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2 COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
3 COMMITTEE ON LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS
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6 Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
7 Thursday, December 2, 2010
4:10 p.m.
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PRESENT:

10 COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
11 COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
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BILL 100550 - An ordinance amending Section
14 9-410 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
"Pedicabs," by broadening the definition of
15 "Pedicab," and by making certain changes in
the requirements for licensing and operation
16 of Pedicabs, under certain terms and
conditions.
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2 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Good
3 afternoon. The Committee on Licenses and
4 Inspections hearing scheduled on Bill
5 100550 originally scheduled for 3 o'clock
6 will now come to order. We thank
7 everyone for their patience.

8 We have established a quorum,
9 to my far left, with Councilman Kelly,
10 Councilman Greenlee and Councilwoman
11 Blondell Reynolds and the sponsor of this
12 bill.

13 Will the Clerk read the title
14 of the bill.

15 THE CLERK: Bill No. 100550, an
16 ordinance amending Section 9-410 of The
17 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Pedicabs,"
18 by broadening the definition of
19 "Pedicab," and by making certain changes
20 in the requirements for licensing and
21 operating of Pedicabs, under certain
22 terms and conditions.

23 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
24 you.

25 Before we get started, the bill

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2 sponsor has some remarks.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I thank
4 you very much, Madam Chair Lady.

5 On September 17th, 2009, about
6 a year after I saw this vehicle in New
7 York City, I introduced legislation
8 permitting pedicabs to appear legally on
9 the streets of Philadelphia. A pedicab,
10 which is a pedalcycle with three or more
11 wheels propelled solely by human power
12 and operated to transport passengers,
13 will only be allowed on routes approved
14 by the Streets Department and only during
15 approved time periods. These vehicles,
16 like taxis and limousines, will require
17 liability insurance, as was stipulated in
18 the earlier legislation.

19 Pedicabs have provided an
20 opportunity to create new green,
21 small-sector jobs and small businesses in
22 the City. There are a number of
23 operators, including those here today,
24 whom my office has worked with since this
25 idea became an idea, and I want to thank

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2 every single one of you over the last
3 year for sitting down with my office, who
4 came -- who sat with us to create a more
5 convenient and fun way for citizens and
6 tourists to get around Philadelphia.

7 Tourism, we know, is the number
8 two industry in Philadelphia and is
9 indeed a vital part of our economy.

10 Pedicabs are known to be popular amongst
11 tourists in other areas of the country,
12 and, as always, I think San Francisco on
13 the west was one of the first and New
14 York was one of the first on the east,
15 and now Philadelphia is getting in line.

16 This eco-friendly tourist
17 option is pollution free and will provide
18 a positive alternative for short-distance
19 travel.

20 I am confident that pedicabs
21 will continue to play a growing integral
22 part in the City and our City's tourism
23 experience. This initiative will also
24 bring us one step closer to reducing our
25 carbon footprint as we seek to become the

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2 greenest city in America.

3 The record should reflect that
4 my office has worked intimately with the
5 Streets Department and a number of
6 pedicab operators to assist with this
7 evolving industry since the introduction
8 and passage of this bill. The amendments
9 today are representative of numerous
10 conversations and discussions and
11 demonstrations over the summer. The
12 first would allow for electric-assist
13 pedicabs, and the second will allow for
14 pedicab operators to operate a pedicab
15 with a driver's license from any state
16 outside of just Pennsylvania.

17 The third will speak to
18 workers' compensation requirements, which
19 was one of my concerns, that we make sure
20 that is a consideration for those who
21 ultimately manipulate these vehicles.

22 Again, I want to thank the
23 Streets Department, the pedicab
24 operators, Philly Bikecab Alliance, Rob
25 Stewart, the Pennsylvania Public Utility

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2 Commission and the Philadelphia Parking
3 Authority to collectively putting our
4 heads together over the past many months
5 to arrive at these amendments.

6 Thank you, Madam Chair, for
7 these opening remarks.

8 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
9 you, Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds. We
10 appreciate all your work in getting
11 Philadelphia to be a more attractive,
12 visitor-friendly environment. So we
13 thank you for your work.

14 Did you have a question?

15 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Yes.

16 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I'm
17 sorry. Councilman Kelly.

18 COUNCILMAN KELLY: I just want
19 to follow up with what Councilwoman Brown
20 just alluded to pedicabs, but I was in
21 Key West, Florida and they don't seem to
22 have any problem with it. In fact, I've
23 been on them, and they can go all over
24 that town, and it seems like it was a
25 great tourist attraction as well as a

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2 good way to get around town, and I just
3 wanted to point that out. They do that
4 and they've done it for years, and it
5 seemed to be working.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very good.

