

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

West Oak Lane Charter School
7115 Stenton Avenue,
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, April 30, 2014
6:25 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

BILLS 130489, 140140, 140144, 140145, 140146,
140147, and 140148
RESOLUTION 140159

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good evening, everyone. We're going to start now. Thank you so much.

Before I read the script, I'd just like to thank you all for coming out in this horrific weather. It's a true sense of commitment to your community and to your city, so I want to thank you so much.

I'd like to ask everyone please be seated.

This is the continuation of the public hearing of the Committee of the Whole regarding Bills No. 130489, 140140, 140144, 140145, 140146, 140147, and 140148 and Resolution No. 140159.

This evening we will continue the hearing of the Committee of the Whole to consider various bills that constitute the proposed operating and capital spending measures for Fiscal 2015, a Capital Program, and a forward-looking plan for Fiscal 2015 through Fiscal 2020.

Since you have entrusted this

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 elected body to be stewards of taxes you
3 pay, I firmly believe that all spending
4 measures should be reflective of your
5 priorities. We're here this evening to
6 continue and deliberate the process.

7 Translation: We think it's
8 extremely important for you in your
9 neighborhood to actually have an
10 opportunity to see your elected officials
11 other than the one who represents you in
12 this particular area, because I know you
13 see Councilwoman Tasco and Councilwoman
14 Bass all the time, but we believe that we
15 should come out and bring the process to
16 you as opposed to always requiring that
17 you come down to City Hall. And we've
18 actually been doing this for, I think,
19 Councilwoman, like four years now? I
20 think it's our fourth year we've been
21 doing this.

22 So on that note, before we
23 start, I would like to take a moment to
24 thank our host for this evening,
25 Dr. Debera Peoples-Lee, President and

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 CEO of West Oak Lane Charter School; its
3 Board Chair, Sharmain Matlock-Turner; and
4 Board members and all staff, parents, and
5 students of the school who may be
6 present.

7 I also extend the same thanks
8 to Councilwoman Marian Tasco and
9 basically Councilwoman Cindy Bass, since
10 her district abuts this particular area,
11 for agreeing to host this event tonight.

12 So at this time, I would like
13 to turn it over to Councilwoman Marian
14 Tasco for remarks.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you,
16 Mr. President.

17 Good evening, everyone.
18 (Good evening.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
20 so much for coming out in this weather.
21 Didn't it rain? It is raining.

22 Most of you in this room I
23 know, and I know you really have a
24 commitment to your community and you're
25 very supportive of what we try to do in

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 our neighborhood. So I just want to say
3 thank you for coming out. I want to
4 thank the East Falls Development
5 Corporation and the development
6 corporation that they formed here, the
7 coalition, for coming out and bringing
8 her children, and all of the community
9 organizations, libraries represented
10 here, the committee people from the
11 mighty 50th and the awesome 10th here.
12 But they not only are committee people;
13 they are community workers. They work in
14 their churches. They work in their
15 libraries. They work in their rec
16 centers. They're just everywhere.

17 So I thought it was important
18 for them to come and we come to this
19 community so that we can hear what you
20 have to say about the budget and any
21 concerns you may have.

22 And I thank my colleagues for
23 coming, and hope we'll have a nice
24 dialogue.

25 Thank you.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Thank you so much, Councilwoman.

4 Councilwoman Bass, would you
5 like to say a couple words.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes. Thank
7 you very much.

8 Good evening, everyone.

9 (Good evening.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's really
11 a pleasure to be here with you. I love
12 West Oak Lane Charter. Let me just start
13 by saying that. I think that they do a
14 phenomenal job. But beyond that, I just
15 wanted to echo Councilwoman Tasco's
16 sentiments and thank everybody for coming
17 out tonight.

18 It's really important that we
19 hear from you. Government doesn't have
20 all the answers. We don't know what it
21 is that you're thinking, what you're
22 feeling. And so that's why it's so
23 important for us to have this kind of
24 conversation. We want to know what it is
25 that you think that we should be doing or

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 how we should operate or what we should
3 implement. It's so important to hear
4 from the people, and so I'm glad that
5 folks were able to come out tonight, swim
6 over, canoe over, however they made it
7 over here tonight, but I'm glad that
8 you're here. So thank you so much.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 Thank you so much, Councilwoman.

11 And also joining us this
12 evening at this point in time, we have
13 Councilman William Greenlee, who is a
14 Councilperson-at-large, and Councilman
15 Bobby Henon from the 6th Councilmanic
16 District. There are actually some other
17 Councilmembers that are on their way.
18 There was actually another event. I
19 believe the African American Chamber of
20 Commerce's annual meeting was this
21 evening, so folks are there. They'll be
22 coming very shortly.

23 So, again, thank you all very
24 much. This is an official budget
25 hearing, so we have certain guidelines as

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 it relates to the participation of the
3 individuals who are interested in
4 testifying this evening.

5 We will call your name. Your
6 names will be called in the order that
7 you signed in. Some people have called
8 ahead of time and gotten on the list, and
9 then we will call those names and then we
10 will get to the names of people who have
11 signed in recently.

12 What we're going to do is call
13 three names, panels of three, ask that
14 you please come forward to the table.
15 Three minutes per person. The reason why
16 we do three minutes is because we want to
17 make sure that everybody has an
18 opportunity, and fortunately tonight we
19 actually have quite a number of people
20 who have signed up. So we anticipate
21 that we'll have somewhat lengthy
22 testimony as it relates to the timeframe
23 tonight.

24 So if there are no questions,
25 we'd like to get started. And Ms. Lewis

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 has a timer here. As you can see, it's
3 the old-fashioned timer. I understand
4 that they used to cook eggs or something
5 with it.

6 MS. LEWIS: The first three
7 names are Majeedah Rashid, Walter Marlin,
8 and Jamil Gordon.

9 (Witnesses approached witness
10 table.)

11 MS. LEWIS: Dr. Toni Damon.
12 (Witness approached witness
13 table.)

14 MR. GORDON: Blessings to you
15 all.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Could you please before your testimony
18 please state your name for the record so
19 we can make sure it coincides with the
20 transcript.

21 MR. GORDON: Absolutely. My
22 name is Jamil Samatiquan Gordon. I come
23 here on behalf of the Oak Lane Branch of
24 the Library System and, in a greater
25 capacity, on behalf of the entire City of

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Philadelphia. I chose this great city
3 even before I was born because I had an
4 instinct that my particular path would be
5 a blessing to all that I come in contact
6 with here.

7 One thing that I provided the
8 library, which I believe would be greatly
9 beneficial to everyone in Philadelphia,
10 is a regard for the environment. We do
11 several programs where we teach specific
12 skills that these young people will use
13 in the 21st century economy that we are
14 diving into.

15 I also am a strong proponent of
16 languages and culture. I personally
17 speak Spanish, French, and Portuguese,
18 and I oftentimes just slip in little
19 words to help the young people realize
20 that young African American males don't
21 just speak Ebonics, but they also can be
22 world travelers and they can be
23 international citizens.

24 So I thank you, and I encourage
25 any decisions about the budget to

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 encourage those two points, international
3 travel and language and the environment
4 as it concerns to the 21st century
5 economy.

6 Thank you all very much, and
7 God bless.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
9 Thank you so much for your testimony,
10 sir.

11 MR. MARLIN: Good evening.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
13 evening.

14 MR. MARLIN: My name is Walter
15 Marlin. To Council President Darrell
16 Clarke, all associate Councilpersons,
17 especially our own District 9
18 Councilperson, Marian Tasco, thank you
19 all for your continued support.

20 I come to you today as a
21 retired administrator of the Philadelphia
22 Prison System, a 33-year volunteer of the
23 Finley Advisory Council, and a Board
24 member of the Philadelphia Parks
25 Alliance.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Our Prison System,
3 unfortunately, experiences the end result
4 of a system that leaves our children and
5 young people with few options except to
6 run the streets and find something to get
7 into, usually something illegal.

8 There are not enough pools to
9 hold the thousands of young people in
10 your councilmanic districts. If there
11 were more adult department staff running
12 supervised and organized programs, with
13 the support of our volunteers within our
14 Parks and Recreation system, maybe, just
15 maybe so many of our young people would
16 not be locked up in our county jails and
17 prisons.

18 The Department of Parks and
19 Recreation struggles to provide
20 facilities to use in your councilmanic
21 districts. Continued budget cuts have
22 and are taking its toll on deferred
23 maintenance and inadequate staffing in
24 all councilmanic districts. It becomes a
25 question of pay it now to our schools and

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 recreation or pay it later to our Prison
3 System.

4 Many, many programs are run by
5 volunteers. Some cleaning and
6 maintenance are now done by volunteers.
7 If a staff person becomes ill or goes on
8 vacation, the building closes. It's the
9 neighborhood children and seniors who are
10 out of luck. More streets, more arrests
11 into an already overcrowded prison
12 system. Where are the tax dollars that
13 were promised two years ago that were to
14 come from our support of the parking tax
15 increase? Your constituents are
16 watching. Is anybody listening?

17 Imagine for a moment when His
18 Holiness, the Pope, and the hundreds of
19 thousands, if not millions, of the
20 world -- if not millions, of tourists
21 visit our City of Brotherly Love and
22 Sisterly Affection for the World
23 Conference of Families and Philadelphia
24 is in the spotlight of the world media,
25 how will Philadelphia measure up? When

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 these tourists visit our hotels,
3 restaurants, Parks and Recreation
4 facilities, historic landmarks, et
5 cetera, will they come back?

6 According to Park Facts 2014,
7 how does Philadelphia compare? Source,
8 Philadelphia Parks Alliance at that
9 e-mail address.

10 Philadelphia is at or near the
11 bottom of dollars spent per resident.
12 Philadelphia spends just \$71 per year per
13 resident on parks and recreation.
14 Cincinnati spends just double, more than
15 double, and Minneapolis over three times
16 more per resident than Philadelphia.
17 Source is 2014 Park Facts, City for Park
18 Excellence, Trust for Public Land.
19 Philadelphia spends one-quarter of what
20 New York spends per acre on parks and
21 rec.

