And then also
3 relocations.

4 MR. WETZEL: And how about side yards.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Yes, whatever you
6 think is appropriate in that realm of questions.

7 MR. WETZEL: Okay. We'll prepare that
8 for you.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please identify
10 yourself.

11 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson and Members
12 of the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel,
13 Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of
14 the City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in
15 support of Bill No. 020673 which approve the 10th
16 Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the
17 Mantua Urban Renewal Area.

18 This bill would authorize the
19 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 761 properties
20 for the purposes of land banking and residential
21 development.

22 A total 737 properties, all vacant lots,
23 will be acquired as part of the land banking
24 strategy within the area designated as the Mantua
25 Acquisition Zone. The properties will be made

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

available forfeiture development projects.

A total of 24 properties, 3 vacant lots and 21 vacant structures, will be acquired for a proposed tax credit rental development for low and moderate income families. Neighborhoods Restorations Limited Partnership, developer of affordable housing has expressed an interest in developing these properties.

This amendment was approved by the City Planning Commission at its meeting on October 15, 2002.

Mr. Chairperson and Members of the Committee, I respectfully request favorable consideration of Bill No. 020673 and would ask the suspects of Council rules to allow first reading on December 12, 2002.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

Please identify yourself for the record.

MR. NAPTON: Mr. Chairman, my name is David Napton, representing the Philadelphia City Planning Commission.

Mr. Chairman Members of the Committee, I'm here to testify on Bill 020673, the amended Redevelopment Proposal for the Mantua Urban Renewal

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 Area in West Philadelphia.

3 As Mr. Wetzel had told you, this
4 acquisition bill entails 761 property acquisitions.
5 And the important thing here is that nearly all of
6 these are vacant lots. The approval for Mantua was
7 based on the acquisition of vacant lots creating
8 potential development sites. As Mr. Wetzel also
9 mentioned, there are certain number of parcels, 24,
10 intended for a specific developer in line in
11 relatively short term. The Mantua neighborhood has
12 been reviewed as a target neighborhood by the
13 Planning Commission at the very beginning of the NTI
14 process, so we're optimistic about this.

15 The Planning Commission reviewed this
16 Redevelopment Proposal on October 15, 2002. If you
17 have any questions I'll try to answer them.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
19 Any questions for these witnesses?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, is
22 there anyone else to testify for this bill in this
23 room?

24 MR. WASHINGTON: My name is Gerald
25 washington and I'm a long-time resident of the

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1
2 Mantua area and I work specifically with the Mantua
3 Community Planners Group. And the main concern of
4 the Mantua community is that even though there is a
5 lot being said about NTI, nobody is being directly
6 contacted. Now, we see little articles in newspaper
7 in regards to NTI, but nobody has been contacted
8 Mantua about anything. And most of your community
9 groups have been meeting as of late in regards to
10 that, but we don't have any material or anything in
11 terms of what the plans are for Mantua. And as
12 spoken earlier about long-time residents of these
13 areas, a lot of our families moved there in the '20s
14 and the '30s. Most of people that are there now,
15 they inherited their properties from their parents.
16 Some of them are still in their parents' names.
17 Some of the residents, they still have properties
18 there but they may have moved on somewhere else.
19 They haven't been notified.

20 And again, like I said, most of the
21 people in Mantua, they would like to know if
22 whatever is being done by NTI, is it the benefit to
23 the people there and would they have any say in the
24 planning of whatever NTI is going to do. So we
25 don't have no dialog with anybody.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1
2 At one time, we were talking with
3 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell. We had a dialog with
4 her for a minute. And then some individual from the
5 neighborhood approached one of the demolition guys,
6 Red Ball because, because what happen is all we know
7 is one day this demolition crew just showed up in
8 areas talking about knocking down houses. So one
9 individual from the area, he approached the guy -- I
10 don't know what all was said, but from that point on
11 Jannie Blackwell cut off all dialog with Mantua
12 community.

13 Now, I came down here one day last week,
14 and her aid, a guy named Harry Way, said they're not
15 talking to Mantua.

16 So now since that point there, I met
17 with other groups of various neighborhood groups and
18 explained the same thing to them. So the consensus
19 is Mantua want to be notified exactly what's up and
20 how can we participate. Now, we're not opposed to
21 doing something to eradicate the blight and
22 bettering the community. We all for that and we
23 want to be a part of that. But at the same time, we
24 don't want to feel like we're just going to be
25 misplaced and somebody just going to sell us out to

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 somebody that got a lot of money to come in there
3 and develop things that we can't afford, even
4 develop housing that we can't afford or either take
5 the housing that we have. So that's what everybody
6 wants to know.

7 And when nobody's telling you what's
8 happening, you know, it's very easy for us to think
9 a lot of things and react in a lot of different
10 ways. So I'm here today to bring this to your
11 attention to let you know what the thought and the
12 feel is in the neighborhood and for somebody down
13 here to do something to reestablish the dialog with
14 the City Councilperson for our district and with the
15 developers where we have some type of communication.
16 At this point, we don't have that. And so before it
17 gets to be into a riot type of situation, because
18 you got some people in the neighborhood who are
19 saying they're not just letting people come in three
20 and do that. Now even though what they're talking
21 about doing is not the right way of handling things,
22 but it's best not to let this situation get ugly.
23 So I'm here now to bring everybody's attention
24 what's going on so maybe we can do something to deal
25 with all that and all parties concerned could be

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 satisfied.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
4 for your testimony. I appreciate it.

5 Anyone else to testify on this bill?

6 MR. KNIGHT: Good afternoon again. I
7 want to thank the Chairperson.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You have to
9 re-identify yourself.

10 MR. KNIGHT: My name is Ken Knight and
11 I'm representing the Mantua Trade Center. And I
12 just want to say good afternoon to the Council
13 Chairperson and to the Council President and other
14 Honorable Councilmembers.

15 I just want to pick up on a few points
16 that Mr. Washington has made for the Mantua
17 community.

18 Now, just to keep the process orderly,
19 we could have had all of Mantua here today. But we,
20 as leaders that we are, we decided to come and to
21 represent the community in a very orderly way and at
22 the same time to appeal to this body.

23 As Gerald Washington has said -- now, I
24 don't know all the reasons, I don't have all the
25 answers, but one thing we do know is that if terms

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1
2 of the ordinance that is now being introduced and
3 proposed, it's just wrong, simply because there has
4 no communication in terms of the rooted people in
5 the Mantua community. I mean, there's been some for
6 the special interests and I heard the names
7 Neighborhood Restorations and everybody know that's
8 Scott Mazo. But at the same time, let me just say
9 again, there has been no real communication with the
10 groups, the embedded groups, the groups that are
11 very strongly rooted in the Mantua community. And
12 in some cases, we feel that we've been sold out.
13 And I'm saying that in terms of this information or
14 what we call openness and just overall thing of
15 disclosure, there hasn't been that. I found out
16 about this meeting, this hearing -- and there again,
17 I see Pat Smith over there. We were up in
18 Harrisburg together last week, and that's how I
19 found out about this hearing. And just like we
20 talked about earlier about people's houses being
21 torn down and them not getting even a post card or a
22 letter, it's the same thing. I mean, NTI came to
23 the neighborhood a few weeks ago. They were on
24 Haverford Avenue. I'm in touch with everybody,
25 every group, every organization in Mantua because,

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1
2 there again, we've been coordinating these groups
3 and having meetings for sometime now. And I'm
4 telling you, we didn't even know that there was
5 going to be a press conference. But we came. We
6 have a way, just as you heard here earlier, even
7 though we don't get the proper notification from
8 RDA, one thing this community -- and I got to say to
9 our credit. We can get the word out, whether you
10 call it the grapevine, whether you call it a drum or
11 whatever you want to call it, but we tend to find
12 out about things that are pertinent to what's going
13 on in our community. And several people were there
14 that day. I asked several people there, I said, "Do
15 you know about any meeting at this press conference
16 or NTI?" They said, "no."

17 And let me just tell you, I go back
18 early on supporting the Mayor's program for
19 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. But at the
20 same time, Mantua itself had its own transformation
21 initiative program and it was called just simply
22 that, the Mantua Transformation Initiative Program.
23 And there again, because we saw early on the way
24 things were going in the City and we wanted to be a
25 part. We wanted to be inclusive. But then we find

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 out that we're not getting any information.

3 And one thing the Chairperson said
4 earlier, Councilman Kenney, as he was asking RDA,
5 what are the particulars in terms of the land
6 banking, what are the numbers? How much money are
7 we spending into the preservation, housing
8 preservation, the relocation? What are the numbers?

9 I mean, we're not rocket scientists, but
10 we can process some information. And there again,
11 we want to know those hard numbers. How many houses
12 are you tearing down? Because we already found out
13 several people have contacted me and said, "Well,
14 Ken, my house is on the hit list. There's nothing
15 wrong with my house."

16 And I'm saying that we had on the part
17 of L & I -- and there again, this whole thing is
18 being driven and we understand that with NTI in
19 terms of the whole effort of renewal and all of
20 that. But at the same time, it has to be a thorough
21 process.

22 When you go and you knock down
23 somebody's house, you can't build it back up. And
24 we had situations and instances in Mantua what that
25 has happened in the past. It has happened all over

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1 this City. So that's why I'm saying, as I said
2 earlier, there needs to be an ordinance coming from
3 this body to protecting those, as Councilman Cohen
4 said, those due process rights on the behalf of
5 those homeowners, those poor people.

6 We have the lowest census tract data in
7 the City. We're in a Catch 22 situation in Mantua
8 and in the Belmont community. A lot of those people
9 moved in in the '20s and '30s, they're on a fixed
10 income. They don't have any money. They can't go
11 anywhere. But at the same time, they're not getting
12 no notice and then you take and you put that person
13 out of their house or you take that house. You
14 can't bring back the dead. Once that person has a
15 heart attack because they found out, they came back
16 from somewhere and then their house is no longer
17 there. You cannot bring back the dead. And I'm
18 saying the damage is already done. That person's
19 had a heart attack and they're dead because we as
20 leaders and as elected officials, we didn't care
21 nothing about them.

22 And there again, going back to this
23 whole idea of disclosure and openness, no, we don't
24 know how many houses are coming down. Some of the
25

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1
2 houses don't have come down because in terms of the
3 Mantua Transformation Initiative, we have already
4 identified blocks where we may have one or two lots.
5 It makes no sense to go on that same block and now
6 you're going to tear down six more houses. To land
7 bank it for when? We don't know when.

8 And then we're saying at the same time,
9 and this is for RDA, we want to land bank, too. We
10 want to land bank. The CDC that we have in Mantua,
11 that we're formulating in Mantua, we want to be in
12 the land bank business, too. Because that way we
13 can ensure our people that they're not going to be
14 displaced. And when those property values go up,
15 then we're invested in that land. Because let's
16 make no mistake about it, we know -- there again, we
17 all don't have college degrees, but we know it's
18 about the land. And like I said before, it's not 40
19 acres, but it's all we got, and we're going to fight
20 to keep it. And that's why we're here today.

21 We could have pack this room. We're
22 going to go all around, not only in Mantua, we're
23 going to go out to the City because we're saying
24 that if it happens in Mantua, it's happening
25 somewhere else. And if it happens in Mantua, that's

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 already too much. And I'm saying that we have to
3 stop this. But at the same time, we need to get
4 with the NTI officials.

5 I asked Pat the other week, I said,
6 "Well, Pat, where is the book for Mantua?" And she
7 said, "Well, Ken, we don't even have any more
8 printed." That's the book, the big thick book that
9 has the color pictures in it that tells you what's
10 going on with respect to your community. There
11 ain't no more. And that's a problem. We need to
12 have that information. We don't have none of the
13 numbers. We don't know what's happening.

14 But one thing we can tell you, we are
15 not going to give up our community without a fight.
16 And I'm talking about a very, very serious fight.
17 If you know the history of Mantua -- let me just
18 tell you, it is the birth place of a lot of
19 movements. And one in particular that I had a lot
20 to do with and that's the anti-drug movement.
21 Herman Rice, Dr. Rice, and there again, may the best
22 wishes and salutations to him. There again, I
23 walked side by side with him in Mantua when it
24 wasn't slated for renewal. And I'm telling you,
25 that movement went all the around this country. And

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1 we plan to do the same thing with this fight.
2 Because we're saying is that that is our 40 acres
3 and that is our reparations. But if we give all the
4 land back to the City, then we have nothing. And
5 I'm saying that as a CDC, we want to land bank. We
6 don't have no problem with giving you some of the
7 land, but we want some, too. We want some of that
8 land to develop for our people. When you talk about
9 neighborhood restorations, I know neighborhood
10 restorations. They started out over there in the
11 southwest part of Market Street with Vera -- and
12 there again, may peace and blessings be upon her.
13 And then died and they got a little inroads into
14 West Philadelphia, but that is not our contractor of
15 choice. We have several qualified people in Mantua
16 that are ready to do projects. We as a CDC, we're
17 ready to do projects. But we want to be vested. We
18 want to be told what is going on. We want to be a
19 part of the process, not after everybody done met.
20 That's before they done met. And that's the problem
21 now. We are not getting no communication. And we
22 feel that Mantua is being sold out from under us,
23 and that has to stop. And like I said, we're not
24 giving up without a fight. And thank you for your
25

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 time.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilmember
4 Blackwell.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I would like to
6 speak after anyone else from Mantua speaks, if that
7 is acceptable.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Absolutely.

9 Is there anyone else here to speak on
10 this particular bill?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Mr. Wetzel, just one
13 question before Councilmember Blackwell. Did you
14 give me the location numbers on this bill in your
15 testimony?

16 MR. WETZEL: Yes. There is zero.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.
18 Councilmember Blackwell.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

20 I'll take the witness chair.

21 I'm Jannie Blackwell, Councilperson for
22 the area. Madam President, Chair of the Committee,
23 and certainly to all Members of the Committee, as
24 all of you know, development, we've been working in
25 Mantua and throughout my district for many years.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1
2 In 1999, we announced West Philadelphia on the Move,
3 a non-profit organization that we formed to deal
4 with this development and other projects that we do
5 throughout the year.