7 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: That's
9 all we needed. Councilman Kelly rode
10 one. We're fine. We're safe. We're
11 fine.

12 COUNCILMAN KELLY: If they can
13 hold me, they can hold a lot.

14 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
15 you.

16 The Streets Department,
17 Mr. Denny, if you would proceed with your
18 testimony.

19 (Witness approached witness
20 table.)

21 MR. DENNY: Good afternoon,
22 Chairwoman Quinones-Sanchez and members
23 of the Committee. Thank you for the
24 opportunity to appear before you today.
25 My name is Charles Denny, the Assistant

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2 Chief Traffic Engineer for the Department
3 of Streets. I am here today to offer
4 testimony on Bill No. 100550, which was
5 introduced by Councilwoman Reynolds Brown
6 on September 16th, 2010.

7 The Streets Department supports
8 the proposed amendments in this bill.

9 Thank you for the opportunity
10 to appear before you today, and I would
11 be happy to answer any questions.

12 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Any
13 questions for this witness?

14 COUNCILMAN KELLY: I do have
15 one question, and I guess it comes to the
16 hours that these people would be working
17 or the times. I think that, as I
18 mentioned before, in Key West they have
19 like mild, warm and hot seasons, but in
20 Philadelphia we have different seasons,
21 and I was just wondering if this was
22 going to affect this bill or the hours of
23 operation or whatever. Would it be from
24 certain months during the year or would
25 it be --

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2 MR. DENNY: They're allowed to
3 operate all day and into the night. The
4 only restrictions we have are on certain
5 state highways and on some streets in
6 Center City during the peak hours, but
7 other than that, there is no
8 restrictions.

9 COUNCILMAN KELLY: There's no
10 restrictions? Well, I'm just wondering
11 about the wintertime, if snow and sleet
12 and everything else is going to affect
13 the service or not.

14 MR. DENNY: I don't believe
15 they're going to be wanting to work in
16 the snow and sleet, so I don't think it's
17 a problem.

18 COUNCILMAN KELLY: It's up to
19 the companies, in other words?

20 MR. DENNY: It's up to the
21 companies. They're regulating
22 themselves.

23 COUNCILMAN KELLY: But they're
24 not required to, in other words?

25 MR. DENNY: They're not

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2 required to, no.

3 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ:

5 Councilwoman Brown.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I do want
7 to seize the moment to offer a huge
8 thank-you again, and if I spoke several
9 languages, I'd say it in different
10 languages, because we have not taken at
11 all for granted the role the Streets
12 Department has -- the leadership role the
13 Streets Department has played, since this
14 is the business you are in when it comes
15 to the safety transport of Philadelphia
16 citizens, and your willingness to be at
17 the table throughout those many months
18 and working with the operators has been
19 deeply appreciated.

20 Thank you.

21 MR. DENNY: You're welcome.

22 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I think
23 you're okay. We will go to our next
24 witness.

25 Mr. Ron Ash, President of the

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2 Philly Bikecab Alliance. As he walks to
3 the witness table, I will read into the
4 record the fact that we'll give to the
5 stenographer that there is a letter from
6 the Pennsylvania Public Utility
7 Commission, a letter from the Philly Cab
8 Alliance and an e-mail from the Parking
9 authority that will be added into the
10 record.

11 (Witness approached witness
12 table.)

13 MR. ASH: Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Mr. Ash.

15 MR. ASH: Good afternoon, Madam
16 Chair and members of the Committee.
17 Thank you so much again, Councilwoman
18 Reynolds Brown, for sponsoring the bill.

19 My name is Ron Ash. I'm owner
20 of Velo Park and President of Philly
21 Bikecab Alliance, and on behalf of the
22 Philly Bikecab Alliance, we thank you for
23 the opportunity to testify today.

24 We are very encouraged about
25 this bill, and passing the items in this

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2 bill will surely help the industry to
3 grow and prosper. It will open more job
4 opportunities. It will make the jobs
5 driving the pedicabs easier. It will
6 create more equal opportunity for others
7 who are in our city who don't have a PA
8 driver's license to access these jobs.
9 It does quite a bit, these three changes.

10 So we're very pleased, and we
11 thank you for your continued support, and
12 I'm available if you have any questions.
13 I'd be more than happy to answer them.

14 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Yes. I
15 did want to -- because part of your
16 presentation talks about how the civic
17 groups have received this well. Can you
18 kind of talk about were there any
19 concerns that you felt the association
20 wasn't able to address, or the people are
21 just pleased and ready to go?