22 We want to thank Mayor Nutter
23 for appropriating an increase in the
24 programming of 500,000 for FY 2015, but
25 it is still insufficient. Despite

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 partial funding in FY 2013, Philadelphia
3 has 17 percent fewer Parks and Recreation
4 staff than in FY 2000.

5 In 2013, 30,377 individuals
6 volunteered in Philadelphia's Parks and
7 Recreation facilities, contributing
8 approximately 13.3 million in sweat
9 equity. In 1971, Philadelphia had 527
10 park guard police, but in 2014, we have
11 only 18 park rangers. How can 18 park
12 rangers patrol and police 10,150 acres
13 effectively?

14 Isn't it time for the Mayor and
15 Council to appropriately fund the two
16 areas that impact all of our children,
17 schools and parks and recreation?

18 Thank you for your time.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Thank you so much, sir.

21 (Applause.)

22 DR. DAMON: Good evening. My
23 name is Dr. Toni Damon. I am the proud
24 principal of Murrell Dobbins CTE High
25 School in Philadelphia and also I'm a

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 proud parent of two girls. One is my
3 daughter, Kanay, who is a graduating
4 senior at the Academy of Palumbo High
5 School in Philadelphia, and she's been
6 accepted to Howard University. So I'm
7 extremely proud.

8 (Applause.)

9 DR. DAMON: I also have a
10 four-year-old daughter who will be
11 starting school hopefully next year.

12 So I bring the perspective of a
13 principal and a parent. And I just
14 encourage you to please do whatever you
15 can do to help our schools. I see where
16 there seems to be money going into public
17 safety and less money in education. That
18 will have to be the case if we don't
19 invest in education.

20 I am so proud at the work we
21 are doing this year with limited
22 resources. I have some of my students
23 accepted to Howard also, Penn State,
24 Drexel University. I'm extremely proud
25 of my students, but what I can say is as

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 a principal in this district for two
3 years, I've come from Delaware County
4 where I've worked for ten years as an
5 administrator, Montgomery County for ten
6 years, but I wanted to come to
7 Philadelphia to make a difference. I'm
8 finding it extremely challenging. I'm
9 the only principal in the City with
10 certification in vocational education. I
11 came here to help. I don't know if I can
12 even keep going at this pace. I work
13 around the clock. My students have my
14 cell phone number, because we have one
15 counselor, where we had three last year.
16 I need to tell you that next year I don't
17 even have a full-time counselor in my
18 budget.

19 My daughter at a college prep
20 high school has one counselor, who is not
21 able to assist us. I'm working around
22 the clock trying to help her fill out the
23 applications while helping 136 other
24 students at my school. It's just not
25 fair. I'm a taxpayer. I live in North

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Philadelphia in the Yorktown section, and
3 I just -- I'm just begging you not only
4 to help me, because I have the tools to
5 help my daughter and the kids at my
6 school, but there's so many other
7 children in the City of Philadelphia that
8 really need the help.

9 (Applause.)

10 DR. DAMON: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 Thank you so much for your testimony.

13 Thank you all. Thank you all
14 for coming out tonight.

15 MS. LEWIS: The next three,
16 Majeedah Rashid, Gina Snyder, and Angie
17 Williamson.

18 (Witnesses approached witness
19 table.)

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
21 evening.

22 MS. SNYDER: Good evening. My
23 name is Gina Snyder and I am here
24 actually with two colleagues, so we're
25 going to try to save some time.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 MS. WILLIAMSON: I'm Angie
3 Williamson, Director of the Mount Airy
4 Business Improvement District.

5 MR. TRACKMAN: Andy Trackman,
6 Executive Director of Germantown United
7 CDC.

8 MS. SNYDER: Thank you very
9 much for the opportunity to speak
10 tonight. Again, I'm Gina Snyder. I'm
11 the Director of the East Falls
12 Development Corporation. We are here to
13 introduce you tonight to the Northwest
14 Commercial Corridors Coalition, if we
15 haven't had the opportunity to meet with
16 you yet. We're a relatively new
17 coalition. Our business corridor
18 organizations are in the seven
19 neighborhoods of Chestnut Hill, East
20 Falls, Manayunk, Mount Airy, Germantown,
21 West Oak Lane, and Roxborough. We've
22 joined together to form a coalition so
23 that we can achieve more together than by
24 ourselves. And we're all -- I'm speaking
25 for them tonight.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 We represent the entire
3 Northwest of the City in terms of the
4 commercial corridors. Collectively, we
5 have a strong track record of economic
6 development, having assisted and
7 recruited businesses into the City.

8 We have also completed several
9 streetscape and similar place-making
10 projects, all of which have increased
11 revenue in our communities. We have been
12 working in our communities to create
13 destination locations, places for
14 customers to shop and dine. This leads
15 to more businesses and more jobs. We've
16 joined forces now because we want to
17 market our entire region, make better
18 connections of the surrounding county
19 communities, and capitalize on our shared
20 assets.

21 We support local businesses and
22 investments that create jobs and bring
23 taxes to the City. We've been working
24 with the Commerce Department to secure
25 funds for our work. They've been very

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 supportive, but almost all of the
3 Commerce Department monies for commercial
4 corridors go to limited CDBG-eligible
5 areas. Our corridors serve people of all
6 income levels, but many of our areas are
7 mixed and not entirely CDBG eligible.
8 Our mixed income and middle market
9 corridors need support to maintain
10 competition and keep businesses in the
11 City.

12 State assistance is not the
13 answer either since state Main Street
14 monies are almost all but gone. Most of
15 our work is not eligible for City
16 support.

17 We can do a lot with a little.
18 Our organizations play a crucial role in
19 the development and the success of
20 Northwest areas. We are requesting the
21 City allocate \$1 million from the General
22 Fund to a competitive grant program for
23 all of the non-CDBG eligible areas --
24 that would be, we think, about 15 total,
25 not just in our Northwest area -- so that

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 we can manage our Main Street, support
3 new businesses, add to job creation, and
4 bring investment to the City.

5 Thank you very much for giving
6 us an opportunity to speak with you, and
7 we're always available to answer
8 questions.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
10 Thank you so much.

11 MS. RASHID: Good evening,
12 everybody.

13 (Good evening.)

14 MS. RASHID: I'm Majeedah
15 Rashid, Chief Operating Officer of the
16 Nicetown CDC, which is a member of the
17 Philadelphia Association of CDCs, PACDC.
18 I have also served as the Executive
19 Director of the Nicetown CDC NAC for 11
20 years and, during that time, have been a
21 member of the Citywide NAC Alliance.

22 I want to thank City Council
23 President Darrell Clarke and members of
24 Council for allowing me the opportunity
25 to testify today, and I want to

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 acknowledge our area Council district
3 representative, Cindy Bass and Marian
4 Tasco.

5 The Nicetown CDC was founded
6 in -- I'm going to cut to the chase for
7 some of this. I know y'all looking at my
8 long testimony, because I can go on.

9 But we were founded in 1999
10 with a mission to improve the quality of
11 life for those who live, work, and play
12 in Nicetown and the surrounding
13 communities. We began with the
14 grassroots resident-driven perspective,
15 which is still the core of our efforts
16 today. This perspective is the same by
17 our Nicetown CDC NAC program.

18 Since 1975, neighborhood
19 advisory committees have evolved from
20 independent organizations to programs of
21 CDCs. NAC areas must have more than 51
22 percent low-to-moderate income residents,
23 and the Nicetown area is rated 7th most
24 impoverished in the City. There are
25 currently 19 NACs in Philadelphia, and we

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 believe that they are the perfect conduit
3 to ensure provisions of vital services to
4 low-to-moderate-income residents and
5 their inclusion in the neighborhood
6 planning and development process. In
7 fact, the NACs fulfill the citizen
8 participation requirement that is
9 included in the Consolidated Plan
10 submitted to the federal government every
11 year. Without this component, the City
12 would not qualify to receive critical
13 CDBG funding.

14 Just briefly going over, in
15 2002 we received our NAC contract, which
16 was at the level of \$57,000, and over
17 time it's been going up and then again
18 decreased to its current level and
19 basically was cut by 25 percent. Those
20 cuts resulted in us having to shut down
21 our satellite office, which is in this
22 area up here. We were afforded a
23 satellite office by OARC and we had to
24 shut that down a couple years ago, which
25 puts a lot of pressure on us getting the

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 word out to the constituents that we
3 serve.

4 People often wonder how one or
5 two people can get the work of NACs done.
6 Basically that's how many people run
7 NACs. And then we do it by partnering
8 and collaborating with people that build
9 our capacity to do so.

10 Basically we're asking the
11 City, I encourage you to explore and
12 consider possible options previously
13 introduced by my PACDC colleagues to OHCD
14 at the Consolidated Plan hearing on April
15 16th. We ask the City to redirect some
16 of the unused funds set aside for
17 property tax relief programs to housing
18 counseling agencies, which could also be
19 another source of funding for the NACs.

20 And we are also asking City
21 Council to work together with state and
22 federal legislators and academic
23 institutions to secure sustainable funds
24 for AmeriCorps workers, who could really
25 help us by developing long-term

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 college-based internship programs. This
3 would help NACs to develop street teams
4 that conduct conditions monitoring and
5 reporting and just helping us do some of
6 the tedious work that we have to do.

7 And more than 42 percent or
8 more than 20 million of the City's CDBG
9 allocation will be spent on operational
10 costs for City agencies in Fiscal Year
11 '15, according to the preliminary plan.
12 These dollars aren't available to the
13 NACs that have been the go-to programs to
14 help deliver the critical services,
15 support, and economic development in our
16 neighborhoods that I described previously
17 in this testimony. These are just a
18 couple options to explore to direct more
19 sufficient funding to the NACs.

20 It's time for the City to
21 recognize the value of the NACs as it
22 relates to serving the poor, as well as
23 with the Consolidated Plan. I
24 respectfully request that the City step
25 up and invest more funding to benefit the

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 vulnerable neighborhoods and residents
3 that we are charged to serve.

4 Thank you for allowing me to
5 provide my testimony here today.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
7 Thank you so much. And, again, thank you
8 for your wonderful work.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: One
11 of the things I'd like to say is -- first
12 of all, I'd like to recognize
13 Councilwoman Quinones-Sanchez, who just
14 came in.