6 Let me say that I've met with Mr. Knight
7 and others several times, several times. So the
8 allegation certainly that there is no information
9 available is not true. In fact, I'm surprised and
10 disappointed that he would come to this public
11 meeting and say thusly. In fact, Mr. Knight, the
12 Mantua Professional Development and Training Center
13 has been in question. I am certainly happy to
14 submit to this Committee a copy of a letter that we
15 wrote to various members throughout the City, RDA
16 and various elected officials in my district. I
17 will read it.

18 "Dear --

19 "We received endorsed proposal from Ken
20 Knight, a self proclaimed community organizer in the
21 Belmont/Mantua community entitled the Mantua
22 Professional Development and Training Center. While
23 I am listed as a supporter of the proposal, I would
24 like to clarify that I nor my office were involved
25 in creating, and neither do we endorse it.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 "As Councilwoman of the 3rd District for
3 the past 10 years, I am quite aware of the need for
4 more employment opportunities on capital works
5 projects such as the Mayor's Neighborhood
6 Transformation Initiative for neighborhood
7 residents. To this end, my office is working
8 closely with the Mayor's Office and Capital Program
9 Office to ensure this concern is addressed and that
10 bona fide employment is created for district
11 residents.

12 "In regards to the proposal, though, we
13 have several reservations. The author, Mr. Ronald
14 Daniels, a legitimate business owner, was told that
15 Mr. Knight was working in partnership with my office
16 on this project. This is not the case.
17 Furthermore, the training center prototype, is Mr.
18 Daniels own proposal, the Daniels Center. He has no
19 knowledge that it would be used by Mr. Knight to
20 market a concept for Mantua. We are in support of
21 Mr. Daniels' center which would be an incredible
22 asset to the Mill Creek community. We do not
23 support the intentional manipulation of facts or the
24 misguidance of honest people for the gain of others.

25 If you or any of your staff would like

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 to see this proposal -- if you see it, we request
3 that you disregard it. We are also available for
4 any further discussion that you deem appropriate.
5 Thank you for your attention to this matter."

6 And I read that. There is a picture,
7 which I will show you, marked Mantua Professional
8 Development Center. I show this to the committee
9 and certain to all those who are in attendance.
10 There is also another proposal that we received some
11 time ago for another area that we work with, 4706
12 West Minister Avenue. This is a proposal. Inside,
13 you will see the same exact photo that was enlarged
14 and renamed something else that Mr. Daniels did for
15 another location. And that is why we said we could
16 not associate ourselves with this. I will also pass
17 this up for Members of the Committee.

18 This also came, a before and after for
19 future needs. These are not as appropriate as
20 those.

21 So we say that, you know, we work very,
22 very long and hard on this Mantua plan, as we have
23 for plans throughout the district. All of those in
24 question are abandoned properties. They're a few
25 lots included. When we are ready to bring a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

1
2 development project to the community where we have
3 everything ready, it is our goal to do that. We've
4 talked to the leaders in Mantua. Everybody knows
5 these are down and out, abandoned, deteriorated,
6 dilapidated ID properties that are in this first
7 package. There is no one who is displaced. Again,
8 there are a few lots. The whole development plan
9 about who does what in the area we will bring to the
10 community. And the whole issue of trying to
11 criticize another developer who has invested 50
12 million private dollars into my district is
13 absolutely unfair. If you have \$50 million that you
14 want to bring to do development, we're glad to
15 receive it. But Neighborhood Restorations has
16 invested 50 million private dollars into my area.
17 And he's one of the private developers I boast of
18 who is certainly a great part of our development
19 team one whose money and investment and commitment
20 to the area we're very, very proud to receive.

21 I'm happy to answer any questions that
22 the committee has and certainly hope that who hear
23 will realize that we always work in the best interest
24 of the community. We always work in concert with
25 them. And certainly, when we have a full proposal

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020673

2 together about the development plans, we will take
3 that. But to talk about taking properties that are
4 already stickered, that are ID'd as dangerous that
5 falling down that are deteriorated, that have been
6 vacant forever and some few vacant lots is certainly
7 in no way hiding from the community about some great
8 plan.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr.
12 Chairman.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Questions for the
14 Councilmember?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very
18 much.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Anyone else to
20 testify on this bill?

21 If you could possibly make it brief. I
22 understand the opportunity your desire to respond,
23 but I'd rather not make this a debate. If you want
24 to leave some parting comments, we appreciate it
25 because we have a few more bills to deal with.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020667

1
2 MR. KNIGHT: There again, in respecting
3 the Chairman's wishes, I just want to state that,
4 there again, anything that we had proposed or we
5 have developed, that has come out of lengthy
6 meetings with not only the community but all the
7 stakeholders. And there again, we have several
8 meetings with Mr. Daniels and I just don't want it
9 said here that we were doing something that wasn't
10 in partnership with Mr. Daniels. We were then and
11 we still are. Thank you very much.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you for your
13 testimony.

14 Anyone else to testify on this bill?
15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The next bill on the
17 list is Bill No. 020667, which is an Ordinance
18 approving the redevelopment proposal of the
19 Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia
20 for the redevelopment of the Greenway Urban Renewal
21 Area being the area generally bounded by Chester
22 Avenue on the north, South 49th Street on the east,
23 Woodland Avenue on the south and South 52nd Street
24 on the west; approving the urban renewal plan and
25 determining that such plan and redevelopment

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020667

proposal conform to the general locality plan and make adequate provisions for individuals, business concerns and families who are displaced.

Please identify yourself for the record.

MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson and Members of the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel, Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in support of Bill No. 020667, which would approve the Redevelopment Proposal for the Greenway Urban Renewal Area.

This bill would authorize the Redevelopment Authority to acquire properties 42 properties, 35 vacant structures and 7 vacant lots, for the purpose of residential development. Neighborhood Restorations Limited Partnership, a developer of affordable housing, has expressed an interest in acquiring these properties for a tax credit rental project to serve low to moderate-income families.

The acquisition will promote the elimination of blight and result in expanding housing opportunities for low and moderate-income individuals and families while restoring abandoned

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020667

2 properties to the tax rolls.

3 This amendment was approved by the City
4 Planning Commission at its meeting on October 15,
5 2002.

6 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
7 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
8 consideration of Bill No. 020667 and would also ask
9 the suspension of Council Rules to allow first
10 reading December 12, 2002. Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

12 Please identify yourself for the record.

13 MR. NAPTON: My name is David Napton,
14 I'm representing the Philadelphia City Planning
15 Commission. Madam President, Mr. Chairman, and
16 Members of the Committee, I'm here to speak in favor
17 of Bill No. 020667. As Mr. Wetzel just explained,
18 this establishes the Greenway Urban Renewal Area.
19 It's a new Urban Renewal Area within the context of
20 a larger area called the Southwest Schuylkill
21 Redevelopment Area. Also, as Mr. Wetzel mentioned,
22 the purpose here is to improve housing conditions in
23 the area between 49th and 52nd Streets.

24 The Planning Commission approved this
25 redevelopment proposal and urban renewal plan on

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 October 15, 2002.

3 I'll be happy to answer any questions of
4 the Committee.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
6 for your testimony.

7 Any questions for these witnesses?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, anyone
10 else to testify on this bill?

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, we will
13 now move to Bill No. 020679, an ordinance approving
14 the 1st Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for
15 the American Street Industrial Corridor Urban
16 Renewal Area, being the area generally bounded by
17 Lehigh Avenue, Berks Street and Montgomery Avenue on
18 the north by Second Street and Philip Street on the
19 east by Girard Avenue, Oxford Street and Jefferson
20 Street on the south and by Germantown Avenue, Sixth
21 Street and third Street on the west, including the
22 1st Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan and the 1st
23 Amendment to the Relocation Plan, which provides
24 inter alia, for the additional land acquisition of
25 approximately 54 properties.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 Please identify yourself for the record.

3 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson and Members
4 of the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel,
5 Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of
6 the City of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in
7 support in Bill No. 020679 which would approve the
8 1st Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the
9 American Street Industrial Corridor Urban Renewal
10 Area.

11 This bill would authorize the
12 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 54 properties.

13 A total 21 properties, 18 vacant lots
14 and 3 occupied houses, would be acquired for
15 industrial development in the 2500 block of North
16 American Street. A Lancaster County ice
17 manufacturer has expressed interest in acquiring
18 this assemblage from the Redevelopment Authority.

19 A total of 27 properties, 21 vacant lots
20 and 6 occupied structures, would be acquired on the
21 west side of 1700 block of North American Street.
22 The proposed reuse is industrial development.

23 A total of three parcels will be
24 acquired on behalf of the Pennsylvania Horticultural
25 Society's Vacant Land Stabilization Program.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 A total of three properties, vacant
3 lots, would be acquired; one on the 1700 block of
4 North Randolph Street and two on the 1400 block of
5 North American Street. PIDC has requested these
6 properties for business expansion and the creation
7 of a parking lot.

8 This amendment was approved by the City
9 Planning Commission at their meeting of October 15,
10 2002.

11 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
12 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
13 consideration of Bill NO. 020679 and would also ask
14 the suspension of Council Rules to allow for first
15 reading on December 12, 2002.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

17 Just let me take this gentleman's
18 testimony and then Councilman Nutter has questions.

19 Please identify yourself.

20 MR. NAPTON: My name is David Napton.

21 Mr. Chairman, Madam President, Members of the
22 Committee, I'm here representing the Philadelphia
23 City Planning Commission here to speak on Bill No.
24 020679 for the American Street Industrial Corridor
25 Urban Renewal Area.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 This bill which would provide
3 acquisition of 54 properties for general industrial,
4 residential and related uses was passed by the
5 Planning Commission at its meeting on October 15,
6 2000.

7 I'll be happy to answer any questions of
8 the committee.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
10 Councilmember Nutter.

11 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
12 Chairman. I want to ask these questions more in a
13 general context because of the relocation issues and
14 I may find myself shortly in a somewhat similar
15 situation. So I want to, to be honest with you,
16 take a little advantage of the fact that you're
17 here, better understand the issue of relocation at
18 the moment so that I can better represent my
19 constituents at a future point in time when this
20 becomes an issue in at least one part my district.
21 So let's talk a little bit about relocation in
22 general.

23 I thought I heard somewhere in the
24 testimony -- but now I can't find it, although I see
25 down on the bottom of the second page testimony you

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 made reference to six families, but I thought I
3 heard in the course of the testimony more. What's
4 the total number of people possibly being relocated
5 here?

6 MR. WETZEL: I'm sorry, there's a
7 correction here. There are two on the 2500 block
8 and four on the 1700 block, for a total of six.

9 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So six is the --

10 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

11 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: It's mentioned down
12 on the bottom of the second page. I was trying to
13 keep track and then I lost it.

14 MR. WETZEL: Item 3 on the second page
15 indicates six residential relocations.

16 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: When you talk about
17 "we're very mindful of the hardships," is that the
18 section of the testimony you're talking about or
19 somewhere else?

20 MR. WETZEL: On the second page Roman
21 numeral III, relocation information.

22 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I'm looking at
23 testimony. What are you looking at?

24 MR. WETZEL: There's a facts sheet.

25 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Was that attached to

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 the testimony .

3 MR. WETZEL: It should be.

4 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yeah, I've seen
5 these fact sheets. They usually come right after
6 the testimony. I didn't see that in this one.

7 All right. Why don't we just agree that
8 it's six. But again, my questions are more general
9 in nature.

10 Your testimony, I think, was that you
11 regret bringing projects that require relocation but
12 in this case, you say, "however, we are not able to
13 do so." Is that because these properties are in the
14 way of a proposed development?

15 MR. WETZEL: You're not reading from my
16 testimony then.

17 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: You're right. I'm
18 reading from Eva Gladstein's testimony who's right
19 next to you. There's no confusion about who the two
20 of you are. I am generally able to identify and
21 distinguish between the two of you, although both of
22 you I desperately attempt to represent here in City
23 Council. You probably won't forgive me after this,
24 though.

25 So we've got six families, right,

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 regardless of whose testimony it is?

3 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

4 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: How do we deal with
5 the issue of relocation?

6 Let's talk about the notice. We had
7 some notice discussion earlier with regard to
8 properties that are probably vacant. What do we do
9 in relocation situations? And do those people get
10 notice?

11 MR. WETZEL: Let me first state that
12 what we do is operate under the Federal Uniform
13 Relocation Act.

14 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

15 MR. WETZEL: And all of our procedures
16 and operations are guided by and we adhere to -- the
17 acronym is the URA, but it's the Uniform Relocation
18 Act.

19 And with so many federal kinds of
20 programs, there are real interesting sort of
21 dichotomies in them; and one of those is when can we
22 officially talk to someone. And technically we
23 can't really officially talk to someone until we
24 send them an offer letter. And we can't send out an
25 offer letter until our board has filed a Declaration

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 of Taking.

3 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I see where this
4 discussion is going. And you can't file a
5 Declaration of Taking until you have an ordinance
6 passed.

7 MR. WETZEL: You got it.

8 Now, the one cure is the very issue you
9 raised earlier, and that is if it's possible to give
10 notice at this stage. So then there wouldn't be any
11 surprises if the notice is given at the stage we
12 talked about earlier. And that's when, let's assume
13 the public ad goes in and a written notice goes to
14 the individual, if that's 's possible to do.

15 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: You do understand --
16 I mean, this is increasingly becoming clear,
17 although it was pretty earlier that some additional
18 requirement with specificity, I think, needs to be
19 put in place to deal with whether it's the vacant
20 house, the vacant lot, or now the occupied property.
21 I mean, we could, if not in fact are presently
22 having a discussion about the possible relocation of
23 individuals, talking about them -- and I say this
24 with every respect to you and everyone's been
25 respectful here. But talking about them in almost a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 third person kind of way at a hearing about possible
3 relocation, we're address specific, we're urban
4 renewal, we're talking about takings and the like,
5 and in the big public forum for everyone to hear,
6 but I think what I'm hearing from you is we have not
7 had a discussion because of statute with the
8 individuals involved directly; is that what you're
9 telling me?

10 MR. WETZEL: No, no, we've had
11 discussion. What we can't do is sit down with an
12 individual and discuss what their relocation
13 benefits would be because we have not even proceeded
14 to the point of condemning their properties.