22 MR. ASH: I think there was
23 some apprehension in the beginning,
24 because there's been dialogue in the City
25 about recreation vehicles and how it

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2 impacts the residents in the area. And
3 we totally understand these concerns and
4 we have addressed everything in the
5 meetings, and once everyone came out from
6 the meeting and took rides in the
7 pedicabs, as Mr. Kenney will attest to,
8 they were very pleased, and I think they
9 were also encouraged to know how we
10 approach handling our business and how we
11 try to work with the public and our
12 customers and things like that.

13 So I think that was very
14 productive meetings and I think we
15 addressed everything.

16 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I hope
17 that this goes well, and it is important.
18 Do we envision being able, outside of the
19 main tourist attractions, be able to use
20 them as a way of showing some of the
21 great Fairmount Park, some of the
22 neighborhood pieces?

23 MR. ASH: Exactly.

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Is that
25 where we're going?

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2 MR. ASH: Exactly. That is
3 certainly within my business model for
4 Velo Park, and I think that's really
5 how -- I used to work at Shaminy Mansion
6 in West Fairmount Park and the Seaport,
7 and you have these wonderful resources
8 that are outside of the downtown loop
9 where tourists are unaware of these great
10 secrets in the City, and this is one way
11 to help move those tourism dollars into
12 other neighborhoods, like North
13 Philadelphia or other areas of the City
14 that have great stories to tell. So it
15 will contribute in some small way to
16 creating a greater experience of
17 Philadelphia, I think.

18 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
19 you.

20 Councilwoman Brown.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.
22 Thank you very much. That is an
23 important question, and it was raised
24 during our hearings. One of the
25 expectations is that this new enterprise

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2 will move to neighborhood corridors and
3 other corridors in the City. We have
4 wonderful art and cultural experiences.
5 I have seen them in the park, and they're
6 on a test kind of experience in the park,
7 but that is one of the expectations. And
8 somewhere in the legislation -- it's been
9 a while, so I don't remember where -- the
10 District Councilmembers will have a say
11 in bringing this type of enterprise to
12 your business corridors, yes.

13 If you would, just speak to the
14 issue of training, because that was
15 another issue raised along the way and
16 how that has been dealt with in those
17 meetings.

18 MR. ASH: Absolutely. We are
19 working with the Bicycle Coalition of
20 Greater Philadelphia and accessing their
21 education model through the bicycle
22 ambassadors. So when drivers come on
23 board with us, the owners provide full
24 training on the vehicle, orientation on
25 our company, all those types of things,

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2 and, of course, training on the street
3 and in the cabs and a number of different
4 things. And then we set up a classroom
5 environment and we bring in a bicycle
6 ambassador and then we talk about
7 etiquette and we do their program.

8 So we're really trying to come
9 at this from a lot of different ways,
10 and, of course, when the tours start,
11 we'll be following the same type of
12 detailed approach to training. It's
13 important.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
16 you.

17 I look forward to seeing these.
18 I know that West Philadelphia's Love
19 Notes murals has been well received. I
20 can envision this being a great way for
21 folks to enjoy that tour. We're working
22 on a similar project like that in
23 Frankford. So I really do look forward
24 to being able to introduce that in the
25 Frankford/Lower Northeast community.

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2 So thank you very much.

3 MR. ASH: Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Anyone
5 else here to testify?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Do you think
8 they would be strong enough to get to the
9 Northeast?

10 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: No.
11 They have to do the route ones up there.

12 He's thinking about himself.

13 This concludes the hearing part
14 of our session. We will now go into our
15 public meeting, and if Councilwoman Brown
16 would give me a motion.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Surely.
18 Madam Chair, I move that Bill No. 100550
19 be amended.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: The bill
21 is the amendment. Just move the bill.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
23 very much for that procedural correction.

24 Madam Chair, I move that Bill
25 No. 100550 be moved out of Committee with

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2 a favorable recommendation and further
3 move that the rules of Council be
4 suspended so as to permit first reading
5 at our next scheduled session.

6 (Duly seconded.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: All in
8 favor?

9 (Aye.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Any
11 oppositions?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Being
14 none, Bill No. 100550 has been moved out
15 of the Committee of Licenses and
16 Inspection with a favorable
17 recommendation and a rules suspension and
18 will be read at our next public session.

19 Thank you very much, and thank
20 you for your patience.

21 (Committee on Licenses and
22 Inspections concluded 4:20 p.m.)

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1
2 CERTIFICATE

3 I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
4 proceedings, evidence and objections are
5 contained fully and accurately in the
6 stenographic notes taken by me upon the
7 foregoing matter on December 2, 2010, and that
8 this is a true and correct transcript of same.

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14 MICHELE L. MURPHY
15 RPR-Notary Public
16
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20 transcript does not apply to any reproduction
21 of the same by any means, unless under the
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