15 We actually had the pleasure of
16 being at a PACDC meeting the other night.
17 It was a wonderful event. Both the
18 Councilwoman and I were recognized by the
19 great organization, and it's very
20 special.

21 Working in neighborhoods we
22 think is so important, and we want to
23 continue to encourage you. And I
24 understand that along with that
25 encouragement, we need to step up to the

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 plate and provide more resources for the
3 local communities, and we in fact plan on
4 doing that and coming out with a number
5 of initiatives very shortly.

6 MS. SNYDER: Council President
7 Clarke, I'm the Vice President of PACDC
8 and I was at the event. I want to
9 congratulate you again for the leadership
10 award, Councilwoman as well. Thank you
11 very much for your hard work.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. LEWIS: Jane Lipton, Doug
16 Bryant, and Deborah Toney.

17 Doug Bryant, Deborah Toney and
18 Oyinade Salako.

19 (Witnesses approached witness
20 table.)

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: And,
22 again, I just want to remind -- well, not
23 remind. For those of you who may have
24 come in more recently, with respect to
25 the testimony we're requesting that you

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 limit your comments to three minutes, if
3 at all possible. We want to make sure we
4 have an opportunity, because I know some
5 people came in after our opening remarks.

6 Thank you. Thank you so much
7 for your cooperation.

8 Good evening.

9 MR. BRYANT: Good evening. My
10 name is Douglas Bryant. I'm a member of
11 the Gambrel Recreation Center Advisory
12 Council and a lifelong resident of the
13 Frankford section of Philadelphia. I
14 would like to take time to thank City
15 Council for giving me the opportunity to
16 speak about the Gambrel Recreation Center
17 and the unfilled promise to restore the 5
18 million for Fiscal Year 2009, \$5 million
19 from Fiscal Year 2009.

20 We service over 300 children at
21 the center. It is also the home of the
22 Frankford Chargers Athletic Association.
23 The Gambrel Recreation Center is a safe
24 haven for your youth. The recreation
25 center was built in 1980.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 If you were to drive down the
3 4800 block of Ditman Street, you will see
4 a very nice-looking fenced-in Astroturf
5 field with a scorer's booth, by the way,
6 built and maintained by Mr. Gambrel; a
7 concession stand; a building to store
8 athletic equipment, also built by
9 Mr. Gambrel; a huge storage bin used to
10 store athletic equipment; two baseball
11 fields; a basketball court; a water park
12 and a playground for the smaller kids.

13 I want to take a few more
14 minutes of your time to take you inside
15 our rec center. Depending on the time of
16 the evening in one of our -- in our one
17 and only multi-purpose room and gym, you
18 might see our girls' dance program
19 practicing their routines or our boys'
20 basketball program, an after-school
21 program, mentoring programs or the girls'
22 cheerleaders practicing their cheers.
23 You see, we have to maintain our indoor
24 programs in shifts. Oh, by the way, this
25 year we started a girls 12 and under

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 basketball team. Unfortunately, the only
3 available time to practice was 7:30 in
4 the evening.

5 There are two storage rooms
6 filled with equipment, a locker room now
7 used for storage. We had to move some of
8 the equipment inside the rec because the
9 storage building on the field was
10 constantly being broken into and football
11 equipment such as shoulder pads and
12 helmets, TVs and DVDs were stolen.

13 In the gym painted by Mr.
14 Gambrel, we have a basketball court, also
15 the floor again maintained by
16 Mr. Gambrel. The restroom facilities are
17 inadequate and obsolete. The boys'
18 restroom has one stall, one small sink,
19 and the old tall ceramic urinal that
20 drains into the floor. Hopefully there
21 is not a downpour outside, because you
22 might hear the drainage system gurgle.
23 Our restrooms are in dire need of
24 renovation.

25 We have our director's office

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 also used to have our Advisory Board
3 meetings, Frankford Chargers Board
4 meetings and other meetings that have to
5 be held in the rec.

6 As you can see, what we need is
7 an expansion to the building. We have
8 completely outgrown our recreation
9 center.

10 We know at this particular time
11 an expansion project is more of a pipe
12 dream than a reality, but we could use
13 some renovations that would afford us so
14 much more needed space. Without having
15 to build an extension to the building,
16 one thought in mind would be to removing
17 the lockers from the locker room and
18 renovating it into another activity room,
19 which we so desperately need. It took
20 more than a year to finally get a Comcast
21 line in the building. With the added
22 space, we would then be able to set up
23 laptops to aid the children with their
24 homework, as originally planned, and
25 other school program activities.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Let's take a closer look at the
3 nice-looking Astroturf football field.
4 Back in 2007, we were recognized as
5 having the worst football field in the
6 City. Before a game could be played, we
7 had to walk the field picking up glass
8 and rocks. Thanks to the City of
9 Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Eagles,
10 a new field was constructed.

11 This was a blessing for the
12 children and the community. But now with
13 normal wear and tear, it's time for
14 maintenance. Although we purchased
15 equipment to fluff up the turf, parts of
16 the field has to be glued down and
17 gullies are starting to appear on it. We
18 had one person came out who gave us an
19 oral estimate on repairs. He said the
20 next couple years the turf and padding
21 would have to be replaced and the
22 drainage system would have to be checked.
23 That would cost in the hundreds of
24 thousands of dollars, which is far more
25 than our budget will have. The

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 difficulty also is finding more
3 contractors to come out to look at our
4 field and give an estimate.

5 I stand before you this evening
6 pleading on behalf of the children who
7 attend the Gambrel Rec Center to please
8 release the remaining \$5 million as
9 promised. We thank God for such people
10 as Mr. Gambrel and a host of others in
11 our community who volunteer their time
12 and talents. With proper maintenance, we
13 can continue to have a healthy and
14 enjoyable recreation center for our 300
15 children and growing.

16 And, by the way, Mr. Gambrel is
17 in the audience, if he stands with me.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

19 Thank you, sir.

20 MR. BRYANT: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 Councilwoman Sanchez.

23 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: This is
24 one of mine, so I want to -- he already
25 asked. Mr. Gambrel, can you stand up.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Can you stand up, Mr. Gambrel. Stand up.

3 This is Billy Gambrel, who this
4 rec center is named after.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And I
7 just really want to affirm the work of
8 the Chargers and all of the organizations
9 that work there at that rec center and
10 add to your plea for additional money,
11 not only for maintenance, but obviously
12 we could talk about an expansion.

13 This center is run fully by
14 volunteers, and it is one of the most
15 impressive recreation facilities in the
16 City of Philadelphia. I'm so very proud
17 to serve them, and I wanted to publicly
18 thank them for what they do. They are
19 truly an outstanding model of children
20 and adults and everyone.

21 Every single building that was
22 mentioned here by Mr. Bryant, Mr. Gambrel
23 built. A concession stand, storage
24 equipment. I always tell them we have no
25 permits for it, but it's okay, because

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 that's the kind of focus and attention
3 you want from the rec centers. They
4 don't ask for permission, and we need to
5 be able to support them more.

6 So thank you both, Mr. Bryant
7 and Mr. Gambrel.

8 MR. BRYANT: Thank you.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. TONEY-MOORE: Good evening.
11 I bring you greetings from the IMHOTEP
12 Charter High School, the first
13 African-centered high school built from
14 the ground up in the beautiful community
15 of the Northwest district. My name is
16 Deborah Toney-Moore.

17 Yes, you clap it up for the
18 TEP, because we're doing some great
19 things.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. TONEY-MOORE: My name is
22 Deborah Toney-Moore and my parent GPA is
23 a 4.0 and climbing, because I made the
24 right choice at IMHOTEP. I'm a Legacy
25 mom with four graduates who have all gone

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 on to post secondary education, and
3 because of the diligent work at IMHOTEPE,
4 my children and the young people who
5 follow and continue to be there have not
6 had to pay too much money for college
7 applications. Our college support
8 system, they make sure that we diligently
9 work. Our mission is to make sure our
10 children are well qualified for post
11 secondary education.

12 I am an adopted daughter of the
13 Northwest, because I had started at
14 IMHOTEPE since 2000, but I come from
15 Councilman Jones' district in Wynnefield.
16 So I travel, as many students come from
17 all across this great city to come to
18 IMHOTEPE.

19 I am a proud parent that has
20 seen with my own eyes the tremendous
21 vision, mission, passion, dedication that
22 it takes from a CEO such as Christine
23 Wiggins and the awesome staff that come
24 to that school. Our parents are
25 phenomenal.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 What we did today is, we
3 brought you greetings from our football
4 team. As you know, we made history. One
5 hundred years, we are the first public
6 school to be state finalists, and we
7 represented the City well. We also have
8 won back-to-back city and state
9 championships. But my greatest pride is
10 these young men that we see here and
11 those in this book. They all have been
12 accepted to college, and we're still
13 working on one that is still in the works
14 as a senior.

15 This is what we do at the TEP.
16 It's a tremendous school, and I'm here to
17 just encourage everyone when the renewal
18 comes up, we need to make Council aware
19 that our renewal is up. There should be
20 no challenges.

21 I have four graduates. I have
22 brought a soon-to-be-graduate with me,
23 and I'm going to share a little of my
24 time with her, and also another parent
25 who also teaches at the great Harambee

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Institute founded by John Skief.

3 I'm just here to tell you, we
4 need your full support. This school does
5 tremendous work. People say athletics,
6 but it's a winning attitude. We get
7 young people to come with no confidence,
8 no faith in education, low scores, and
9 we're telling them of their greatness,
10 their successes in our race, that we are
11 born to achieve and succeed.

12 And with those closing marks,
13 I'm just going to ask you to take a
14 minute to visit our great school. Just
15 like this beautiful facility here, West
16 Oak Lane Charter, it is one of the only
17 independent charter schools. It's an
18 independent community-based charter
19 school, which was based on Act 22 of the
20 state law. Many of us start -- I started
21 in the struggle before I even understood
22 what a charter school was, and I found
23 the buy-in from stakeholders that take
24 ownership of education is one of our
25 greatest successes. And in addition to

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 the funding that needs to happen for
3 education, we need to make sure that
4 we're bringing many partnerships and
5 resources to our schools, because on any
6 given Monday, you can be a child of a
7 traditional public school, private or a
8 public charter school.

9 So I'm thanking the Council for
10 coming out here today, and if I could, I
11 would like to just share a minute for our
12 student who came out to speak tonight.