15 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I understand
16 that, but we have advertised in the newspaper and
17 we're presently engaged in a public hearing at 1:35
18 in the afternoon about the possible relocation of
19 the individuals, and you're telling me that we
20 haven't had a discussion with them --

21 MR. WETZEL: No, I'm not saying that.

22 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, tel me what
23 telling me.

24 MR. WETZEL: I'm saying we haven't given
25 each individual a written notice from the

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 Redevelopment Authority, but we have been at
3 community meetings. And Eva can add to this.
4 Including Redevelopment Authority relocation staff.
5 We can talk about the relocation process, the
6 relocation benefits, the relocation entitlements,
7 but you can't -- you can talk to the relocatees but
8 not one-on-one and lay out a relocation plan and
9 benefits because we're prohibited from doing that
10 under the URA. But we can talk about the process,
11 the entitlements, all the aspects of it and provide
12 them literature on it as well.

13 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: But you cannot have
14 a direct --

15 MR. WETZEL: One-on-one discussion.

16 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: -- specific
17 relocation, "This is what may or may not happen to
18 you; this is what we may or may not do for you, Ms.
19 Jones, Mr. Smith," specific to that person.

20 MR. WETZEL: Right. But we can talk
21 about "You're entitled to a replacement housing
22 payment; you're entitled to just compensation for
23 your property." We can talk about if you're not
24 satisfied.

25 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And when the person

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 says to you, "Well, okay, this may happen to me.
3 I'd like to be able to sit down with my family and
4 have a fuller discussion about it," I mean, at some
5 point, I assume, you have to say, "Well, we can't
6 get into those details yet"?

7 MR. WETZEL: Yes. And I think we did a
8 simpler situation -- I hate to keep bringing up the
9 Martin Luther King one, though, but --

10 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Bring up the one you
11 got.

12 MR. WETZEL: We went down to the church
13 more than one time and had very open dialogs and
14 discussions about relocation, the benefits, the
15 entitlements, you know, what happens, and provided
16 information that I think actually facilitated in the
17 overall scope of things. It was far better having
18 those discussions up front than coming in cold
19 afterwards. Even though you can't sit down --
20 because people are anxious, like, "Well, what do I
21 get?" And I understand that.

22 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yeah, they would
23 have a slight interest in that.

24 MR. WETZEL: Right. "What is my
25 particular situation?" And I understand that, but I

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 think having had that kind of experience, we have
3 stood ready to go out to any community meeting where
4 this arises and explain the overall process itself
5 and provide the brochures that HUD has produced on
6 relocation, for example.

7 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: That's happened in
8 this particular situation?

9 MR. WETZEL: Councilman, could I ask Eva
10 to answer more definitively?

11 MR. WETZEL: No. If you can't answer
12 the questions, then I have no interest -- of course
13 she can.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please identify
15 yourself for the record.

16 MS. GLADSTEIN: Good afternoon. My name
17 is Eva Gladstein. I'm Executive Director of the
18 Philadelphia Empowerment Zone.

19 In this particular case, I'll just
20 briefly state what we have done. Back last April,
21 we held a community meeting sponsored by the
22 community based organizations in the Empowerment
23 Zone as well as by the Empowerment Zone, and that
24 was the point where there was this urban renewal
25 area was actually being created. It was prior to

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

its introduction to City Council to begin with.

That community meeting was attended by over a hundred residents, and there was staff of the appropriate City agencies at that meeting.

We had a meeting in October with over 200 residents. After the Redevelopment Authority and the City Planning Commission had approved at their boards these projects that would require relocation, our staff went out individually to the residents who would be directly affected, those six households, and offered to meet and answer any questions.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Say that again.

What about the six?

MS. GLADSTEIN: Our staff went and knocked on the doors of the six families who would be directly affected by these two projects, offered to meet, offered to share information to those families. And we brought Redevelopment Authority staff with us to provide technical information. And again, as Herb Wetzel had said, not being able to individually negotiate an arrangement, but speaking to people about what their rights are and what they're entitled to.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 We also sponsored another community
3 meeting on October 24th with also over 200 residents
4 at that meeting.

5 We sent a mailing to over 330 people who
6 were the combined attendance of those two meetings.
7 In that mailing, we again stated what the
8 individual's rights are and we sent the information
9 that's available through the Redevelopment
10 Authority.

11 We've also published articles in the two
12 neighborhood newspapers that are read most
13 frequently to try to share information, and been in
14 as constant communication as we can with the
15 residents according to their own interest. We spent
16 about a half day with Councilman Mariano visiting
17 the homes of many of the affected residents about a
18 month or so ago.

19 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

20 MS. GLADSTEIN: I would also like to
21 point out that, in large part, because of this
22 intensive interaction, three of the six residents
23 are here today and do plan to testify. We do have
24 also a statement signed by three of the six
25 residents as well based upon the work that we've

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

done.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: A couple last questions. When I look at the boundaries of this particular bill, I'm going to make the leap that there might potentially be a couple different languages spoken in the area. Are the notices and other communications, whether from the City or HUD or anyone else, do they have dual language?

MR. WETZEL: Actually, what we're doing now is several things. And you're right on target there. The last spanish translation of the HUD document that's essentially what happens when the government acquires your property, was done in 1992. And they've since revised the english language version of it but never bothered to update the spanish language version of it. We're actually just taking all the HUD notice brochures, having them translated into Spanish, having all our offer letters and other related documents that would be communicated translated into Spanish so that, you know, if it's a one-page letter, it will be English on one side and Spanish on the other side.

And in addition to that, we've been authorized to hire a spanish-speaking individual to

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 work in our relocation department instead of pulling
3 people from other parts of the Redevelopment
4 Authority who speak Spanish to go out.

5 So I think, you know, there were some
6 valuable lessons there and clearly we're just going
7 to have to spend the money. The feds aren't up to
8 date in terms of their translations, and we can't
9 wait for them.

10 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: One last question in
11 this area.

12 Of the six families potentially affected
13 by this, what would you estimate to be their level
14 of satisfaction with the process and where things
15 are at the moment?

16 MR. WETZEL: You're talking about in
17 this particular ordinance?

18 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yes.

19 MR. WETZEL: I would let Eva answer that
20 simply because we have not been in that one-on-one
21 contact with them.

22 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand.

23 MS. GLADSTEIN: I would say, of the six
24 families, there's one family who actively was
25 seeking the relocation benefits and was very excited

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 about the opportunity. The over five families,
3 three are here today. I don't think it's anybody's
4 first choice to move and I think they'll speak for
5 themselves today, and that's the statement that they
6 said. But what they've said very consistently
7 throughout all of our conversations is that they
8 want to be treated justly, they want to be
9 compensated fairly for their homes, they want to be
10 able to obtain comparable housing. And we've been
11 trying to work very closely with them to help them
12 achieve those goals.

13 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mr. Wetzel, again,
14 based on the requests from earlier in this hearing
15 regarding notice, in this particular type of
16 situation, it sounds like there has been a
17 significant amount of notice. So again, I'd ask you
18 in doing the research on the other notice discussion
19 that we had with the broadest possible provisions,
20 if you can look at how we provide notice in the
21 relocation situation. And if that is somehow
22 distinguished either by practice or by statute from
23 the non-relocation notification process, certainly
24 it sounds like you have broader leeway with the
25 relocation direct notification than has been

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

exercised so far with the non-relocation
notification.

MR. WETZEL: I'm going to look into all
of that. And I think one of the points is, though,
is if you do that early on notice, whether it's a
vacant lot, vacant structure, or an occupied
structure, everyone has been noticed, and at the
very outside if that's a possibility. And the
implication is if you're living in an occupied one
and you were to get this notice is that you would be
subject to possible relocation.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand.
You'll work with your legal team to decide what the
notice says. I think, again, what's most important
here is occupied, non-occupied, a person's property
is a person's property. I think for our own
protection, we just want to make sure that we've
gone through the steps to say, "We sent you
something," whether it's registered mail or hand
delivery or whatever the case may be. Whether you
show up or not, literally almost kind of becomes
your problem. Our requirement, I think, though,
should be broad as possible notification. We gave
it to you. Whether you responded or not, as long as

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

it's written in a language that most people understand, they do have some responsibility to respond. In most instances, the reason they're noticed is the fact that their property is either in disrepair or some other kind of state, that they haven't responded probably to 25 L & I notices. This is kind of your last opportunity here.

Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. Wetzel, where is the authority that leads you to conclude that you're not permitted to have a one-on-one discussion?

MR. WETZEL: I'll be glad to provide for you. But it's in the Federal Uniform Relocation Act and in other statutes. In other words, unless we have proceeded with a Declaration of Taking, there is nothing to discuss because there is no condemnation on a one-on-one basis. I mean, if somebody says to me, "What are my specific benefits," that's subject to the value of their property, to how far away or how close they're going to move. They're entitled to like moving payments. They're entitled to either a fixed moving payment or an actual moving payment. There's a lot of

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 variables that come into play, and it all depends on
3 what the replacement house is going to be. For
4 example, an owner can decide to be a tenant and take
5 their replacement housing payment to become a
6 tenant. Or a tenant can take their replacement
7 housing payment and put it as a down payment and
8 become a homeowner. It is a very -- I'd be glad to
9 share it with you. It is a very complicated system,
10 the Uniform Relocation Act that has a high level of
11 protection in it.

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I must have in my
13 career missed the occasion when there had to be a
14 discussion as to government's right to limit
15 discussion with its citizens, because I can't
16 imagine the language that would be used in the
17 Government publication saying that you must not
18 discuss any specifics with an owner or with anybody
19 until you've decided to take it.

20 MR. WETZEL: I'd be glad to share it
21 with you.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I kind of have a
23 feeling that it must have been language built by
24 bureaucrats who were aware of the fact that they
25 might give misleading information, and that could

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 create problems who then adopted a result that it's
3 better to muzzled and say nothing to avoid being
4 charged later with having given false information.
5 And that's a genuine consideration. But I really
6 can't believe that there is any law which bars
7 Redevelopment Authority from talking to people and
8 saying, as Councilman Nutter suggested, "Well, we
9 can't tell you your specifics until we work out
10 other plans." That is understandable. But it would
11 seem to that there could be absolutely nothing that
12 exists that bars the Redevelopment Authority except
13 its own decision from discussing as much as you
14 possibly can with individuals. You know, you're not
15 -- if somebody goes to buy a TV and they're
16 wondering whether they should rent it instead of
17 buying it, nobody can give them an answer until they
18 know is it a rental or a purchase deal. In the same
19 way, you can't give people the final answer until a
20 lot of things are worked out, but I know of nothing
21 that would bar you from explaining every detail.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Can I have a point
23 of order?

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Point of order.

25 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Point of order, Mr.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 Chair.

3 Excuse me, Councilman. Councilman, I'm
4 only bringing this because there's several people
5 that have been here since 10 o'clock, 9:30 actually,
6 from the community to testify. And this discussion
7 that we're currently having is extremely important,
8 but it kind of centers more about policy and not
9 directly related to the bill. Is there any
10 possibility, Mr. Chairman, that we can have those
11 individuals testify and go back to this policy
12 discussion about the broader implications of
13 relocation?

14 COUNCILMAN COHEN: I would agree to
15 that.

16 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
17 Chairman.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: We agreed.

19 (Laughter.)

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Actually, we had a
21 pretty long hearing today with a lot of people in
22 it, and it's going quite smoothly, and I guess that
23 really speaks to when people come in and want to
24 cooperate within the hearing process that things do
25 go smoothly in here. I thank you all for your

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 patience and for your attendance and your
3 involvement.

4 Any other questions or anything else to
5 say?

6 MS. GLADSTEIN: I have testimony that I
7 understand you now have in writing which I haven't
8 presented verbally. I'd like the opportunity to do
9 that, but there are a number of -- as I said, three
10 residents who are here and a number of community and
11 business groups who are here, so I'd be happy to let
12 them go and then I'll testify after.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That's fine. Thank
14 you. Who on 020679 is here to testify?

15 Please identify yourself for the record.

16 MS. RODRIGUEZ: My name Daralia
17 Rodriguez (ph), and I represent Dalia Rodriguez, my
18 mother, 233 Cecil B. Moore. I would like to read
19 the testimony first.

20 We, the undersigned families are
21 homeowners affected by Bill 020679. We submit this
22 statement to ensure the City of Philadelphia records
23 our position.

24 We understand the reason the City is
25 seeking to acquire the parcels. Unfortunately, to

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

achieve its goals, we will be impacted. As a city,
we also have a vested interest in the outcome of
today's hearing.

The 1700 block of American Street
includes our homes as well as vacant land. We have
lived in these properties raising our families and
working hard to make numerous improvements for many
years. It is not our preference to sell or move.
We recently made significant improvements to
modernize our homes. We like where we live. We
also understand that it is in the neighborhood's and
City's best interest to acquire land for new
industry and job creation. We are not against
progress of our community. On the contrary. But at
the same time, we don't want to sacrifice our
current quality of life or financial investments.

It is our expectation that the City and
our Councilperson respect our rights and make sure
that we are treated with fairness and provided with
just compensation if this bill is approved by City
Council. Thank you.

Now, in addition to this, I just wanted
to make a personal note. We've been living in 233
Cecil B. Moore for 46-some years. That number 233

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 is very important because my father 46 years he
3 played that number in New York. He hit, and that's
4 what he used to put a down payment on the house. So
5 he used his winnings to make a payment on his dream
6 and he worked butt off to pay for his high mortgage
7 of \$46.53 for 15 years. But I might add, some
8 months were harder than others. But he did it. And
9 he's passed on, but my mother, myself, my sisters,
10 we've continued to make memories in this big old
11 house. It's old, but it's ours. It's our house.

12 We've adjusted our lives and our work
13 schedule as well in order take care of our mom, take
14 her to the doctors, since she can't travel alone.

15 My mom and I heard about this
16 revitalization of American Street years ago, and we
17 thought, wow, finally we can live in a nice place
18 and a neighborhood that we can proud of. So we've
19 made improvements, significant improvements in our
20 house. Councilman Mariano you've been there. We've
21 fixed the outside, the inside, and we're proud of
22 it.