13 MS. SALAKO: Hello, everybody.
14 My name is Oyinade Salako. I'm Nigerian.
15 I moved to America three years ago, and
16 IMHOTEK wasn't my neighborhood school. I
17 started over at King as a freshman, and
18 it wasn't a very nice experience. So I
19 transferred to IMHOTEK Charter High
20 School. And IMHOTEK has helped me in a
21 lot of ways and it also strengthened me
22 academically, physically and, you know,
23 well-rounded. It's a well-rounded
24 school.

25 I would say that we need the

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 community support and as well as your
3 support to fund our school and make it
4 one of the best, which it is already, and
5 with your help, we can get more
6 awareness. Because, you know, as an
7 African-centered school, our school is
8 doing a lot of things. And my school,
9 IMHOTECH Charter High School, is doing the
10 best. It can go to key extremes,
11 especially young blacks in school and,
12 you know, education is one of the things
13 we need nowadays to get what we want to
14 succeed. And with your help and the
15 funds, we can achieve our dream as
16 blacks, African Americans to attain the
17 (unintelligible).

18 Thank you very much.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Thank you.

21 MS. TONEY-MOORE: Can she just
22 share where she's going to college and
23 her --

24 COURT STENOGRAPHER: Can you
25 talk into the microphone, please.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yes.

3 MS. SALAKO: Okay. I'm a
4 graduating senior with a GPA of 3.64,
5 with over a few college acceptances and
6 I've also secured scholarship with the
7 colleges, which include Temple, Drexel,
8 LaSalle with a full ride and few tuition
9 for some, but my choice, I'm going to
10 Kutztown during the fall.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. TONEY-MOORE: And we
13 provide our point of pride for IMHOTEP,
14 so you're welcome to share in that,
15 spread the good news about the TEP.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Thank you so much for your testimony.
18 Congratulations.

19 I'm sorry. One second.
20 Councilwoman wants to make a couple of
21 references.

22 MS. TONEY-MOORE: We love our
23 Councilwoman.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
25 very much. I love IMHOTEP as well.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 I can tell you that I've been
3 there many times. Mama Chris is
4 fantastic. I'm surprised she's not here
5 tonight.

6 MS. TONEY-MOORE: We had an
7 honor roll dinner, which we have a parent
8 that came. His daughter is being
9 honored.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Oh,
11 wonderful.

12 MS. TONEY-MOORE: She's also
13 being honored.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, I
15 knew it was for a good reason. I knew
16 that if she wasn't here, that there was
17 something going on over at IMHOTEP.

18 I remember when you started,
19 when IMHOTEP started, and they were in
20 trailers.

21 MS. TONEY-MOORE: Yes,
22 modulars.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Modulars,
24 excuse me. And it's come a long way to
25 the beautiful facility that you're in

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 now, and it makes a difference. And I
3 believe IMHOTEP graduates either the most
4 or at the top in terms of graduation for
5 African American males here in
6 Philadelphia.

7 MS. TONEY-MOORE: Yes.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And that is
9 really significant.

10 So I just wanted to thank you
11 for the work that you're doing and for
12 your advocacy.

13 MS. TONEY-MOORE: Thank you so
14 much, and I did want to share -- and I
15 apologize for everybody, but I think we
16 need to know. Today we had Stanford, the
17 school in Tennessee, and a number of
18 coaches and people from all over the
19 nation recruiting our students. Every
20 October we invite the community out.
21 It's an open college fair. And we not
22 only recruit -- help our students get
23 college scholarships and acceptances, we
24 bring other schools into the TEP so they
25 can also partake.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 So we want to share that good
3 information with the community and let
4 you know that we are community based and
5 we're here to serve.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Thank you. Keep up the good work.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. LEWIS: The next three,
11 Janice Winston, Jeffrey Hackett, and
12 Francis Nelson. Janice Winston, Jeffrey
13 Hackett, and Francis Nelson.

14 (Witnesses approached witness
15 table.)

16 MS. LEWIS: Harriet Davor.

17 (No response.)

18 MS. LEWIS: Gina Snyder,
19 William Dorsey.

20 (Witness approached witness
21 table.)

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
23 evening.

24 MS. WINSTON: Good evening. I
25 apologize. My testimony is written, as I

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 didn't think I was going to get back to
3 Philadelphia today, so I just wrote it as
4 I was sitting in the room.

5 My name is Janice Winston and I
6 am the Treasurer for the all-volunteer
7 City Youth Association Gators. Our
8 organization is dedicated to the youth,
9 with a concentration on sports, travel,
10 education, and mentoring. We also
11 encourage our parents to participate with
12 their children from ages 4 to 16. We are
13 based at Cherashore Playground in
14 Councilwoman Marian Tasco's district.

15 I'm here today to implore you
16 to maintain or increase the budget for
17 recreation. As the School District is
18 forced to concentrate on its major
19 mission, to educate our children, it's up
20 to organizations like the City Youth
21 Association Gators and others to round
22 out the youth experience.

23 Recreation gives our youth the
24 opportunity to experience the use of
25 other parts of their brains.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Organizations that service youth rely on
3 the recreation budget to help us fulfill
4 the creative genius of our children
5 outside of the classroom.

6 With the assistance of
7 Councilwoman Tasco, we have taken our
8 children to Florida, Ohio, New York, New
9 Jersey, and recently Rehoboth Beach,
10 Delaware. Our cheerleaders and football
11 teams are national champions.

12 Self-esteem, a sense of
13 self-worth, fulfillment of dreams not
14 deferred are what we wish for our
15 children.

16 I ask that you remember our
17 youth and remember your youth and the fun
18 you had when you were young. I ask that
19 you provide money for maintenance for our
20 facilities and continue to support the
21 development of our youth outside of the
22 classroom.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 Thank you so much.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. DORSEY: Good evening.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
5 evening, sir.

6 MR. DORSEY: My name is William
7 Dorsey and I'm here representing the
8 Business Center for Entrepreneurship and
9 Social Enterprise.

10 COURT STENOGRAPHER: Can you
11 speak into the microphone.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yes.
13 The stenographer --

14 MR. DORSEY: Okay. The
15 Business Center is headed by Pam
16 Rich-Wheeler, who serves as our Executive
17 Director. The mission of the Business
18 Center is to equip individuals with the
19 necessary skills to start, maintain, and
20 expand small businesses. Our target
21 areas is in the Northwest of Philadelphia
22 and includes commercial corridors along
23 Chew, Cheltenham, Germantown Avenues, as
24 well as the local business district.

25 Small businesses play an

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 important role in Philadelphia's economy
3 and contribute to the overall well-being
4 of our communities by expanding the tax
5 base and creating jobs. Public policies
6 and programs such as commercial corridor
7 facade improvements, technical assistance
8 to entrepreneurs, access to capital, and
9 the streamlining of the City's tax and
10 regulations process can go a long way to
11 creating an economic environment where
12 small minority-owned businesses can grow
13 and thrive.

14 We encourage the Council to
15 pass the budget that addresses the
16 capital and capacity-building needs of
17 Philadelphia's minority and women
18 entrepreneurs in a positive and proactive
19 manner. Instead of focusing on big box
20 developments, City Council should
21 encourage a vibrant mix of small
22 businesses along commercial corridors
23 that cater to the needs of our
24 neighborhood residents, while creating
25 solid living-wage jobs and contributing

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 to our tax base. The Council should also
3 encourage the establishment of
4 small-scale high-tech manufacturing
5 facilities, which would serve to address
6 the underutilization of Philadelphia's
7 industrial infrastructure and would
8 create further job opportunities for its
9 residents.

10 Finally, we ask that the
11 Council should pass a budget that funds
12 programs that promote financial literacy
13 and encourage entrepreneurship among our
14 youth.

15 Thank you very much.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

17 Thank you so much for your testimony.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. WINSTON: Can I just take a
20 minute to just thank Councilwoman Marian
21 Tasco for her continued support for the
22 Cherashore Playground. Thank you very
23 much.

24 MR. HACKETT: Good evening,
25 Council President, members. My name is

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Jeff Hackett. I am Commissioner with
3 Parks and Recreation. I chair
4 programming now, but I'm here as the
5 President of Helen G. Sturgis Recreation
6 Center. I'm also the President of the
7 35th District Police Advisory Council.

8 I would like to say first that
9 I thank you guys for the further
10 transparency. I've been dealing with the
11 rec centers for a lot of years, and it's
12 a refreshing and welcomed invite to those
13 that actually get involved to see the
14 transparency difference and also see the
15 battles that you put your necks out
16 sometimes battling the other side of the
17 table.

18 But what I'm here to ask for
19 is, basically I looked at the stats. Our
20 murder rate has gone down, but our
21 shooting rate has shot through the
22 ceiling. More and more people are being
23 shot in areas that are set out to be for
24 recreation and entertainment for
25 families.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Right now there's a meeting
3 going on about the branding, Find Your
4 Path. One of the struggles I see is when
5 I look at areas that we have in the
6 Northwest area that are really
7 unattainable. I keep bringing it up, and
8 we will continue to keep bringing it up,
9 but we have a reservoir that sits over
10 there that needs to be some kind of
11 health track. The Water Department is
12 doing a lot of things in a lot of areas.
13 And I work all over the City. I'm also
14 employed by the School District of
15 Philadelphia. So I see a lot of things.

16 My life, for whatever reason,
17 has turned to be an advocate for
18 children. I like the bad boys. I'll
19 take them in and I usually make them
20 coaches, and it tricks them into being
21 responsible rather than discarding them.
22 We practice a zero tolerance. I'm proud
23 to say we've ran outdoor basketball for
24 six years. Not one major incident. Not
25 one.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 (Applause.)

3 MR. HACKETT: There's stigmas
4 and dogmas on our children, but I say to
5 you right now that what I found, that
6 organizing in your community, in
7 partnership in your community, is where
8 the power comes from. We just
9 partnershipped with the ASPIRA school
10 system. We partnershipped with the
11 Finletter school system. There used to
12 be a relationship between schools, parks,
13 cultural centers and everything, and
14 we're trying to just go back to some
15 things. I know a lot of times it's not
16 good to go back, but we want to go back
17 to the village process. We want to
18 invite everybody in, and we're trying to
19 include everybody this time to make sure
20 that our children have somewhere to go.

21 And one last thing I want to
22 talk about is a big strong argument that
23 I would like to try to bring forth, and
24 that has to do with the budgeting in the
25 recreation hours on Saturday. Most

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 teenagers get up at 12 o'clock. The rec
3 center closes at 2:00. If we're really
4 going to help them, we need to maybe open
5 up at 12:00. You know, I know that it's
6 a thing with staffing and a lot of things
7 of that nature, but we got to go with the
8 nature of the beast, you know. That's
9 where our problem lies and, therefore,
10 that's where our solution lies. We need
11 to occupy them, and we need to bend a
12 little bit, because pretty soon they'll
13 be leading us. So we need to be careful
14 of how we're leading them, in which
15 direction we're taking them in.

16 Thank you for your time.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

18 Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Real
21 quick, before you leave the table, before
22 you leave I just want to reference a
23 couple of things I know of. A couple of
24 my colleagues here are actually working
25 on some of the very important

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 initiatives. Councilman Henon is
3 actually the -- Councilman, you're the
4 Co-Chair or the Chair of the
5 Manufacturing Task Force? And I know one
6 of the things that Councilman -- he can
7 obviously speak for himself, but I just
8 wanted to reference that. He's done a
9 real good job, and they're focused on
10 small businesses, because the reality is
11 is that small businesses are what creates
12 the majority of the jobs, not only in the
13 City but in the country.

14 And also Councilwoman Bass, I
15 know she wants to talk about the safety
16 issue around the rec center.

17 And, Jeff, I just want to say
18 to you, I want to first congratulate you
19 and thank you for your tenure on the
20 Fairmount Park Commission. You're doing
21 a great job. And what I'd ask for you to
22 do with respect to some of the operations
23 issues, because we do take very seriously
24 what the Commission references and
25 recommends, if you can just formalize

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 that, and during our budget process,
3 we'll see if we can have that
4 conversation with the Commissioner and
5 possibly in that particular provision.

6 MR. HACKETT: Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you,
8 Mr. President.

9 I'd just like to thank all of
10 you for coming out to testify, you as
11 well as all of the other residents who
12 have come forward, but I'd like to sort
13 of thank Jeff for a job well done at
14 Sturgis Recreation Center, which we will
15 hopefully open in July. He has led that
16 project and worked there when it was a
17 classroom, and now it has expanded to
18 what we -- in a park, and it was very
19 challenging trying to keep the trees and
20 the landscape and still provide a larger
21 facility.

22 I just want to thank you for
23 your leadership. Long before we thought
24 about the rec center, you were working in
25 the community with the people, and I want

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 to thank you.

3 And I want to thank Janice for
4 your work at Cherashore. Thank you so
5 much. It's a nice little rec center, and
6 you really spend a lot of time there.
7 Thank you very much.

8 MS. WINSTON: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
10 Councilwoman Bass.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
12 Mr. President.

13 Jeff, I just wanted to thank
14 you for mentioning basically recreation
15 and the relationship to keeping young
16 people busy and crime and that there's a
17 relationship there. If you keep them out
18 of sort of the mischief, then you don't
19 have some of the things going on that we
20 see that are so troubling.

21 And so I just wanted to mention
22 a couple of things, and the first is that
23 I want to make sure that everybody knows
24 that every member of Council,
25 particularly the district members, have

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 made a commitment to ensure that every
3 playground and recreation center in the
4 City of Philadelphia will have cameras
5 within the next three years. And so that
6 is really significant.

7 (Applause.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And so
9 every member here has made that
10 commitment. Every member in City
11 Council, period, has made that
12 commitment. And so we want to thank them
13 for that.

14 And also every member voted for
15 a bill that we introduced last year which
16 required the Parks and Recreation
17 Department to tell us about or to report
18 to the Police Department any infractions
19 that are happening. So as district
20 members, if I know that one playground in
21 particular is having a crime or a safety
22 issue, if I see the report that tells me
23 that, I can put additional resources
24 there too.

25 So there's a lot of things that

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 we've been working on. You know, we're
3 not completely there yet, but I believe
4 that we are on the right path, and I
5 think if we're able to get additional
6 funding, it makes a huge difference, and
7 we all know that.

8 But thank you for your
9 advocacy. We really appreciate it.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Thank you, Councilwoman.

12 And one thing Councilwoman
13 omitted to tell you -- she does so many
14 things, she can't keep up with all the
15 stuff she does. The Councilwoman
16 actually sponsored and passed legislation
17 that will prohibit any firearms on the
18 Department of Recreation.

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You
21 did so much, you can't remember. Good
22 stuff.

23 The Chair recognizes Councilman
24 Henon.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Council President, and thank you all for
3 testifying and those who came before you
4 and those who will testify after you this
5 evening.

6 Council President is correct.
7 Each member of City Council has
8 contributed to just about every issue
9 that we heard here tonight, starting with
10 public safety, safety in our rec centers.
11 So I'm glad our Chair of Parks and Recs
12 is able to come here tonight and stand up
13 and say we have a proven track record of
14 trying to change things and make our
15 Department of Rec a better place and a
16 more vibrant place where we could have
17 our kids play and hang out for organized
18 and unorganized sports in a safe way.

19 When you talk about
20 manufacturing, we certainly have the
21 talent pool here in the City of
22 Philadelphia, and working in partnerships
23 with the School District and some of the
24 private sectors, specifically the
25 manufacturing industry, the way we

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 approach putting kids to work is a little
3 different now. We have the resurgence
4 and the vibrancy of manufacturing that is
5 coming upon us now, and the different
6 approach is, it's going to be by demand.
7 So we will be training our kids as the
8 pipeline in education for those jobs, for
9 the need of those jobs. So these jobs,
10 even in the economic downturn that we
11 have had, we see it on an upswing. There
12 will be job placements for all our kids,
13 whether it's in technology, utilizing our
14 School District. Ben Franklin School is
15 equipped with, contributed and donated
16 manufacturing, advanced technology there
17 for all our kids in the City of
18 Philadelphia as well as our community
19 colleges and some of our higher
20 education.

21 So we are fully prepared to put
22 neighborhood children and neighborhood
23 folks to work as soon as possible. So we
24 are certainly taking the steps for that,
25 and I want to thank Council President and

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 the members of this body for recognizing
3 that, as they all have been pounding the
4 pavements and visiting some of these
5 manufacturing jobs that are in our
6 neighborhoods.

7 And, finally, there's been a
8 lot of talk about the commercial
9 corridors, and from Councilwoman
10 Quinones-Sanchez and our Council
11 President specifically, as the Council
12 President has been fighting for the last
13 several years and has been successful
14 with getting more money in the budget for
15 our commercial corridors, making sure
16 that the facade improvement program is
17 available for local small businesses,
18 local small businesses from -- could be
19 people in this room who opened up and
20 taken a chance with their retirement or
21 taken a chance to offer services for a
22 commercial corridor to be successful.
23 Legislation that is passed where the
24 first \$2,000 for the business income
25 taxes are exempt, to give people the

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 opportunity to succeed on a walkable
3 district in our commercial corridors
4 where neighborhood residents can just
5 walk around the corner, just come to the
6 street and feel safe about it. And also
7 collectively over the last three, four
8 years, the new Zoning Code change, making
9 sure that the Zoning Code reform includes
10 an easy way to be successful on the
11 corridors.

12 So every Councilmember that you
13 see here tonight and every Councilmember
14 over the past three years that I've been
15 a part of has had extreme input in making
16 sure that our neighborhoods are
17 successful with a nice mix with local
18 businesses and local people supporting
19 them, walking on them, and making that
20 economy thrive right back in our
21 neighborhood.

22 So I thank you all for being
23 here.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 Thank you, Councilman.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Thank you so much for your
3 testimony. Thank you so much.

4 And before we call on the next
5 group, I would like to recognize a good
6 friend of mine and a good friend of all
7 of us, State Representative Cherelle
8 Parker is in the house.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
11 actually had the pleasure of spending
12 some time with the Representative today
13 up in Harrisburg, and I was just
14 marveling at how she was handling her
15 business, fighting for money for
16 education. And, Rep, it was a good time.
17 I don't necessarily look forward to
18 spending any more time up there, because
19 you got that, but, again, great job
20 today. I really appreciate watching you
21 handle your business.

22 Majority Leader Jones. There
23 he is.

24 (Applause.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you,

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Mr. President. Also to my colleague
3 Councilman Henon, just to say to the
4 people who live up in this area, we'll be
5 getting our streetscape on Stenton Avenue
6 from Allens Lane all the way down, I
7 think it's to Rittenhouse. So we had a
8 meeting the other night at Oxford
9 Presbyterian Church. We had a wonderful
10 turnout of the community. So we're
11 looking forward to beautifying our
12 Stenton Avenue as we've done on Ogontz as
13 well as Wadsworth. Thank you all very
14 much. And with your tax dollars, we
15 appreciate it.

16 (Applause.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

18 Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

19 MS. LEWIS: The next three
20 speakers are Garry Mills, Walter Marlin,
21 and Andy Trackman. Garry Mills, Andy
22 Trackman, and Doug Bryant, I think.

23 Desmin Daniels.

24 (Witnesses approached witness
25 table.)

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
3 evening.

4 MR. TRACKMAN: Good evening.

5 Thank you, members of Council, for coming
6 out and having us tonight. My name is
7 Andy Trackman. I was up here earlier in
8 support of the commercial corridor
9 funding, but I'm testifying here tonight
10 as a Philadelphia resident, as a parent
11 and a resident of the 8th District, and
12 I'm here to support a request to restore
13 full funding, \$3.2 million, to the
14 Philadelphia Cultural Fund.

15 This year the Fund provided
16 general operating grants to 272 arts and
17 culture organizations. Thirty-three of
18 them are actually in the 8th and 9th
19 District. And with the cutbacks in the
20 schools, organizations like the
21 Comasellar (ph) Group, which provides
22 school children with a performing arts
23 platform and provides education in
24 African and African American history,
25 these organizations are filling a need

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 that is being -- that really is important
3 in our community.