23 A few months ago, only a few months ago,
24 we found out this program had a lot to do with us.
25 It wasn't in April, it was in September we found out

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 about it through some of the community residents.
3 Not that we were going to be part of it as far as
4 living within the community, but to be the part that
5 means being taken out. Out of our home for 46-plus
6 years. This was not what we dreamed of. No need to
7 say how devastated we were and we still are of the
8 possibility of not living in the community.

9 We do understand, though, and are not
10 against the progress of the community, but at the
11 same time it's a shame we will not be a part of it.
12 We have been approached by many people, many
13 agencies and community leaders and have been told
14 that if or when the bill is passed we would be
15 placed in something comparable, but at the same time
16 telling us that if we stay in the community we will
17 definitely not find a house as big as ours. Our
18 house is huge. We've worked hard to have what we
19 have. We do not want to sacrifice our current
20 quality of life.

21 We have had sleepless nights over this
22 and it has started taking a toll on my mom's health
23 who is now 82 years old. And not to mention the way
24 it has affected my production level at my place of
25 employment. I've loss work today. If bill is

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

passed, we are willing to cooperate with the City,
but as long as our rights are respected and we're
treated fairly and with just compensation. And I
speak for myself and my sister and my mother.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
for your patience and for your testimony. I
appreciate it. Thank you.

Is there anyone else to testify?

MS. VELAS: Hi. My name is Malgras
Velas (ph), and I'm going to speak on behalf of my
father, Manuel Velas. He lives on the 1700 block of
American Street. And previous to that we lived on
Bodine Street which is the six houses that are going
to be torn down. So we've been living in the
neighborhood for a long time.

Now, my father, like, we didn't know
anything that was going on with his house on
American Street, that it was going to be torn down,
until October. And we heard like another gentleman
had said, like from the grapevine, you know from
other neighbors. And the community, you know,
they've been setting up meetings with us, ourselves
together, and they've created a committee and
they're the ones who have been making phone calls

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 and finding out information. Yeah, now the American
3 Street Empowerment Zone are coming to the houses,
4 but they didn't come to us in the first place. The
5 committee, they've assigned people to find out
6 information, call this person, that person. And
7 through them, they're the ones that, I think, called
8 the American Street Empowerment Zone and the other
9 organizations to have a meeting with us. So we were
10 surprised. We were not sent a letter or anything.
11 A neighbor just said to you, "Oh, tell your father
12 that probably in seven or eight months he might get
13 a letter saying that he's going to have to move
14 because the house is going to be torn down."

15 Now, also, two days ago someone came
16 from the American Empowerment Zone to my father's
17 house and, you know, was trying to tell my dad, you
18 know, convince him to move, whatever, that they're
19 going to relocate him, this and that. So my dad, he
20 kept insisting my dad does not want to move. And
21 what he told my dad at the end was if my dad doesn't
22 want to give in and move then his case would be sent
23 to court and then in 72 days my dad will have to
24 move.

25 Now, I don't know how this works, you

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 know, the process. I don't anything. But if it all
3 boils down to that my dad has to move, he does want
4 -- I understand what the gentleman was saying with
5 the other organization Redevelopment Authority, but
6 that's not good enough. In order for residents to
7 be willing to move, we do want to what we're going
8 to get. I agree what the gentleman here at the end
9 said completely. He took the words right out of my
10 mouth. There's going to be problems. We're not
11 going to want to move if they're not going to tell
12 us what we're going to get. We want something in
13 writing, somehow, if somebody can do something to
14 help us, the community. Because that's creating a
15 problem.

16 The people from Bodine, they were all of
17 a sudden like just sent a letter and said, "Oh, you
18 got a couple of months to move and we're offering
19 you \$20,000." That was the first thing. I don't
20 know what organization it came from. They were all
21 alone in on this. They didn't this a lawyer. They
22 didn't know who to go to.

23 And we were surprised about what's going
24 on in our community, and we want to be involved. We
25 want someone, anybody, to set up meetings with us,

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 with the affected residents, and let us know what is
3 going to happen in our community. Everything,
4 what's going to happen with us. Somebody who knows
5 something that can tell us something because we
6 don't know anything and we're like lost out in
7 space. That's all I want to say.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I hear you. Thank
9 you for your testimony.

10 Is there anyone else here to testify in
11 this regard?

12 MS. GRAY: Rose Gray with Asocacion De
13 Puertorriqueños En Marcha, APM. During the past two
14 years we've worked in partnership with the American
15 Street Empowerment Zone, the business association,
16 other CDCs that are here today in developing a
17 streetscape strategy. And the reason for this is
18 because we believe that we need to revitalization of
19 the American Street Corridor for the \$54 million at
20 least of investment that you have supported in the
21 past for APM's initiatives.

22 As part of this, unfortunately, there is
23 a relocation component. And Ms. Rodriguez and her
24 family have visited with me and my staff recently to
25 talk about relocation. And I've sat through

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1 listening to their trauma, their tragedy, and the
2 sadness. And I think I can't express it any more
3 than they've expressed it today. But what I can
4 tell you is we're dedicated to assist them in the
5 relocation activities.
6

7 Fortunately, today, we are in the
8 process of completing a 50-unit homeownership
9 project in that neighborhood. One of the units is a
10 five-bedroom unit newly instructed that I'm asking
11 them to see if this bill is so passed. I don't know
12 what compensation can really be made to take your
13 home, but if we can assist them, we will.

14 APM over the last years has relocated
15 40 families in situations like this. And out of the
16 40 families, we've had one negative event. So they
17 can be assured that we'll do everything.

18 And I'll make it short. That's it.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

20 Is there anyone else to testify on the
21 relocation issue?

22 MR. SALAS: Mr. Chairperson, Members of
23 the Committee, my name Jeramos Salas, Jr (ph). I'm
24 the president of the Hispanic Association of
25 Contractors and Enterprises, a non-profit

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

organization doing development in this area since about 1982. During this time, we've invested both private and public investment in affordable housing rent to own homeownership along with business services in the area of \$60 million.

The area in question is very close to my heart in that I've lived in this area since 1956. My family still lives in this area. And being around that long, you get to see the good and the bad that time brings on. In the last 40 years, this community has seen a lot of bad, not only in this community, but in the City in terms of blight and deterioration, loss of business, loss of jobs, loss of housing, lots and abandonment. The blight issue is a real serious issue in this community. And I think for the very first time in this many years we see a partnership between City government and the community in trying to bring about resources, programs, and initiatives to show progress.

Unfortunately, there is displacement of these six families. And I think that while we talk about the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative City wide that the displacement and dislocation of families is part of progress, however, the manner in

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 which it is handled, as we've heard this morning by
3 other people in terms of notices needs to be
4 improved. In a process as complicated as
5 development and in a process as complicated as
6 community revitalization when y ou talk about
7 businesses and jobs and housing and people, that is
8 a very complicated process. And the manner that we
9 should do it can be improved. And I think it will
10 be improved. I think having the initiative to hire
11 a person to speak Spanish goes a long way to be able
12 to translate the proper information and the right
13 information.

14 HACE is currently doing a development in
15 1600 block of North American Street. It's a
16 long-term vacant, City-owned property. It is a
17 facility that will be done to prepare foods for
18 elderly residents. It will create 20 jobs.

19 I think the notion of having business
20 and community and people living next to each other
21 is a good thing if we can just sit down and talk
22 about it so that it is fair, it is equitable, not
23 only to this community and the people, but to the
24 City of Philadelphia. Thank you very much.

25 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

for your testimony.

As we go on, the only thing I would say is that we're dealing with in this bill apparently six families. From the testimony, we understand that one relatively happy, the other five realize that it's a fait accompli, they may go, but are very confused and concerned about the timing on how they were notified and what they were told. And that is a serious problem that, obviously, need to be rectified. The concern I have is that as we go forward, when you're dealing with hundreds of people potentially that have to go through this process, you need a much more refined and dependable process. I mean, if this is microcosm of what we're going to deal with down the road, I really think there's some serious things that need to be correct. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

Are there other witnesses on this bill?.

MR. FORKIN: Good afternoon, Committee Chair and Members of City Council. My name is Tom Forkin and I'm President of the American Street Erie Avenue Business Association, an association representing more than 150 business owners located within the American Street and Erie Avenue

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

Corridors. I'm also the Corporate Vice President of Uniguide Products, a small metal stamping firm located at 2403 North Second Street. Thank you for providing the opportunity for me to testify day.

I would like to just start by saying, Jim, I agree with some of the comments you made. I'm not here to talk about the general macro issues about notice or fair just compensation. Basically, we're here to support the effort for economic development on a number of parcels located adjacent or contiguous to American Street. And we believe there's six major reasons for proposing and advancing this development.

Number one, the proposed projects will create jobs for City and neighborhood residents. That's unquestionable. American Street firms employ several hundred neighborhood residents. When I say neighborhood residents, I mean residents of the Empowerment Zone Area itself. Our association's membership prefer to hire employees that live near by and can get to work without difficulty. And I can speak to that firsthand experience. In addition, ASEABA members have a long history of working with local job training providers, such as

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

Impact Services to identify new hires who live in the neighborhood.

Number two, the vacant abandoned industrial land found at all these locations is a magnet for short dumping, abandoned autos, and illegal activity that are a source of constant problems for the existing businesses on American Street and for the residents themselves. Reuse of taxable vacant land will bring activity and investment to long abandoned parcels that have had a blighting effect around the surrounding neighborhood.

Number three, American Street remains a highly attractive location for firms that distribute and manufacture goods due to its proximity to Center City and I-95, the width of the American Street itself, and the industrial character of that corridor. Businesses want to locate on American Street but are prevented from doing so because of a lack of parcels large enough for development.

Number four, it is appropriate for the City to designate American Street as a location for future industrial development because of the problems that truck traffic create when trucks move

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

through residential areas. Because characteristics mentioned above, American Street suits these industrial firms very well and is now where many of them are already located.

Number five, the designation of American Street as an industrial corridor and location for future industrial development has been affirmed repeatedly over the past 20 years in planning processes involving the Business Association, community-based organizations the City Planning Commission. The industrial character of American Street was affirmed most recently with the creation of American Street corridor industrial Urban Renewal Area this past spring.

Finally, Number six, the proposed projects will complement investments made over the past 20 years, but not only the City of Philadelphia, but the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to develop the American Street corridor as a location of businesses to manufacture and distribute goods.

The ASEABA is committed to continuing to work as a partner with, not only government and community organizations, but with all the area

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 residents to better the neighborhoods that our
3 member of companies are located in. This bill, done
4 in an equitable manner, sends a strong message of
5 support to local, small, family-owned businesses who
6 have made a commitment to stay in the City.

7 As President of the American Street Erie
8 Avenue Business Association, I look forward to
9 continuing this work with Council. And I thank you
10 for providing the opportunity to testify day.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you for your
12 testimony.

13 Any questions?

14 (No response.)

15 MR. CARBINE: Good afternoon.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Good afternoon. You
17 have to identify yourself for the record.

18 MR. CARBINE: Thomas J. Carbine of the
19 American Street Erie Avenue Business Association.
20 We're talking in terms of several decades now in
21 which we've been involved. One of the things that
22 you are getting here now is just a microcosm of what
23 it was here originally. And you can recall from
24 looking at pictures that when we had it torn up
25 unused railroad and it was on either side with

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 demolished buildings that had fallen into disrepair.
3 However, in that area, there are people who I know
4 today who were there when we decided that -- and I
5 say the City and I'm saying Frank Rizzo decided to
6 ask the federal government for \$18 million to start
7 this project. This project is not completed. From
8 Day One we have had to think about census tracts. I
9 think there were 15,000 census tracts involved and
10 many, many families. It was hard for them to think
11 of moving. But nevertheless, when they stepped back
12 and thought of what we could accomplish, they then
13 became very agreeable and we did the best we could.
14 And to my knowledge today, they were very happy and
15 satisfied.

16 So Philadelphia has a reputation for
17 treating the residents with respect and doing the
18 best by them. Currently, we have had additional
19 funds come down from Harrisburg. Governor Casey on
20 the same day that he committed to the improvement of
21 South Broad Street committed \$20 million to the work
22 that we were doing at that time which was
23 remediation basically because the businesses that
24 had been there had been using materials which had
25 contaminated the ground, and it's taken quite a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

while for that remediation to take place. And so that's why we're delay in getting around to this portion of the corridor.

When we initially were approached by the residents in the lower part of the corridor, we were business individuals, businessmen, who did not and had no association with each other. Business made no concerted effort. This was strictly an effort on the part of the City and the current Councilman in that area to foster this project. What I really want to let you know is the project is here, it's underway, it's not completed, and we have some more to do. And we know that these relocations could happen again. We just have to make sure that everybody is treated fairly. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you. That's my hope that in this particular area especially that the private sector move this forward. We've been through a number of programs in the section, Enterprise, Empowerment, KOZ, NTI. I mean, the list goes on. And I really do personally depend on the private sector to make sure that the money that's invested in -- I guess if I look back at all the money that's been invested in the City, not just

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

there, but around the City in these kind programs,
if we could reduce the taxes and improve the
schools, we probably wouldn't be doing NTI. But
there's always time to start over.

Thanks Tom.

Good afternoon.

MR. RAMSTEAD: Good afternoon. My name
is Ron Ramstead, and I'm the president of small food
processing plant on the 1300 block of American
Street. I'd like to thank for the opportunity to
testify today.

My company has been located on American
Street for about 15 years, and I've only been there
six. I currently employ over 40 people, full-time
jobs, represented by a local union. A majority of
my employees live in the Philadelphia market. And
over a third of them can actually walk to work.

I urge you to support this proposed
legislation. My perspective is probably a little
different since I'm not a native of Philadelphia.
I'm from the great state of Iowa and got lost one
day here. But the perspective of six years ago I
came here and it was very, very difficult place to
do business on American Street, from the graffiti,

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 the crime, and different situations. And also, some
3 of the situations of how to expand a business.

4 My mission was to basically turn around
5 a very poorly run company and then probably to move
6 it out of the area. I have elected since then by
7 working with many officials to stay the course as
8 long as I can. One of the difficulties we do have
9 is basically acquiring land and that's an issue that
10 happens a lot. I have had some help and have
11 acquired several properties since that time. There
12 are things I do like about American Street now that
13 I didn't before. It is a safer place. My car
14 doesn't get broken into every other week. Graffiti
15 is no longer in existence and the crime of breaking
16 into the building and stealing things off my roof no
17 longer happen.

18 The proposed projects will improve
19 American Street by bringing in new investment
20 activity and jobs for residents. Activity is really
21 important. When you do see investment by private
22 companies, things get better. More people in the
23 local area will be hired and it becomes very more
24 successful. It has been tough, but with this
25 legislation I do see the light at the end of the

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 tunnel and greater success in the market.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
4 for your testimony.

5 Sir.

6 MR. FLAHERTY: Good afternoon. My name
7 is Jim Flaherty. I'm the Executive Director of the
8 Kensington South NAC and I'm also the acting
9 President of the American Street Empowerment Zone
10 Community Trust Board. I'm speaking in support of
11 this bill also. And I'm just going to paraphrase
12 what I will leave you in writing.

13 The area of American Street, which runs
14 from Girard to Burks in my area is approximately
15 seven blocks of the approximate 15 blocks of this
16 area. So it's an important part of our community
17 and has been identified in our strategic can plan as
18 an industrial area and to continue into the future
19 as an industrial area.

20 In 1999, the American Street Empowerment
21 Zone Community Trust Board set a priority of
22 attracting 300 jobs into the community, and it was
23 always thought of at that time and to this day that
24 those jobs would go on American Street. It was the
25 largest area of vacant land. It had the

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 infrastructure for it and it also had the
3 appropriate zoning. So this is something that the
4 Community Trust Board has kind of pushed forward and
5 we're, in one sense, happy to see it going forward.
6 However, we have been very disturbed by the initial
7 way that the relocation process has been carried
8 out. I'm not going to go beat this horse again, but
9 it could have been better. I think there have been
10 a lot of very good questions that have been raised
11 and a lot issues that need to be resolved. Having
12 said that, though, I certainly hope that the
13 Committee and the Council will approve this bill
14 because I think it's something that's very much
15 needed. Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

17 MR. HARTLING: My name is James
18 Hartling. I'm a principal with Urban Partners and
19 Economic Development Consulting Firm. We've been
20 doing this for 22 years. Prior to that time, I work
21 for the City of Philadelphia and, in fact,
22 supervised the beginning of the American Street
23 revitalization process 25 years ago. So I bring
24 some perspective to this issue. I am speaking also
25 in favor of the bill. I should also point out I'm a

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

consult to the Empowerment Zone for economic development issues.

I just want to make four points. The first one is that residents and businesses have for a quarter century now and perhaps longer if you listen to Mr. Carbine, struggled to try to make American Street a good place to both live and to work. But we're trapped in the environment created by 19th century land use patterns with homes and small business chocked up against each other. It simply doesn't work with the trucks that we have now have on American Street. And so it's very important to try to move away from the fragmented land use patterns. We see the immediate problem of that at all times as small parcels are owned by the City, they're vacant, they're derelict, they're not tax paid and then there will be some person living in the middle of that or small business trapped in the middle of that. The dumping occurs on all those vacant parcels, and everyone is hurt immensely. So getting past the fragmented ownership pattern is a critical issue to moving forward.

Secondly, effective parcels are critical to attract the types of businesses that are

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 interested in American Street. As Mr. Forkin
3 mentioned, we're essentially looking at value added
4 distribution firms who have a lot of jobs, a lot of
5 good-paying jobs, but who need the ability to move
6 up and down American Street with their trucks and to
7 be in a position in which they can function on their
8 parcels effectively with a large enough building to
9 house their goods and services. We have to have
10 larger parcels to do that. Time and again, as we
11 have interviewed businesses, they've said to us, "We
12 are not investing in our business in this community
13 because of the rest of the property looks so bad
14 that our customers do not want to come here." So
15 the spill over investment to the adjacent businesses
16 will be a tremendous benefit.

17 The third point I want to make is that
18 for 25 years we've been making investments in
19 American Street to be an effective, modern
20 industrial district, and the bill you have in front
21 of you is one more step in exploiting all those
22 investments and roads of business development and
23 job training that we've made all those years.

24 The last point I'd like to make is that
25 the residents in this community want to have the

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 business corridor be an asset for them. The
3 businesses want the business corridor to be an asset
4 for them. And in order to do that, if we look
5 anywhere around the region, business districts that
6 are assets have terrific landscaping, they have
7 clear boundaries, they have places where the trucks
8 go and places where the trucks don't go. And the
9 bill you have in front of you is one small step in a
10 continuum to begin to create that vision for
11 American Street that everyone wants. Thank you very
12 much for your time.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you for your
14 testimony.

15 Anyone else to testify on this bill?

16 MR. AKBAR: My name is Jordan Muhammad
17 Akbar. Transportation is my forte. And we were
18 looking at property on American Street for our
19 hallow endeavor. We have a constituency of 2.5
20 billion people worldwide and we have the only
21 hallow, which means lawful, water purifying
22 mechanism and bottle purification process in the
23 world. And we reached out for some property on
24 American Street and was wondering why we couldn't
25 get it.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 The language here is making me sick on
3 my stomach. It sort of reminds me of what happened
4 to my ancestors 400 years ago when some people
5 decided in the name of progress it would be
6 profitable to move some people from one continent to
7 another continent. And I caution this Council, to
8 violate one citizen is like building your castles on
9 sand. And the mistakes of the past that we ignore,
10 we're doomed to repeat them. And what goes up must
11 come down. So I just wanted to caution that the
12 cure cancer might come and if we violate one human
13 being and save a million, yet that one human being
14 is worth more than that million. Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

16 MS. GLADSTEIN: I'm not going to read my
17 testimony because you have it already.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

19 MS. GLADSTEIN: You're welcome.

20 I wanted to make sure, though, that you
21 had a copy of the testimony that could not be
22 delivered by the Pennsylvania Horticulture Society.
23 They were here earlier. And also, the statement
24 that was read from the residents, I have copies of
25 that and I wanted to make sure that that got entered

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

2 in as well. And that's it.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

4 Anyone else to testify.

5 MS. GLADSTEIN: I'm sorry, I do want to
6 say one thing on the record on behalf of the
7 residents, which is that the City Planning
8 Commission has initiated steps to establish a broad
9 based very interactive planning process that will
10 involve looking at the American Empowerment Zone
11 neighborhood and probably in areas slightly larger
12 than that so that we can address some of the issues
13 that have risen today around making sure that
14 everybody in the community has the same vision for
15 the use of the land going forward and the various
16 amenities, both residents and businesses.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

18 Anyone else?

19 Councilman Mariano.

20 COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Thank you, Madam
21 Chair.

22 COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Thank you. I'd
23 like to thank Councilman Nutter, first of all, for
24 bringing up some poignant questions and driving home
25 the points that were probably well taken here today,

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 and I would like to thank the rest of the Members of
3 the Committee for bringing out some things that went
4 wrong with this whole process. And I'd especially
5 like to thank Ms. Rodriguez and her sister for
6 coming down here, and the rest of the neighbors. I
7 was in that house that her father won on that lucky
8 day. I didn't have the fortune to meet her father,
9 but I met her and her sister and I met her mother.
10 Now, I can venture a guess when they bought that
11 house there was more than two houses there. So
12 their reward for sticking it out here is just this.
13 So if she seemed a little emotional, you can
14 understand. They just put a whole new room
15 downstairs so their 82-year-old mother doesn't have
16 to walk up the steps.

17 And the one lady whose name I forget who
18 spoke for her father, if you walked in his house, I
19 was transported back in time. I thought it was like
20 1975 and I may have been on an island in Puerto Rico.
21 It's a very lovely house and he put a lot of time
22 and care in it.

23 The whole process which may start out
24 good -- one of the Councilpeople taught me this. The
25 rode to hell is paved with good intentions.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 Everything in here was good intentions, and we
3 certainly understand my friend Mr. Forkin and what
4 he's, Mr. Carbine what he has been doing all these
5 decades and the consultants. Let's not make these
6 mistakes again. And this is a message to this
7 Administration who I've been favorable with I'll be
8 favorable on this bill because the community is for
9 it. I'm not going through this process again. This
10 should be handled a lot better and it should be
11 handled in a process -- if you're sending letters
12 out to people that don't speak English but don't
13 read English or Spanish, someone has to visit them.
14 And you know what, a Spanish-speaking consultant may
15 not be good enough. There may be someone that lives
16 in that neighborhood that everyone knows and trust.
17 If I'm Mr. Valdez and somebody's knocking on my door
18 that I don't understand on the 7800 block of America
19 Street, I'm not answering that door. I don't care
20 how Spanish he looks or how white he looks or how
21 African American he looks; I'm not answering that
22 door because his whole life is in that house and the
23 life his family before him. Nobody wants to hurt
24 anybody here, but don't bring us this again, not
25 like this. So I hope Mr. Wetzel, Ms. Smith and Eva,

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020679

1
2 I mean, we all try to do good things there. You're
3 going to lose one person if this ever has to happen
4 again. And I think these are all good people and
5 you understand what's going to go on. But the
6 community had this spread all around because that's
7 the only way they had to get information. If they
8 heard something from their neighbor, it had to be
9 true because they weren't hearing nothing else. And
10 being human beings, we go for the worse news.
11 That's what I do. "Well, what's the worst thing
12 that could happen? I'm going to lose my house. Are
13 they coming to take my dad's house? Well, must be
14 because they did it over here and they're doing it
15 over here." Then we go down there six, eight
16 months later and it's like we got our thumbs stuck
17 up a certain part of our anatomy that we don't want
18 to and we don't want to say in these people. I was
19 in tears, literally had to fight back the tears to
20 walk in a couple of them houses and say, you know
21 what, this person is probably going to lose their
22 house regardless of what I do.

23 So take that as warning. It's as nice a
24 warning you're going to get. This can never happen
25 again here. And I can tell by the other district

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 council and the at-large councilpeople here, no
3 matter what federal guidelines, we need people that
4 live in that community to be able to go there and
5 they can see a face that they trust so they can
6 understand what's going on here.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

9 Anyone else to testify on this bill?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: We will now move to
12 Bill No. 020681, an ordinance approving the 30th
13 Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the
14 Model Cities Urban Renewal Area, being the area
15 beginning at the northwest corner of Front street
16 and Spring Garden Street, including the 22nd
17 Amendment to the Urban Renewal Plan and the 21st
18 Amendment to the Relocation Plan, which provides,
19 inter alia, for the additional land acquisition of
20 approximately 1,035 properties for residential and
21 related uses; the additional land acquisition of
22 approximately 39 properties for institutional and
23 related reuse; the additional land acquisition of
24 approximately 301 properties for residential,
25 commercial and related reuses.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 Please identify yourself for the record.

3 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson and Members
4 of the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel,
5 Executive Director of the Redevelopment Authority of
6 the City of Philadelphia.

7 This bill would authorize the
8 Redevelopment Authority to acquire 1,376 properties.

9 A total of 301 properties, all vacant
10 lots, will be acquired as part of a land banking
11 strategy in Strawberry Mansion Acquisition Zone, an
12 area of North Philadelphia generally bounded by 33rd
13 Street to the west, Oxford Street to the south,
14 Dauphin Street to the north, and North 31st Street
15 to the east. This area has been selected because of
16 its high vacancy rate and proximity to Fairmount
17 Park and lends to redevelopment potential.

18 A total of 582 vacant lots will be
19 acquired as part of a land banking strategy in the
20 Cecil B. Moore Acquisition Zone, an area of North
21 Philadelphia bordered by North Broad Street on the
22 east, North 21st Street on the west, Montgomery
23 Avenue on the north, and Master Street on the south.
24 It is an area that has been strategically selected
25 due to its high vacancy rate and redevelopment

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

potential.

A total of 221 properties, all vacant lots, will be acquired as part of a land banking strategy in the Sharswood Acquisition Zone, an area of North Philadelphia in the vicinity of 22nd and Jefferson Street. It is an area that has been strategically selected due to the high vacancy rate and redevelopment potential.

A total of 55 properties, 29 vacant structures and 26 occupied structures, will be acquired in support of the last phase of the Cecil B. Moore Homeownership Zone.

A total of five properties, vacant structures, will be acquired on behalf of the Board of City Trusts for the development of five affordable homeownership units for first time home buyers as part of an overall commitment to remove blight in the Girard College area. Development funding will be applied for by the Board to the Redevelopment Authority's Homeownership Rehabilitation Program.

A total of two properties located at 1717-19 North 33rd Street will be acquired and made available for development as affordable housing for

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 the elderly.

3 A total of nine properties, eight vacant
4 lots and one vacant structure will be acquired on
5 behalf of Habitat for Humanity-North Central.
6 Habitat proposes to develop new construction
7 single-family homeownership units for sale to low
8 and moderate-income families.

9 A total 14 vacant structures will be
10 acquired and rehabilitated under the Office of
11 Housing and Community Development's Homestart
12 Program as affordable homeownership units for sale
13 to first time home buyers.

14 A total of 34 properties, 11 vacant
15 structures and 23 vacant lots, will be acquired for
16 Susquehanna Seniors Development, a joint venture
17 made up of ventures and the Susquehanna Business
18 Association Community Development Corporation, which
19 proposed to develop a 65 to 70 unit low-income
20 housing tax credit project.

21 A total of 25 vacant properties, all
22 vacant lots, will be acquired on behalf of the
23 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's Vacant Land
24 Stabilization Program.

25 A total of 39 properties, 36 vacant

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

lots, 1 vacant structure, and 2 occupied structures, will be acquired for future institutional development. Hope Partnership for Education has expressed interest in developing a Charter school at this site.

A total of four properties, vacant lots, will be acquired and made available to the neighborhood garden association.

A total of 12 properties, all vacant structures, 5 of which have been encapsulated by the Department of Licenses and Inspections, will be acquired and made available for rehabilitation under the Redevelopment Authority's Homeownership Rehabilitation Program.

A total of 60 properties, 55 vacate lots and 4 vacant structures, and 1 occupied structure, will be acquired on behalf of the Women's Community Revitalization Project. WCRP proposes to utilize low-income housing tax credits to develop 32 new construction rental townhouses and apartments for very low income families.

A total of one property, a vacant lot, at 1810 Ridge Avenue is being acquired on behalf of Complete Wilding for expansion of their existing

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 business.