4 My daughter has had musical
5 instruction at Settlement Music School,
6 another benefactor of the Philadelphia
7 Cultural Fund, and I've enjoyed some
8 amazing performances by Intercultural
9 Journeys and the Black Pearl Chamber
10 Orchestra, as well Quintessence Theatre.
11 That's some of the 272 arts and culture
12 organizations.

13 All these organizations enrich
14 Philadelphia's economic, cultural, and
15 spiritual lives, and I urge you to
16 restore the Cultural Fund so it can
17 continue and expand its work and its
18 investment in our community and in
19 Philadelphia.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 Thank you so much.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. MILLS: How you doing?

25 Good evening, everyone. My name is Garry

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Mills. I'm the founder and President of
3 Shoot Basketballs, Not People.
4 Currently, I had an issue with the
5 Department of Rec in the Northwest
6 section. I attacked or went to every
7 single Department of Rec and asked for
8 outdoor permits, indoor and outdoor.
9 Indoor I was not successful for the past
10 six months. Outdoor, they wouldn't issue
11 permits for the outdoor basketball courts
12 for some reason I'm not aware of. They
13 wouldn't let me know. So it forced me to
14 go to the Lenfest Center to start our
15 skills training program as well as
16 Germantown Friends for our girls.

17 But I'm trying to implement the
18 basketball outdoor program for our
19 children, and I need the proper space and
20 time in order to do these things. Also I
21 proposed to the Department of Recreation
22 to do a gentrification project with all
23 of the basketball courts in the area.

24 I currently attended a Coors
25 Lite event with Kenny Smith, and they are

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 gentrifying the church at Zion Baptist on
3 Broad Street, but I thought it would be a
4 phenomenal idea to get with corporate
5 partners, such as Target, maybe Walmart
6 and some of the larger entities that's in
7 this Northwest section, and possibly see
8 if we can reach out to them to gentrify
9 the playgrounds outside.

10 So now if you have more vibrant
11 playgrounds, the children will be more,
12 you know, I guess, more anxious to come
13 and play the sport of basketball that I
14 know I'm in love with, I know a lot of
15 children in the City of Philadelphia is
16 in love with. And by us being a big
17 market, our basketball has declined
18 publicly as well as as far as the youth
19 organizations are concerned as well. So
20 I'm trying to pick that culture back up
21 to where we're right back on the map and
22 we can attract some of the Nikes and
23 Adidas and Reebok and Under Armour, some
24 of the larger brands to come in and maybe
25 facilitate some money to help us gentrify

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 some of these playgrounds.

3 So if there's anything that any
4 City Council members or President Clarke,
5 if there's any hands that you can extend
6 to me or if we can possibly sit down and
7 do a potential partnership to revitalize
8 some of these playgrounds, then that
9 would, I think, minimize some of the
10 violence that's going on inside of these
11 playgrounds outside.

12 So I just wanted to make you
13 guys aware of that. I'm standing firm to
14 what I believe in, and I really want to
15 see our children, you know, go forward.
16 But it breaks my heart when I'm in these
17 classrooms and they're telling me, I
18 don't have anywhere to go, there's no
19 space, this team is practicing. So maybe
20 if I can, like I said, facilitate a
21 program outside of those indoor spaces
22 that's already being utilized, maybe we
23 can do something on the outside, brighten
24 them up a little bit. And, you know,
25 with the whole campaign that I'm doing,

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 it's on the national perspective now. So
3 I'm getting attention from NBA players as
4 well as some of the family out in Akron,
5 Ohio. They've been real receptive. Our
6 program has been phenomenal for our
7 President's Day event out there.

8 So I would like to bring it
9 home, you know. I hate to say I was more
10 successful in Ohio than I have been at
11 home, but I want to bring those stats
12 back to Philadelphia and raise this
13 market back up. Okay.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: This
15 is the number where you can be reached?

16 MR. MILLS: Yes.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 Thank you.

19 MR. DANIELS: Good evening. My
20 name is Desmin Daniels. I'm here today
21 as a concerned resident and as a
22 concerned father in Mount Airy. I ask
23 the Committee today to consider and
24 reconsider sections of Mount Airy. I
25 know we have different entities that are

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 focused on business development and local
3 corridors, and while that's important, we
4 also have some communities that,
5 particularly here in Mount Airy, in the
6 Stenton, Johnson area, that while the
7 beautification may be on its way, I think
8 right outside of those beautification we
9 had some areas that are of large concern.

10 In 1972, my grandmother moved
11 on to Cliveden Street. She sent her
12 kids, my mother and my uncle, to the
13 local elementary school. She loved the
14 area because it also had some local
15 businesses that she can walk to and a
16 supermarket in this very location where
17 we sit today. And I think a lot of those
18 entities that are important or aspects
19 that are important to community building
20 are being lost in this particular area.

21 My son -- I have inherited the
22 house from my grandmother in Mount Airy,
23 and we sent our son to the local
24 elementary school, and we had to cut that
25 short after a half of a school year, to

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 which my wife had to quit her job and we
3 home-schooled our child because of what
4 was going on in the local elementary
5 school.

6 We also don't benefit from
7 being able to walk from our home onto
8 Stenton Avenue and enjoy the businesses
9 that were there ten years ago. And
10 certainly it was the start of a little
11 produce store that closed frequently, but
12 we can't travel locally. We can't walk
13 to get fresh produce or things of the
14 like.

15 And so I just ask that you
16 guys, the Committee and the community at
17 large, really look at while we beautify
18 Stenton Avenue, right outside of those
19 areas, even down here on Mansfield around
20 the playground, there's some areas that
21 are -- that it's not too late to sort of
22 help turn the tide. I think that to
23 beautify an area, then to have it be
24 destroyed is a waste of our tax dollars.
25 And so if we could also focus on how our

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 communities are changing. We want to
3 beautify them, but at the same time, we
4 have components of them that aren't
5 changing for the positive.

6 And so, again, that local
7 elementary school, I would like to see it
8 be that local elementary school where
9 families can send their kids to walk to
10 school. So while we beautify the area,
11 again, I ask that we reconsider what's
12 going on outside of these corridors to
13 help strengthen our community.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
16 right. Yeah. That's --

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Thank you. That's actually a very good
20 point, one that we've been talking about
21 for some time. Recently there was a
22 story about the excitement around the
23 fact that the City of Philadelphia had
24 actually gained population for the first
25 time in decades. And that's a good

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 thing, but once you dug down into the
3 numbers, the reality is is that the
4 significant part of the population growth
5 was new births. So there was a lot more
6 kids being born in certain areas of the
7 City. But when you dug down into the
8 numbers, you actually saw that in the
9 outlying neighborhoods, the neighborhoods
10 that actually used to be the choice
11 neighborhoods, the strong neighborhoods
12 like Mount Airys and the West Oak Lanes
13 and Wynnefield, those areas, you actually
14 saw significant population loss.

15 I talk to Councilman Jones all
16 the time about that. In the last
17 redistricting, we looked at the west side
18 of the City of Philadelphia. All that
19 population left, so we had to actually
20 redistrict. We're now in places --
21 represent areas in the City -- I know
22 Councilwoman Sanchez in particular, she
23 had a significant shift, because we had
24 to make up the numbers. You have to have
25 150,000 in every district.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 So there has to be a strategy
3 for these neighborhoods beyond Center
4 City. I represent Center City, and it's
5 a great thing. I love what's going on
6 down there, but there are also
7 neighborhoods out here that there needs
8 to be a strategy and there needs to be a
9 plan and there needs to be some clear
10 thought about how we reinvest in our
11 communities to have new housing starts,
12 to have people in these neighborhoods be
13 in a position to take advantage of the
14 ten-year tax abatement, to have strong
15 commercial corridors, new business
16 startups. So that's something that we
17 are going to be working on very
18 aggressively over the next several
19 months, and I agree with you a hundred
20 percent.

21 Thank you so much for your
22 testimony.

23 (Applause.)

24 THE CLERK: Marika Meekins,
25 Jeffrey Hackett, Damien Price.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 MS. MEEKINS: Good evening. I
5 come to you as a parent at IMHOTEP
6 Charter School and as an educator for 15
7 years in Philadelphia public schools. I
8 am an educator for the last ten years at
9 Harambee Charter School.

10 I come to you because IMHOTEP
11 is up for renewal of their charter, and I
12 am asking for the support not only of the
13 community but of the Councilmembers.

14 IMHOTEP is a diamond in the
15 rough. I have a daughter that's
16 currently been there since 9th grade.
17 She's now 11th grade on honor roll. When
18 it was time for me to choose a high
19 school, she could have went anywhere in
20 the City. She was accepted to all the
21 top high schools of Philadelphia, but I
22 chose IMHOTEP for her.

23 Nothing is perfect, but IMHOTEP
24 was perfect for her. IMHOTEP is perfect
25 for the 538 students that attend IMHOTEP.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 The dedication not only of the CEO but
3 the Board members, the staff, the
4 children. You can walk past IMHOTEP any
5 day between Monday -- seven days a week
6 and see children in IMHOTEP. Not because
7 they have to be. Because they want to
8 be.

9 I have students that come from
10 Harambee that I see have grown and
11 flourished and now are going to college,
12 where people might have thought he's not
13 going to do anything, she's not going to
14 do anything, but they have shown that
15 they can be the best they can be.

16 Like you said, we're not only
17 good for the sports. Academically. Like
18 the Councilwoman said, the majority of --
19 we have the highest majority of African
20 American males going to college, not to
21 prison, not on the corners, being
22 educated so they can be good citizens of
23 the City.

24 So I'm just asking you today,
25 not only Councilpeople but the community,

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 to make sure when it comes time for that
3 renewal for IMHOTEP Charter School, that
4 you support that diamond in the rough,
5 because this is home to a lot of
6 students, community members, and staff.
7 So please on that day when that renewal
8 is up, remember that diamond in the rough
9 on 21st Street, IMHOTEP Charter School.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. PRICE: Good afternoon --
12 excuse me. Good evening. On this rainy
13 day, thank you for coming out and
14 listening to our testimonies. I'm going
15 to echo some of the things that the
16 sister to my left just said. I'm not
17 only a parent of an IMHOTEP Charter --
18 I'm sorry. I'm not only a parent of the
19 IMHOTEP Charter Institute student, but
20 I'm also one of the basketball coaches
21 over there of the girls' basketball team,
22 which we just won the -- you know?