3 A total of three properties, vacant
4 structures, will be acquired on the 1600 block of
5 Montgomery Avenue for the Advocate Community
6 Development Corporation for a special needs housing
7 development.

8 A total of five properties, all vacant
9 structures, will be acquired on behalf of Project
10 H.O.M.E. Project H.O.M.E. will rehabilitate these
11 properties utilizing the Redevelopment Authority's
12 Homeownership Rehabilitation Program. These homes
13 will be made available for low and moderate income
14 first-time home buyers.

15 This amendment, which will result in the
16 enhancement of the property, was approved by the
17 City Planning Commission on October 15, 2002.

18 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
19 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
20 consideration of Bill No. 020681 and would ask the
21 suspension of Council Rules to allow first reading
22 on December 12, 2002.

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
24 for your testimony.

25 Could I just ask, the first three items

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 you mentioned, all land banking, how many properties
3 of the 1500 are included in that land banking?

4 MR. WETZEL: 1104.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So 1104 out of the
6 1500 will be land banked?

7 MR. WETZEL: Of the 1376.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry, 1376.
9 And how many will be land banked.

10 MR. WETZEL: My count is 1104.

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And with the
12 exception of Mr. Brown at Complete Welding, the
13 others are either projects that are publicly
14 subsidized or have some social service mission of
15 some kind?

16 MR. WETZEL: Right, you're correct.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Fine. Thank you.

18 MR. WETZEL: The balance are for
19 specific proposed projects.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But not generally
21 private sector projects with the exception of Mr.
22 Brown's expansion?

23 MR. WETZEL: No, none of these are what
24 you would call a fair market rate other than the
25 business expansion.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Mr. Brown's
3 expansion is probably the only private sector
4 besides the potential land banking uses?

5 MR. WETZEL: That's correct.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please identify
7 yourself.

8 MR. REDDING: Good afternoon, Mr.
9 Chairman and Members of the Committee. I'm Richard
10 Redding representing the Planning Commission
11 testifying on Bill 020681, involving the Model
12 Cities Urban Renewal Area proposing acquisitions in
13 many project areas, including Strawberry Mansion
14 where our community planning from the Planning
15 Commission is well under way.

16 The Planning Commission approved this at
17 their meeting in October, and I'm able to answer any
18 questions if you'd like.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
20 for your testimony.

21 Councilman Clarke, do you have a
22 question for these witnesses?

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. Mr. Chairman, I just wanted to reference
25 two of the land banking initiatives in particular,

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

1
2 particularly the Sharswood Acquisition Zone and the
3 Cecil B. Moore Acquisition Zone. Both of those
4 acquisition packages are adjacent to current
5 development initiatives, so this hopefully will
6 build upon what is currently a relatively successful
7 development both in the Sharswood area where we
8 approximately a year completed 72 units of housing
9 and those acquisitions are around the perimeter of
10 that particular development. I think probably all
11 of the parcels are vacant with the exception of two.
12 The Cecil B. Moore Acquisition Zone is around the
13 perimeter of the current funded Homeownership Zone
14 in addition to which it is adjacent to the Temple
15 University area. So we're very sure that the
16 development initiatives in those particular areas
17 will be enhanced by its location. So I just wanted
18 to clarify that for the record.

19 I'll assume the Chair. Are there any
20 other questions of these witnesses?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Councilman, you were
23 on the phone. I had to steal the initiative.

24 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I appreciate it. Is
25 this the last bill?

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: There is one more.

3 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I can hold my
4 questions for that.

5 I would ask, Mr. Wetzel, and I know
6 there's been a lot of discussion going back and
7 forth about what's ready for development, what's
8 possibly in a land bank. Was an earlier question
9 asked for data regarding a delineation between those
10 two for the upwards of 2500 properties that are part
11 of today's --

12 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

13 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: You'll get that to
14 us?

15 MR. WETZEL: Yes. The Chairman
16 requested that delineation, yes.

17 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: All right. I may
18 have missed that.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
20 Anyone else to testify on this bill?

21 Please identify yourself for the record.

22 MS. SMITH: My name Patricia Smith, and
23 I'm Director of Neighborhood Transformation. I did
24 submit written testimony on behalf of the Cecil B.
25 Moore Homeownership Project, which is part of the

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

1
2 Model Cities in the Cecil B. Moore Urban Renewal
3 Area. Briefly, that's a 296-unit development
4 project that was funded by HUD in the mid '90s.
5 We're moving towards the final and last phase of
6 that project. The intent is to complete
7 approximately 151 units, in part, using resources
8 from NTI bond proceeds to support the acquisition
9 and site preparation and demolition activity where
10 new construction would be involved.

11 Also, we will be moving forward with
12 constructing a community-based development
13 organization as required by the HUD regulations
14 which will consist of a qualified developer to
15 partner with a community-based organization. The
16 CBO will be comprised of several individuals and
17 organizations represented in the community in
18 earlier planning processes.

19 That's just an overview of the
20 initiative.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
22 Please identify yourself for the record.

23 MR. ESSANDOH: Good afternoon, Chairman
24 and Committee Members. I'm Alfred Essandoh, and I'm
25 Director of Operations for Habitat for Humanity in

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 North Philadelphia.

3 We have been in the neighborhood for 16
4 years now, and we enjoy the support of our
5 Councilman Darrell Clarke, and I'm here to lend our
6 support to this initiative. Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
8 for waiting.

9 Finally, Reverend.

10 REV. MOORE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.
11 Thank you for the opportunity to testify, and I'll
12 respect the fact that you have been sitting a long
13 time and I'll get right to the point to say that I
14 do want to lend my support to this initiative. I
15 think for the record I need to give my name.
16 William B Moore, I'm Pastor of the 1300-member 10th
17 Memorial Baptist Church in North Central
18 Philadelphia and president of two non-profits: One
19 has built a 60-unit senior housing at Ridge and
20 Master and also a second development, 10 townhouses
21 just across the street from my church in the 1900
22 block of Master Street. And on both of those
23 projects as well as the other initiatives, we worked
24 cooperatively with our Councilman, Councilman
25 Darrell Clarke, and he has been very sensitive to

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

all of the issues that, not only we've had, but also the community initiatives.

I do want to say that I do support the land acquisition strategy of this bill. I think it's so vitally important because being a part of having done development in the past, I've seen what dangling participle development has meted out where you have a block of good development and then two blocks of vacant and abandoned housing, and it really does not engender people wanting to stay in the neighborhood. So this bill, I think, provides an opportunity, a window of opportunity, to do it right, to do wholesale development to build houses so that it does in fact invite and encourage other development that makes a community whole and strong. And I want to add my strong support to this bill.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much. We appreciate it.

REV. MOORE: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Who is next?

MR. KAUFMANN: Thank you for I'll be fast. I'm Steve Kaufmann, I'm the Executive Director of Community Ventures and we're going to be involved in partnership with Susquehanna CDC in the

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

seniors development at 15th and Susquehanna, and we appreciate very much the opportunity to be allowed to do this work and the consistent support of Councilperson Darrell Clarke.

I just wanted to state briefly that this is a development that won't work unless we do do some relocation perhaps on a private basis. And I think it's appropriate to ask developers, particularly if they're involved in big projects that generate significant fees to get involved in the relocation issue financially and also in terms of working with the residents. Details would have to be worked out with the Redevelopment Authority in terms of all these timing and notification issues. But I think it's appropriate to ask developers to step up and help with the problems since there's genuine human concerns here. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

Who's next, please?

MS. STONE: Good afternoon my name is Susanne Stone. I work for Sherrick Project Management. I'm here today on behalf of the Board of City Trusts who is represented in this bill by the five properties on Thompson Street.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 The Board of City Trusts has made a
3 commitment to the Girard College area to renovate
4 blighted properties and has done so over the past
5 couple of years. With the renovation of these five
6 vacant properties, there will be no more vacancies
7 on this 1700 and 1800 block of West Thompson. So
8 the Board of City Trusts is in full support of this
9 bill.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
11 Councilman Clarke.

12 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chair.

14 Good morning, Ms. Stone. Could you just
15 very briefly, because the time is late, talk about
16 the initiative, focus of the Homeownership
17 Initiative and the residents that we have targeted
18 for placement in these homes?

19 MS. STONE: Absolutely. The program has
20 looked at the immediate area surrounding Girard
21 college and looked at all the vacancies. They have
22 begun renovation. Actually, they've renovated -- I
23 don't have the exact number, but over the last two
24 years they renovated several properties in that
25 area. The properties are then sold to first time

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 low-income home buyers.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: From?

4 MS. STONE: From the immediate area.

5 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: The parents of --

6 MS. STONE: I guess what Councilman

7 Clarke is trying to draw out of me --

8 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Parents of the

9 students who attend Girard College.

10 MS. STONE: Exactly. And I guess it's
11 because it's second nature, so everybody else must e
12 know this.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I know I'm leading
14 the witness, but this is not a courtroom so I can
15 probably get away with it.

16 MS. STONE: Thank you. I'm a little
17 punchy from not eating lunch.

18 Absolutely, the parents of the children
19 that go to Girard College are targeted to be those
20 first time home buyers. And then also, people that
21 buy the homes that may not have their children
22 enrolled are offered a scholarship and encouraged to
23 enroll their children at Girard college. So it's a
24 really unique and exciting project that the
25 Councilman has been very involved in and have been

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 very supportive of.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

4 MS. STONE: You're welcome. I'm sorry.

5 I think if I had eaten lunch I would have picked up

6 on that a little bit better.

7 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: It's okay.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Next witness,

9 please.

10 MS. PLACKE: Good afternoon. My name is

11 Carolyn Placke. I am Housing Community Development

12 manager for Project H.O.M.E., and my colleague also

13 David Cleghorn who's Housing Project Manager at

14 Project H.O.M.E.

15 Project H.O.M.E. is testifying in

16 support of this ordinance which will result in a

17 total of 11 units of homeownership, five of which

18 are included in this bill. The five properties will

19 be rehabilitated through the RDA's Homeownership

20 Repair Program. And I'd also like for your

21 consideration to know that Project H.O.M.E. has been

22 committed to this neighborhood for the past 10

23 years. And the neighborhood that we're focussing on

24 also falls within the NTI designated Strawberry

25 Mansion neighborhood.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

2 In addition, these units will help
3 complement the many investments that have been made
4 over the years as well as community anchors,
5 including eight units of rental housing, six open
6 space sites, a community center, and extremely
7 vibrant after school program. Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

9 MR. AKBAR: Again, I want to ask a
10 question. Do I have to re-identify myself?

11 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Please.

12 MR. AKBAR: Jordan Muhammad Akbar. I
13 want to ask the Council the position of an
14 Administration. When can an Administration own
15 something?

16 My understanding, the way this process
17 happened with the Declaration of Independence that
18 the Administration's origin is out of the consent of
19 the people to be administered over or for, not ruled
20 or et cetera. That's my understanding. You have to
21 work with me because I may be back in time. So
22 whenever the citizens fault or don't hold up their
23 end of the bargain, my understanding is that the
24 land or the houses or something reverts to an
25 Administration, but the Administration cannot be an

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

1
2 owner because that's a conflict of interest. That's
3 why I asked Mr. Wetzel what was the origin of the
4 RDA or the PHA, et cetera. Because I'm confused
5 there. And the people I represent -- I'm also the
6 Director of the Islamic Officers, the 197th
7 Legislative District. And as Darrell knows, I was
8 in Andrew's office. Andrew is my cousin, as a
9 matter of fact, he was state representative for X
10 amount of years. So it's not new to me. So I'm
11 asking again.

12 Then I wanted to read something and then
13 I'm done. It's titled, "Treason defined as Misuse
14 of Public Trust." And it has "Property ownership
15 and power."

16 The need for universal ownership in
17 response to dialog with Wally Wilson Goode, Mayor of
18 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, enjoyed Muhammad Akbar,
19 Citizen, native Philadelphian, property owner. At
20 the North Central Philadelphia Association Board
21 Director and Members Meeting, 100 Sullivan Hall,
22 Temple University, 10:25, 1984.

23 Mayor Goode stated that public housing
24 along with the rest of the blight in Philadelphia
25 was his pilot priority. And I quote, Iman Muhammad,

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

1
2 teacher of the American Muslim Mission, quote, the
3 circumstances affecting our lives as members of this
4 nation are no long a question for the court. The
5 American ownership papers we allow in, so called
6 African Americans have are in way different from the
7 ownership papers or title of citizenship held by any
8 other racial members or ethnic persuasion of our
9 nation. The lonely marching song must give way to
10 the ownership song. Once identified with America in
11 terms of ownership, I don't approach the problems
12 with an eye of an embittered or hurt person standing
13 outside. From ownership sentiment, I approach the
14 problems of American with a courageous and healthy
15 mind, with the strength of my intelligence and of
16 owner sentiment and responsibility, unquote.

17 Then the next line is "Property
18 ownership and people power - the need for universal
19 ownership." I'm going to skip over that and come to
20 here.

21 Today we are confronted with the
22 negative effects of a longstanding national policy
23 which undermines land and homeownership in American
24 life. Those who are gravely concerned about such a
25 policy need little reminder of a third sinister and

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

1
2 rapacious law at work in the area of public policy.
3 We call the law of bureaucratic scavengery.
4 Whenever no barriers exists in any area of our
5 common life, the government bureaucracy always tends
6 to move and stake its arbitrary and all-consuming
7 claim. We simply site here one tragic story
8 presently being enacted involving so-called black
9 American which exemplifies the process at work to
10 demean and lessen the lives of an overwhelming
11 majority of people.

12 I represent a people whose time has
13 come, and I'm questioning the process in this
14 land-grabbing all-staking claim that an
15 administration or those subsidiaries that exist out
16 of that Administration and, I want know what makes
17 them an authority and, et cetera, that was my
18 question earlier.

19 So I put these things together because I
20 am also spearheading a movement called the
21 Rediscovery of America. So I might want to discover
22 where you live at and see whether for the sake of
23 progress, as I understand it, whether your property
24 et cetera and the things you've invested all your
25 life, et cetera, don't mean anything. And I have an

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020681

offer for you that you can't refuse. So I'm asking of those lines, you see. And there are more than I can count on all of your hands and toes qualified people to plan something for me. This cage is not my habitat. I don't care if it's gold, I don't care -- my sackcloth is more important to me than your gold cage or anybody's gold cage.

Again, I want to know when an Administration -- and I want to separate the two because government is people, City is people, and they elect representatives not leaders, you see. And leaders are not servants, they're stewards and they're governed by an oath. That's my understanding.

Now, when the City owns something, then I'm the City. And you all are our elected representatives. Is that right or wrong?

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Correct.

MR. AKBAR: Then I'm asking up those lines. And it would behoove me not to ask these questions, but I have to go back and face some people. I'm going to talk to some people on the radio, et cetera, about the response because, again, this language is sickening. I'll ask again, is this

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 the same language the ancestors of the Caucasian
3 world used when they moved our people out of the
4 Continent of so-called Africa? Is that the same
5 language with a three-piece suit. I'm asking.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: You're very welcome.

8 Thank you.

9 Is there anyone else to testify on this
10 bill.

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Seeing none, we will
13 now move to the final bill, 020682, an ordinance
14 approving the 9th Amendment of the Redevelopment
15 Proposal for the Whitman Urban Renewal Area, being
16 the area beginning at a point of intersection of the
17 northerly side of Snyder Avenue and the easterly
18 side of Front Street, including the 9th Amendment to
19 the Urban Renewal Plan and the amended relocation
20 plan, which provides, inter alia, for the additional
21 land acquisition of approximately 30 properties for
22 residential and related uses; the provision of
23 certain relocation services, as required by law and
24 declaring the condemnation is not imminent with
25 respect to the project.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 Please identify yourself for the record.

3 MR. WETZEL: Mr. Chairperson, Members of
4 the Committee, my name is Herbert Wetzel, Executive
5 Director of the Redevelopment Authority of the City
6 of Philadelphia. I'm here to speak in support of
7 Bill No. 020682, which would approve the 9th
8 Amendment of the Redevelopment Proposal for the
9 Whitman Urban Renewal Area.

10 A total of 30 properties, all vacant
11 lots would be acquired under this for the purpose of
12 land banking.

13 The bill would advance NTI goals of
14 eliminating blight assembling land for future
15 development in restoring, in the end, properties to
16 the tax roll.

17 This amendment was approved by the City
18 Planning Commission on October 15, 2002.

19 Mr. Chairperson and Members of the
20 Committee, I respectfully request favorable
21 consideration of Bill No. 020682 and would also ask
22 for the suspension of Council Rules to allow first
23 reading on Thursday, December 12, 2002.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you. How
25 large is the Whitman Urban Renewal Area? Do you

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 know how far it goes up, how far north?

3 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Snyder Avenue is
4 the northern boundary.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And these properties
6 are all vacant lots at this point?

7 MR. WETZEL: Yes, they are.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And how were these
9 lots chosen?

10 MR. WETZEL: This was a request that
11 came through the District Councilperson's office.
12 And I believe he received that request from State
13 Representative Keller.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But there's no
15 developer for this land at this point?

16 MR. WETZEL: No. I think they're
17 working on a conceptual plan at this point in time
18 and wanted to just bank what was vacant now.

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Councilman DiCicco
20 is not here now, but I know that for quite sometime
21 with a developer ready to go there's been a large
22 number of parcels in the northern end of, I guess,
23 south of Washington Avenue, east of Front Street
24 which has been known forever, I guess, as Jefferson
25 Square. I was just curious as to when we make

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2 decisions as to taking of property without
3 developers ready to go, how did we not get this
4 particular project that's been, I guess, on the
5 drawing board for three years with a developer ready
6 to go? How does that not make the list?

7 MR. WETZEL: Let me understand, if
8 you're asking the second set of condemnations
9 requested by Jefferson Square?

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm talking about
11 the movement of the project forward. We are going
12 to approve today, with my affirmative vote, we're
13 going approve today about almost 3,000 properties,
14 many of which do not have developers ready to go.
15 This particular proposal has had a developer waiting
16 to go for quite sometime and money that's in the
17 pipeline which is not coming forward to move the
18 project forward. Who makes that determination that
19 we go through and take properties that don't have
20 any development plan for them but leave properties
21 on the table or put properties in limbo that have a
22 developer ready to go that could be a good model
23 project for NTI as something to show off, it doesn't
24 make the final cut or at least this cut.

25 MR. WETZEL: I think the problem right

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 now is that we did do a major condemnation. We did
3 supply the land. We did allocate \$3 million in CDBG
4 for the project. We supported it for a million
5 dollars worth of Pennsylvania finance and there's no
6 movement. And we have attempted to work with the
7 developer --

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What's the reason
9 that you understand for lack of movement?

10 MR. WETZEL: At this point in time, the
11 last thing I heard, and not directly from the
12 develop, was that their construction numbers are
13 coming in higher than the subsidies that are
14 available.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, Councilman
16 DiCicco is not here now. I don't know if that's
17 necessarily the case. So I would appreciate if you
18 could provide in writing what your understanding of
19 why there's a delay.

20 MR. WETZEL: The second part of this was
21 that the second proposal for a second condemnation
22 included well over 30 relocations. And between that
23 and the rising property values down there, it might
24 have been a 5 or \$6 million condemnation only to
25 creat enough land to maybe build 30 houses. It

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 would be very -- I mean, that real estate market
3 since this started has changed so dramatically down
4 there that what we appraised and condemned four or
5 five years ago, we couldn't even come close to that.
6 I think the market is really taking off there.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There?

8 MR. WETZEL: Right. Or nearby.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What information do
10 you have? I don't know how you do comparables on
11 vacant lots because a lot of them are vacant lots.

12 MR. WETZEL: Well ---

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What neighborhood
14 are you comparing it with.

15 MR. WETZEL: I can just tell you what
16 the developer supplied us. When this project was
17 first proposed, the appraised value of their
18 three-bedroom units was 85 and for their
19 four-bedroom units was 95. In our most recent
20 discussion with the developer, after construction
21 values on the three-bedrooms are \$195,000, and he
22 can sell the four-bedrooms for 210,000. That's just
23 how rapidly the market has changed down there.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is this a problem
25 with that particular scenario?

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 MR. WETZEL: No, I think it's great. I
3 mean, there's nothing wrong with that. I think it's
4 good. I mean, I'd just like to see them put a
5 shovel in the ground get moving.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There's a second
7 round of condemnations, would that speed up this
8 process?

9 MR. WETZEL: No, not that I'm aware of.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So the ability to
11 build more volume would not be beneficial to a
12 project?

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Not that I'm aware
14 of.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: That seems to fly in
16 the face of anything I've understood about housing
17 development, that if we could do market rate housing
18 development on a larger scale, that would not more
19 beneficial than doing it on a smaller scale?

20 MR. WETZEL: I can't argue that. If
21 you're going to do 200 versus 100 houses, there are
22 some economies of scale to be realized.

23 I think the issue here is, we have not
24 been presented, including with 4 million in public
25 subsidy, including with spending well over 3 million

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 to put the land together, the developer has not come
3 in and said "I'm ready to build" yet. We have 4
4 million in public subsidy --

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But we have
6 developers in these other bills that did not step to
7 the floor and said "We're ready to build" either.

8 MR. WETZEL: No, but they don't have 4
9 million in public subsidy and the land. I mean,
10 we've already conveyed the land to Jefferson Square,
11 put 3 million in CDBG, 1 million in PHFA finance.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I understand. I
13 know the numbers.

14 MR. WETZEL: And so it's not like we're
15 not supporting this.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: What is the amount
17 of all the acquisitions that we're going to approve
18 today preliminarily?

19 MR. WETZEL: A little over 14 million.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So a substantial sum
21 of money without developers waiting, with the
22 exception of 686 and one private sector development
23 in 681 I don't see much on this list that developers
24 waiting in line to do it or private sector expansion
25 or the private sector development with the exception

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2 again of Westram and Mr. Brown up the Model Cities
3 Program. So while I understand there may be a
4 change in the real estate environment in Jefferson
5 Square, we are going to approve preliminarily today
6 \$14 million in acquisitions without much of a
7 development scheme. Which I'm willing to do.
8 Again, I'm voting for this. When I a project that's
9 on the board for three years which has great
10 potential to improve a neighborhood, it has tons of
11 planning behind it, gets left off the list when
12 we're going to move forward and do 3,000 properties
13 which have similar situations without -- this
14 project has a developer. These properties don't
15 necessarily have developer and are costing \$14
16 million. Again, I'm voting it. I think that
17 Westram especially is a tremendous opportunity and I
18 think some of the other things may pan out to be
19 great opportunities. We don't know. I think we
20 have a pretty good idea that Jefferson Square
21 because of, as you testify, as a changing housing
22 marketing would be very substantial project which
23 would bring middle and upper middle income people to
24 the neighborhood and a greater tax base and
25 improvement to South Philadelphia community all

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 tolled. I mean on one standard, we don't have a
3 developer ready to go so we're not going to do that.
4 But we don't have developers ready to go here and
5 we're gong to condemn 3,000 properties.

6 MR. WETZEL: I understand. I think, if
7 I can articulate this. There as was an acquisition
8 put together for the first phase of Jefferson
9 Square. \$3 million in CDBG was set aside. The City
10 supported it for another million dollars of PAHA
11 financing.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: State money.

13 MR. WETZEL: Right. And we spent a
14 little over 3 million on acquiring the land for this
15 project. That is all -- we've turned over the land
16 well over a year ago. The other financing has been
17 placed well over a year. I think we need to see
18 that thing move. I mean, you're right, it's ready
19 to go, but it's been ready to go for over a year.
20 And to justify spending another 5 or 6 million
21 assembly land, you'd like to see this developer put
22 a shovel in the ground. It's not that they don't
23 have the money.

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Well, is 5 or 6
25 million your supposition of what the houses are, or

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 do we have appraisals of those properties?

3 MR. WETZEL: I think that our market
4 studies in what we did for NTI is do 15 different
5 market studies to do baseline budgets are indicating
6 substantial increase in property values in that area
7 that would rise -- and then remember, you've got 30
8 relocations at, you know, alone are going to cost
9 well over a million dollars, just the relocations,
10 not including additional subsidies that would be
11 required if those persons relocate into those new
12 house.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And, again, I'll say
14 for the record, I'm happy to vote on all these bills
15 today, but we're spending \$14 million with not a lot
16 of developers lined up to do anything.

17 MR. WETZEL: I hear you. I understand.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

19 MR. REDDING: Good afternoon again. I'm
20 Richard Redding from the Planning Commission
21 testifying on Bill 020682, involving the Whitman
22 Urban Renewal Area proposing acquisition of a
23 approximately 30 properties. I'm testifying in
24 support. The Planning Commission approved this at
25 its October meeting. Thank you very much.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

3 Any questions for these witnesses?

4 Councilman Nutter.

5 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you. I have a
6 couple questions. They're not specific to the bills
7 in front of us. They are pertinent, though, to the
8 matter at hand. And if I could just ask a couple
9 questions, some of which the witnesses may actually
10 have answers to at the moment; the rest, if they can
11 get the answers back, I'd certainly be satisfied.
12 But I think they're relatively short.

13 Mr. Wetzel, for the record -- and I
14 think there was an information request made earlier.
15 You're going to be able to get us copies of all the
16 various urban renewal areas or renewal zones as well
17 as a City-wide map that would show everything; is
18 that correct?

19 MR. WETZEL: Well, actually, what we
20 committed to have was have what maps for these
21 ordinances put together. It's going to take a
22 little bit longer if you want -- the Planning
23 Commission does have a City-wide map that covers all
24 the redevelopment areas and they're working one that
25 then superimposes the urban renewal areas on top of

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

it.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: All I'm asking for is for the matters that are in front of us today if we could have kind of small user friendly version of the maps that have gone back and forth as well as take all of that information and then put it on one map just for the bills that are in front of us today so you can then get a City-wide perspective of the 13 bills. We could then take the 13 bills and the areas involved and properties and put them on one map which is of a City-wide nature so you can see actually visually where the development activity is proposed to take place.

MR. WETZEL: Excuse me. If we go down to the parcel level on City-wide map, it's all going to get blurry. So at this level of map, if we go down to the parcels that are being taken, if you want to see like the property lines, does that matter that much to you?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: No, it doesn't. I think if you want to -- on a City-wide map if you took -- it seems like on this map, for instance, you have two things going on here. You've got the boundary of the renewal area. And then, unless my

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2 eyesight is failing me, the properties being taken
3 which are in the red all seem to be up in the upper
4 left hand corner there. So for my purposes, at
5 least, I would say give me the boundaries and then
6 to extent that those properties are close to each
7 other, why don't you just either make a circle, a
8 square, a triangle, use whatever shape you want, the
9 ones you like the most in grade school, and have
10 that be the designation for what's going on there.
11 That's obviously easier with that one and a few
12 others that are very close to each other. Where you
13 have an area that has two or three things going on
14 in different places, just designate them that that's
15 where active is going on. You'll just be able to
16 visually see what's happening.

17 MR. WETZEL: Okay.

18 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Now, I've had
19 meetings with yourself and a number of other members
20 of the Redevelopment Authority and Planning
21 Commission and the like related to proposed takings
22 in my own district. But I would like to get some
23 clarification for the record.

24 How did you decide -- give me the
25 shorter version of this story. How did you decide

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

which packages or which parcels or which areas or zones would be a part of this series of 13 bills versus my understanding that there will be another package of bills coming to us late winter, early spring, and if you can tell us actually what the timing is for that. But how did you decide what's in this round versus any other round.

MR. WETZEL: I can share with you, and I'll deliver to you a set of principles that we looked at, for example, a set of principles for land banking versus a set of principles for side yard acquisitions versus a set of principles for projects. And I'd will be glad to share that with you. But just generally, what we were looking for in acquisition zones was already a tremendous amount of vacant lots. And if you look at the acquisition zones and you look at the numbers, there already was a substantial amount of vacant land that was in each of those acquisition zones. When we looked at projects, we looked at, you know, is a project, or example, part of the City's Consolidated Plan, and I think the example is Cross Street which I think the Councilperson says has probably been the plan for five years or more. You know, something that hadn't

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2 moved forward and now there's an opportunity to move
3 it forward by using NTI resources to do something
4 with it. So we looked at projects that had a real
5 chance to move. And I can share with you the kind
6 of principles that we have because we've committed
7 to those to writing as a team in order to review,
8 analyze these packages and then make
9 recommendations. And we came back to each District
10 Councilperson. We worked with them during the
11 process, came back, said this is our
12 recommendations. And in some cases we had to go
13 back to the drawing board and take properties off
14 and add properties, but the whole process in the end
15 was to arrive at a mutual agreement between us and
16 the District Councilperson as to what would be in
17 the package.