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yeah, I
24 know.

25 MR. PRICE: And I'm very proud

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 to say that, because IMHOTEK has embraced
3 not only myself but my daughter who came
4 from small town USA to Philadelphia to
5 come live with me, and IMHOTEK embraced
6 her as one of their own. Now she has
7 been given opportunities that weren't
8 given to her prior to coming to IMHOTEK.
9 She's on the honor roll. She's at the
10 honor roll dinner right now. She's a
11 part of the Pretty Panthers, which won
12 all-city again. She won an award that I
13 never thought would be possible, and that
14 was -- she's on the Mock Trial Team at
15 IMHOTEK, and they went to Temple and they
16 won. She won the Most Outstanding
17 Debater Award there.

18 So I can't speak nothing but
19 high praises when it comes to IMHOTEK.
20 And I implore and I beg and I ask you,
21 please come out to support IMHOTEK when
22 that renewal is up. Some of you have
23 already been to IMHOTEK, maybe to a
24 sporting event, maybe to a job fair that
25 they have in the community. There's a

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 lot of community things that go on that I
3 never realized until I moved right down
4 the street right there on Laveer, 21st
5 and Laveer. And I notice that IMHOTEP
6 supports the community as well as the
7 students that go to that school.

8 So, once again, I'm asking you
9 to come out and to see what IMHOTEP
10 offers not only the community but the
11 kids that they educate there as well as
12 the students -- I mean, the teachers are
13 phenomenal, the administrators are
14 phenomenal, and the community surrounding
15 IMHOTEP is phenomenal. And I want you
16 all to come out there and just visit,
17 take a minute of your time, if you can,
18 and see the beauty or the diamond in the
19 rough, as she just said, shine daily,
20 Sunday through Saturday.

21 Thank you for your time.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

23 Thank you.

24 (Applause.)

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
4 Mr. President. One of the beautiful
5 things about an IMHOTEP or a Harambee is
6 that kids come from all of our districts
7 to go there, and the emphasis that's not
8 only placed on sports, y'all win a lot of
9 those championships, but also on the
10 well-rounded nature of the student in
11 academics. So I respect that.

12 I just got off the phone today
13 with the new CEO or manager of Harambee,
14 Sandra Dungee Glenn. I don't know if it
15 was really made public, but former SRC
16 Chair, Sandra Dungee Glenn, is now
17 running Harambee.

18 But I wanted to also emphasize
19 that I judge a school -- and I know a lot
20 of our members --

21 (Bell rung.)

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Is that one
23 for me too? That's all right.

24 So the way -- and I learned
25 from my colleagues. I really did. You

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 could tell a lot about a school by parent
3 participation. All you have to do is
4 stick around for the home and school to
5 see which parents are really engaged in
6 the product and the development of the
7 product, which at the end of the day is
8 the student.

9 So in both of those schools,
10 you have strong parent support systems
11 that do more than just pick up report
12 cards. They participate.

13 So it's ironic, Mr. President,
14 we're going to be dealing with the SRC
15 next week; isn't that right? So we're
16 going to remember to make that and put
17 that on the record.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Thank you, sir.

21 (Applause.)

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Can
23 I ask you a quick question, please. We
24 only hear like -- because we don't get to
25 vote on charter renewals or charter

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 revocations. So we kind of like only
3 hear about it at the end when something
4 happens, like over in my district and
5 Councilman Henon's district, Dr. Palmer's
6 school closed. I got a phone call. They
7 said, Just giving you a heads-up, it's
8 closing today.

9 Wow, thanks.

10 During the course of the year,
11 is there like in the event that there is
12 some performance issues or some possible
13 issues that could possibly cause a
14 revocation during the course of the year,
15 is there like an outreach from the School
16 District to make sure that it's not an
17 abrupt end to the process at the end or
18 is this ongoing during the course of the
19 year?

20 MS. MEEKINS: What happens is
21 that every five years, the charter
22 schools are up for renewal, where they
23 come in and they evaluate. During that
24 evaluation, they look over everything
25 from finances to talking to students,

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 test scores, all that sort.

3 Once they come back with their
4 findings, if it's something, they do give
5 you a chance to come back and correct it
6 or whatever the issue may be. And what
7 happens is that sometimes, like you said,
8 wait until the end. It's very important
9 that you make your parents aware that
10 there are issues, because as you look in
11 the news right now, charter schools are
12 under attack. I mean, I'm just being
13 personal. I work at one, and I
14 understand. So what happens is, parents
15 have to be involved, and what happens is,
16 they don't tell you until almost the end
17 that it's an issue. They don't let you
18 know in September like, Okay, they're
19 coming back in May, this is what the
20 problem is, let's -- they wait -- we
21 found out over spring break.

22 MS. TONEY-MOORE: And I just
23 wanted to add, with the process in
24 February of 2012, IMHOTEP was rated one
25 of the top high schools, right along with

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Girls' High and Central. They had a very
3 extensive partnership that came out and
4 evaluated everyone.

5 Just recently, they came out
6 and they spent all of maybe an hour, and
7 they eliminated the parent piece, which
8 is a big mistake, and they did not
9 interview parents. They did not
10 interview students. So when they take
11 that report back, they're not really
12 listening to the stakeholders who are
13 making the choices to send their children
14 to neighborhood schools and charter
15 schools.

16 So we're asking that Council
17 also, when you're about to evaluate, to
18 make sure that people who are making
19 decisions on these schools at least give
20 the respect to come out and visit and
21 spend the adequate time that's needed to
22 give a fair evaluation.

23 And in addition to that, we
24 love social media, so we do have
25 information that's posted up on our

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 website, and we try to share that, and
3 we're looking forward to sharing that
4 with more Councilpeople and people in the
5 community.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

7 Thank you.

8 Thank you so much for your
9 testimony.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm
12 sorry.

13 Hold on a second, please.

14 Councilwoman Tasco.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I was just
16 going to say to the President and members
17 of Council, when the School District
18 comes before the Council to testify for
19 the funding of their budget, these are
20 the issues we have to raise, because this
21 is not the only -- first time I've heard
22 about IMHOTEP, but I also heard it about
23 a couple of other charter schools, and
24 the process by how they make the
25 evaluation and determination is

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 questionable.

3 And so if you can when the
4 School District comes before Council -- I
5 think it begins next week; I don't have
6 the schedule -- you all need to come down
7 and testify, because I see some problems
8 with the process on how they evaluate and
9 restore the school -- I mean, you all are
10 just absolutely wonderful. Although I'm
11 on this side of the street, I know Mama
12 Chris. We've worked with her. She kind
13 of thinks I'm her Councilperson too. So
14 if you have success like that and you get
15 the treatment and the lack of interest
16 from the District bothers me, and I want
17 you to come and testify.

18 MS. TONEY-MOORE: Yes, ma'am.
19 We are signed up for May 7th, if that's
20 the correct date. So our students will
21 be there, parents, and our educators.
22 We're bringing a whole group down to the
23 Council hearings on the 7th. So thank
24 you again.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Thank you.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. LEWIS: The next three
5 speakers, Sonia Blank.

6 MS. BLOUNT: Blount.

7 MS. LEWIS: Blount. Sharee
8 Garner, Terry Pittman.

9 (Witnesses approached witness
10 table.)

11 MS. BLOUNT: Good evening.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
13 evening.

14 MS. BLOUNT: My name is Sonia
15 Blount and I'm a recent Temple graduate.
16 I'm standing on behalf of Youth for
17 Change, which is a youth development
18 organization that has our programs in the
19 North Philadelphia area. I am the
20 founder and President, so I'm standing on
21 behalf of the youth.

22 I am here today to ask that you
23 invest in not only recreational centers
24 but invest in out-of-school-time
25 programs. We have our programs at 16th

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 and Berks Street at Amos Recreational
3 Center. And I do appreciate you,
4 Councilman Clarke, for contributing to
5 building a new playground, but there is a
6 need for an investment not only in our
7 youth but to the program providers.

8 The program that I started in
9 Temple University, which was about two
10 years ago, is completely ran by
11 volunteers and, as you know, with any
12 business, you kind of get a little burned
13 out.

14 So two years I've been
15 volunteering, and based off of the lack
16 of resources, we have 60 students
17 enrolled. We have weekly meetings with
18 our parents. We take the young people on
19 trips. We have programs. Our focuses
20 are education, entrepreneurship,
21 community service, and health and
22 nutrition. And as of now, we're at the
23 point where we need more resources and
24 finances for the development of our youth
25 programs.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 I also would like you to
3 consider investing in our recreational
4 centers, because we are in a recreational
5 center where there's no computers. If
6 there are computers, there's no working
7 Internet, and it's not a place where
8 young people want to go.

9 So, one, invest in
10 out-of-school programs and, two, invest
11 in the recreational centers so we make it
12 a safe environment and a great
13 environment where young people want to
14 go.

15 I hear a lot of people talk
16 about, Oh, the young people, they're not
17 in these programs, they're not being
18 involved, and they're shooting and
19 they're violent and these things. But
20 these are not spaces where they want to
21 come to. They're in school, and school
22 is a different subject, but they may be
23 in schools and in spaces where they don't
24 want to be there, and then they come to a
25 recreational center where it has no

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 resources and the bathrooms don't work
3 and, you know, we don't have resources to
4 provide to them. So just making it an
5 opportunity for a space where they want
6 to come.

7 So I'm going to end with this.
8 You can repeat after me, and everybody
9 can get involved too.

10 I am wonderful.

11 Okay. I'm going to say this,
12 and everybody repeat after me, please.
13 Thank you.

14 I am wonderful.

15 (I am wonderful.)

16 MS. BLOUNT: I am creative.

17 (I am creative.)

18 MS. BLOUNT: I am somebody.

19 (I am somebody.)

20 MS. BLOUNT: Y'all can say it
21 with -- feel it with your soul. You
22 don't have to be scared.

23 I am wonderful.

24 (I am wonderful.)

25 MS. BLOUNT: I am creative.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 (I am creative.)

3 MS. BLOUNT: I am somebody.

4 (I am somebody.)

5 MS. BLOUNT: I can make a

6 change.

7 (I can make a change.)

8 MS. BLOUNT: We can make a

9 change.