18 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Can you take for us
19 the 2500 properties and break them out by vacant
20 lot, vacant building, occupied structure, and tell
21 us what the 2500 properties or parcels are composed
22 of?

23 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

24 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Can you also take
25 those parcels and tell us, for instance, how many in

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2 a line item kind of fashion how many are going to
3 CDCs, how many are going to private developers, and
4 then I guess possibly as a result of the Chair's
5 earlier request, I guess the balance would then be
6 going into a land bank; is that how they would be
7 split up?

8 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

9 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: How many known CDC
10 projects are a part of the 13 bills in front of us
11 and how many are private sector developments?

12 MR. WETZEL: We'll get you that
13 break-out.

14 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Did I hear you say
15 earlier that this package in front of us represents
16 \$14 million in acquisition costs?

17 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Is it my
19 recollection at the NTI budget hearing that we put
20 aside \$10 million at the acquisition?

21 MR. WETZEL: No, there's actually 14
22 million, 14.5 in the Year One Program Statement and
23 Budget.

24 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So you don't need
25 any additional acquisition dollars for this package

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

in front of us.

MR. WETZEL: Pat, you may want to comment on this, but I think there's going to be a request to add some money because we're going to be doing this in the spring.

MS. SMITH: My name is Patricia Smith, Director of Neighborhood Transformation. In the FY '03 budget, which was approved by Council in June, there was all total approximately \$14.5 million for land assemblies, specific development projects, and acquisition of buildings for rehabilitation. We're also, based on the pending request, looking at somewhere in the area of another 30 million. The approved acquisitions as a part of this ordinance, including indirect and direct costs, are totaling about 14, 15 million. So we're almost, you know, neck and neck in terms of the ordinances.

Last week, the Administration -- I believe has been transmitted to Council, a resolution to amend the program statement and budget so that we can allocate more funds in acquisition as part of this year to support anymore takings going forward. And we also described as a part of that process the beginning of a recycling concept where

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 most of these properties are tax delinquent and
3 abandoned to the extent that we realize the
4 collection of any liens to begin a fund to recycle
5 resources to support acquisition in future years.

6 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So, I'm sorry, what
7 did you say was transmitted to Council.

8 MS. SMITH: A resolution to amend the
9 program statement and budget. That was, I believe,
10 transmitted last week. I know there was some
11 conversations with the President's office. I don't
12 know if it's been physically transmitted yet. And
13 there have been prior conversations because we
14 realize that the pending requests are exceeding what
15 we had budgeted for Fiscal Year '03.

16 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Let me make sure I'm
17 understanding. Are we talking about a bill or a
18 resolution.

19 MS. SMITH: It would be a resolution
20 under the ordinance passed by City Council.

21 That resolution and the additional
22 dollars would be tied to the acquisition package for
23 what in essence is next year, although still in the
24 course of this fiscal year; is that correct?

25 MS. SMITH: Yes, we're still in this

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2 fiscal year. I mean, it's a budget. What we
3 presented to Council and approved was a budget and
4 at the time was our best estimation of what demand
5 for acquisition dollars were. And based on the
6 pending request, we want to up the budget amount for
7 this Fiscal Year. And that must be approved by a
8 resolution.

9 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: But there are no
10 acquisitions -- you will not be at a disadvantage in
11 terms of acquiring properties because of the
12 resolution that has been sent over to us may not
13 have been introduced --

14 MS. SMITH: No, that does not impact
15 this. By the time the Declarations of Takings and
16 everything will be followed.

17 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Last question is
18 actually related to kind of who's doing what these
19 days. You are the NTI Director, correct?

20 MS. SMITH: I'm Director of Neighborhood
21 Transformation, yes.

22 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Now, I read not too
23 long ago that the Administration has recently
24 brought on -- I may not have the title correct. Is
25 it the Secretary of Neighborhoods?

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2 MS. SMITH: The Secretary of Housing and
3 Neighborhood Preservation. And Mr. Kevin Hanna.
4 Mr. Hanna will be responsible for overseeing
5 basically what I call the City's housing and
6 community development delivery systems, including
7 any reorganization of the housing agencies that will
8 place that we've outlined in prior materials. I'm
9 still a member of the Mayor's staff. Often I
10 describe my role of sort of like if you think of an
11 orchestra and the conductor, that the orchestra is
12 made of various parts, various agencies, so I
13 interact with the Managing Director's Office, with
14 the Capital Program Office, with OHCD, PHA, RDA.

15 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Where does Mr. Hanna
16 fit in with all of these activities? Does he report
17 to you? Do you report to him?

18 MS. SMITH: Mr. Hanna, as a secretary
19 position, reports directly to the Mayor. He's a
20 member of the Mayor's Cabinet and reports directly
21 to him in the same way the Managing Director, the
22 Finance Director, the Director of Social Services
23 Public Safety.

24 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Lastly, the
25 things that he will be doing, who presently does

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

them?

MS. SMITH: Currently, the work that's currently being done, I mean, some members of the OHCD, Redevelopment Authority, you know, the delivery system is spread out. So he's the secretary or the point person that will oversee those positions.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And who then reports to him.

MS. SMITH: At this point in time, it would be the Director of Housing, Deborah McCullough. Then there's a what I call a collaborative relationship between Redevelopment Authority, the Housing Authority. We meet on a monthly -- the City Housing and Community Development Directors, we meet on a monthly basis with the Mayor and so we're part of that sort of like cluster. We call them clusters. So we have a community development cluster made of a variety of agencies that are involved in housing and community development activity.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: All right. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.

12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

1
2 MR. WETZEL: I know this has been a long
3 day, but I have to take this opportunity to update
4 the Committee, and especially Councilman Nutter who
5 I came before many times and the question was, are
6 we going to get any legislative changes. I want to
7 report to you that both the House and the Senate
8 unanimously passed legislation reforming both Act 94
9 and the Urban Renewal Statutes and it was signed by
10 the Governor on October 5th. The became law last
11 week.

12 One of the key provisions of that that's
13 really important is that in these budgets, this
14 \$14 million, there's 35 percent contingency in
15 there. In other words, if we appraise the land at a
16 million dollars, we need to set aside another
17 350,000 to handled any challenges that might come up
18 and pay those. Under the previous statute, that
19 money -- if we paid that money in the court, it
20 could sit there five years and individuals had five
21 years to come forward to challenge the value. The
22 statute now is one year. So 12 months after we pay
23 in the court, if nobody comes forward or very few,
24 we'll be able to release that money and recycle it
25 into more acquisitions. And that is a real

1 12/9/02 - RULES - BILL 020682

2 fundamental change that's going to make doing
3 business better. So I just wanted to report that
4 update. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much.
6 That will conclude the hearing of the Rules
7 Committee.

8 - - -

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1

2

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

PUBLIC MEETING

4

COMMITTEE ON RULES

5

- - -

6

December 9, 2002

7

- - -

8

Public Meeting conducted by the
Committee on Rules, held in Room 696, City Hall,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the above date, to
consider action on the following:

10

BILLS 020666, 020667, 020668, 020669,
020671, 020672, 020673, 020678, 020679, 020681,
020682, 020685, 020686.

11

12

- - -

13

14

PRESENT:

15

COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY, Chair

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA VERNA

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL

16

COUNCILMAN DARRELL CLARKE

COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN

17

COUNCILMAN FRANK DICICCO

COUNCILMAN MICHAEL NUTTER

18

COUNCILMAN RICHARD MARIANO

19

20

- - -

21

22

23

24

25

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: We will now convene
3 a public meeting.

4 The Chair recognizes Councilmember Verna
5 for a motion on Bill No. 020666.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020666 be reported
8 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation,
9 also a recommendation that the Rules of Council be
10 suspended so as to permit first reading at our next
11 Session of Council.

12 (Duly seconded.)

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

14 All in favor?

15 (Aye.)

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
17 opposed. Bill No. 020666 reported out of this
18 committee favorably and a request will be made for
19 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
20 next Council Session.

21 The Chair recognizes Councilmember Verna
22 for a motion on Bill No. 020667.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020667 be reported
25 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation,

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 also a recommendation that the Rules of Council be
3 suspended so as to permit first reading at our next
4 Session of Council.

5 (Duly seconded.)

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

7 All in favor?

8 (Aye.)

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
10 opposed. Bill No. 020667 reported out of this
11 committee favorably and a request will be made for
12 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
13 next Council Session.

14 The Chair recognizes Councilmember Verna
15 for a motion on Bill No. 020668.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
17 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020668 be reported
18 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation,
19 also a recommendation that the Rules of Council be
20 suspended so as to permit first reading at our next
21 Session of Council.

22 (Duly seconded.)

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

24 All in favor?

25 (Aye.)

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
3 opposed. Bill No. 020668 reported out of this
4 committee favorably and a request will be made for
5 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
6 next Council Session.

7 The chair recognizes Councilmember Verna
8 for a motion on Bill No. 020669.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
10 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020669 be reported
11 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation,
12 also a recommendation that the Rules of Council be
13 suspended so as to permit first reading at our next
14 Session of Council.

15 (Duly seconded.)

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

17 All in favor?

18 (Aye.)

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
20 opposed. Bill No. 020669 reported out of this
21 committee favorably and a request will be made for
22 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
23 next Council Session.

24 The chair recognizes Councilmember
25 Nutter for a motion on Bill No. 020671.

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
3 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020671 be reported
4 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation, a
5 further recommendation that the Rules of Council be
6 suspended so as to permit first reading at our next
7 Session of Council.

8 (Duly seconded.)

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.
10 All in favor?

11 (Aye.)

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
13 opposed. Bill No. 020671 reported out of this
14 committee favorably and a request will be made for
15 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
16 next Council Session.

17 The Chair recognizes Councilmember
18 Nutter for a motion on Bill No. 020672.

19 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
20 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020672 be reported
21 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation, a
22 further recommendation that the Rules of Council be
23 suspended so as to permit first reading at our next
24 Session of Council.

25 (Duly seconded.)

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

3 All in favor?

4 (Aye.)

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
6 opposed. Bill No. 020672 reported out of this
7 committee favorably and a request will be made for
8 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
9 next Council Session.

10 The Chair recognizes Councilmember
11 Nutter for a motion on Bill No. 020673.

12 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
13 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020673 be reported
14 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation,
15 also a recommendation that the Rules of Council be
16 suspended so as to permit first reading at our next
17 Session of Council.

18 (Duly seconded.)

19 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

20 All in favor?

21 (Aye.)

22 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
23 opposed. Bill No. 020673 reported out of this
24 committee favorably and a request will be made for
25 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 next Council Session.

3 The Chair recognizes Councilmember
4 Nutter for a motion on Bill No. 020678.

5 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr.
6 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020678 be reported
7 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation,
8 and a further recommendation that the Rules of
9 Council be suspended so as to permit first reading
10 at our next Session of Council.

11 (Duly seconded.)

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

13 All in favor?

14 (Aye.)

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
16 opposed. Bill No. 020678 reported out of this
17 committee favorably and a request will be made for
18 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
19 next Council Session.

20 The Chair recognizes Councilmember
21 Clarke for a motion on Bill No. 020679.

22 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
23 Chairman. I make a motion that Bill No. 020679 be
24 reported out of Committee with a favorable
25 recommendation, and a request for a suspension of

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 the Rules.

3 (Duly seconded.)

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

5 All in favor?

6 (Aye.)

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
8 opposed. Bill No. 020679 reported out of this
9 committee favorably and a request will be made for
10 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
11 next Council Session.

12 The Chair recognizes Councilmember
13 Clarke for a motion on Bill No. 020681.

14 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
15 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020681 be reported
16 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation,
17 and a request for the suspension of the Rules as to
18 allow for first reading.

19 (Duly seconded.)

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

21 All in favor?

22 (Aye.)

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
24 opposed. Bill No. 020681 reported out of this
25 committee favorably and a request will be made for

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
3 next Council Session.

4 The Chair recognizes Councilmember Cohen
5 for a motion on Bill No. 020682.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chairman. I move that Bill No. 020682 be reported
8 out of Committee with a favorable recommendation,
9 also a recommendation that the Rules of Council be
10 suspended so as to permit first reading at our next
11 Session of Council.

12 (Duly seconded.)

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

14 All in favor?

15 (Aye.)

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
17 opposed. Bill No. 020682 reported out of this
18 committee favorably and a request will be made for
19 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
20 next Council Session.

21 The Chair recognizes Councilmember
22 Clarke for a motion on Bill No. 020685.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Mr.
24 Chairman. I make a motion that Bill No. 020685 be
25 reported out of Committee with a favorable

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 recommendation, and a request for a suspension of
3 the Rules.

4 (Duly seconded.)

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

6 All in favor?

7 (Aye.)

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
9 opposed. Bill No. 020685 reported out of this
10 committee favorably and a request will be made for
11 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
12 next Council Session.

13 The Chair recognizes Councilmember
14 Clarke for a motion on Bill No. 020686.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
16 Chairman. I make a motion that Bill No. 020686 be
17 reported out of Committee with a favorable
18 recommendation, and a request for a suspension of
19 the Rules.

20 (Duly seconded.)

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Moved and seconded.

22 All in favor?

23 (Aye.)

24 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: There are none
25 opposed. Bill No. 020686 reported out of this

1 12/9/02 - RULES - PUBLIC MEETING

2 committee favorably and a request will be made for
3 Rules suspension to allow for first reading at our
4 next Council Session.

5 That concludes the business of the Rules
6 Committee. Thank you for your attendance.

7 (Council adjourned at 3:25 p.m.)

8 - - -

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia of December 9, 2002, were reported
fully and accurately by me, and that this is a
correct transcript of the same.

RE: COMMITTEE ON RULES

Lisa C. Bradley, RPR
and Notary Public