10 (We can make a change.)

11 MS. BLOUNT: Youth for Change.

12 (Youth for Change.)

13 MS. BLOUNT: And with that, I
14 leave you with that, and please invest in
15 out-of-school-time programs.

16 Thank you.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

18 Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: One
21 quick question. Is your program solely
22 out of 16th and Berks?

23 MS. BLOUNT: As of now, yes.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Did
25 you apply for an Activities Grant?

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 MS. BLOUNT: Not yet. I'm
3 doing that today.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 You're going to do that?

6 MS. BLOUNT: Yes, sir.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
8 Okay. I just wanted to make sure.

9 MS. BLOUNT: Somebody told me I
10 missed the deadline.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Mr. Young is saying you did not miss the
13 deadline.

14 MS. BLOUNT: I didn't miss it?
15 Okay. All right. Thank you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 We'll make sure you get that in.

18 MS. BLOUNT: Thank you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 You're welcome.

21 MS. GARNER: Good evening. My
22 name is Shanee Garner. I am speaking
23 tonight on behalf of Public Citizens for
24 Children and Youth. I would like to
25 thank Council President Clarke and all of

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 you for being here today and especially
3 Council President Clarke for answering
4 our many inquiries and spending time with
5 us but, more importantly, with the parent
6 advocates that we bring to your office on
7 a regular basis.

8 I also want to acknowledge
9 Councilman Jones and Councilwoman
10 Quinones-Sanchez, who we were able to
11 award superhero awards to last year. And
12 we are on the prowl for heroes again this
13 year, so we'll keep you posted.

14 I wanted to take a moment to
15 talk a little bit about the School
16 District budget. I know that next week
17 you'll be spending some time hearing the
18 customary ask. And while I know we all
19 have fatigue and that you all did not
20 create the issue that our District is
21 facing, you all do have the power to
22 help.

23 And so before I worked at PCCY,
24 I was a teacher at John Bartram High
25 School. And as you all know, the

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 pandemonium that has erupted at that
3 school is by design. That is something
4 that didn't happen with those young
5 people two years ago. And after a 40
6 percent staff reduction there, the
7 situation couldn't be worse.

8 Bartram lost two of three
9 assistant principals, three of five
10 counselors, its sole librarian, in
11 addition to its long-term principal.
12 That is the kind of instability that
13 sends our young people the wrong message,
14 and it's the kind of disinvestment that
15 puts us in a position where we are
16 dealing with crime and punishment later
17 on instead of productive citizens.

18 We are working hard at PCCY at
19 the state level to make sure that people
20 in the surrounding suburbs are speaking
21 to their legislators. Philadelphia was
22 not the only district that was hurt. In
23 Upper Darby, in William Penn School
24 District, in Southeast Delco, in
25 Norristown, those districts are seeing

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 unprecedented cuts. We speak to
3 Councilmembers there and School Board
4 members there on a daily basis, and they
5 are in the same terrible position that
6 you all are in.

7 So, once again, I'm here on
8 behalf of students to ask that you extend
9 the 1 percent sales tax. I know that
10 that was permission for us to tax
11 ourselves, and as unjust as it was,
12 without getting to that \$260 million
13 mark, we will be unable to even sustain
14 the level of services that we have now.

15 Just a few days ago, we saw an
16 inspirational documentary about Martin
17 Luther King High School. That was done
18 in spite of disinvestment, not because of
19 investment.

20 So I am asking that you all
21 make the hard decision once again and to
22 hold out hope that we will have a
23 different type of leader in the near
24 future, a funding formula, but until
25 then, I'm going to ask that you extend

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 the sales tax extension.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 Thank you so much for your testimony.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. PITTMAN: So good
8 afternoon. My name is Terry Pittman, and
9 today I'm here to represent Hill Freedman
10 Charter -- I'm sorry. It's not a charter
11 school. Hill Freedman Middle School,
12 which sits about 400 yards from here. I
13 just want to let the folks in the
14 audience know that this is the number two
15 middle school in the state, but yet the
16 School District does not currently have a
17 decent plan in regards to how to actually
18 make this high school work.

19 So let me just kind of give you
20 my prepared information, and then I would
21 like to sit back and have some
22 conversation. I know Councilperson Cindy
23 Bass is well aware of this, and maybe
24 some of you guys are as well.

25 So basically Hill Freedman

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 World Academy is in search of a suitable
3 building that would accommodate the
4 expansion into a high school serving 6th
5 to 12th grades by 2016. The School
6 District approved Hill Freedman to become
7 a high school in 2013, with no concrete
8 plan for new space. Currently, the
9 School District is recommending that we
10 move the 9th and 10th graders, who will
11 be there next year, into Kinsey School,
12 which was built in 1915 or 1918, as a
13 temporary solution to house the incoming
14 students. Approximately 150,000 is
15 allotted to perform cosmetic repairs,
16 including upgrades to lighting, new
17 paint, updated water fountains. The Hill
18 Freedman community is not satisfied with
19 this option for the following reasons:

20 Kinsey is a mile away, and many
21 families are not familiar with the area.
22 The condition, the age of the building is
23 a concern. The building is not equipped
24 to handle the special need population.
25 Kinsey is supposed to be a short-term

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 solution, but we all know once we get in
3 there, if there's not a concrete plan,
4 we're going to stay.

5 Therefore, we have proposed a
6 couple of different options, and I will
7 say we have testified now at the SRC, the
8 School District, and we have had some
9 conversations, but today is about asking
10 you guys to support funding of the Hill
11 Freedman for a high school, because it
12 was approved.

13 Again, President Clarke, you
14 had talked about how residents leave
15 certain communities without plans. Well,
16 we realized that one of the reasons a lot
17 of citizens move out of the City is
18 because they want to go to the suburbs.
19 Well, if we have another high-performing
20 school, such as Hill Freedman World
21 Academy, which is an international
22 baccalaureate, which will also be a
23 special admit, but also they will bring
24 in the students locally from here. So
25 not only will the students from West Oak

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Lane Charter, AB Day, as well as some of
3 the other students who cannot get into
4 the Centrals and the Girls' High and the
5 Mastermans, this is a way for us to keep
6 our students here and bring families back
7 into this community.

8 So I ask that you have some
9 conversations with us about additional
10 funding to support a public school, and I
11 think it will be a great investment, not
12 only for the community but for the state
13 but also for the students that do attend
14 there.

15 So I thank you, and I'm
16 available. And I would like to send
17 these notes to someone as well since
18 they're electronic.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 We'll make sure that they're incorporated
21 in the testimony.

22 MR. PITTMAN: Who do I send
23 that to?

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You
25 can send it to -- what's the website

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 for --

3 MS. LEWIS: I'll give you the

4 website afterward. It's

5 budgethearings@phila.gov.

6 Budgethearings, H-E-A-R-I-N-G-S,

7 @phila.gov.

8 MR. PITTMAN: Thank you.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

13 Mr. President?

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm

15 sorry. Councilwoman Bass has a question.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just

17 wanted to thank you for bringing

18 attention to Hill Freedman and the

19 struggle that's been going on for the

20 last two, three years now. This, as you

21 mentioned, is a high-performing middle

22 school. They do a great job, and we have

23 been in contact with the District

24 continuously, myself and also State

25 Representative Steve Kinsey, who

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 represents Hill Freedman, about their
3 interest in moving it out of the
4 neighborhood when there are other options
5 that are very nearby.

6 And so we're going to continue
7 to press them on this, and we want to try
8 to find a space that can accommodate Hill
9 Freedman and is going to be of minimal
10 disruption to the families, to the
11 parents, to the students, and to the
12 community, and we think we can work that
13 out. So we're going to continue to keep
14 pressing.

15 MR. PITTMAN: Thank you. I
16 would also say that we proposed three
17 different options. We've also proposed
18 an opportunity based off of some
19 conversations with State Rep Kinsey in
20 regards to bringing some additional
21 dollars into the School District, but it
22 is a different type of plan, but, again,
23 we think that it is a viable one. And we
24 think that when we're looking at the
25 School District and the type of stress

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 that they're under, we should be able to
3 have this conversation and try to figure
4 out a good way to make this happen versus
5 just saying it can't happen, because
6 right now the Kinsey Elementary School
7 option is really just a horrible option.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I agree.

9 MR. PITTMAN: I don't care how
10 you look at it. It's horrible.

11 So I thank you for your time.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 Thank you.

16 MS. LEWIS: The next set of
17 speakers are Teri either Yayo or Yago and
18 Reverend Chester Williams.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 That's it?

21 MS. LEWIS: Yes, sir.

22 (Witnesses approached witness
23 table.)

24 MS. YAGO-RYAN: Good evening.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 evening.

3 MS. YAGO-RYAN: It's Teri
4 Yago-Ryan. And President Clarke and
5 Councilpersons, thank you for giving me
6 the opportunity to come and talk with you
7 this evening. I'm the Executive Director
8 of Big Picture Alliance. We're a media
9 arts education organization and youth
10 development organization. We've been
11 around 20 years.

12 I want to also give my thanks
13 to Councilwoman Bass. We are based in
14 the 8th District, but we serve all of
15 your districts. We have collaborative
16 partnerships with Taller Puertorriqueno
17 and Nueva Esperanza in the summer where
18 we bring youth together from all sections
19 of the City, all of your districts, to
20 come together for an engaging six weeks
21 to engage in filmmaking.

22 I want to also apologize,
23 because I only heard about this probably
24 about an hour ago and came straight from
25 a staff meeting after having been at New

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 Media Technology Charter this afternoon
3 where we were holding a big pitch
4 session. The youth there have come to
5 our after-school program and they're
6 getting ready to work on their group
7 projects, and I bring professionals in
8 from the industry and they built 21st
9 century presentation skills just like I'm
10 doing right now where they're pitching a
11 project. So I apologize. I want to work
12 from some notes that I put together
13 quickly.

14 We began our work as a youth
15 violence prevention program and we've
16 grown to address not just that, but the
17 achievement gap and the dropout rate.
18 Our concentration are the youth in all of
19 your Council districts. Your youth are
20 our students. We serve to engage.

21 We educate youth through the
22 collaborative process of filmmaking.
23 Oftentimes when we culminate our programs
24 and I stand up and talk to the parents
25 and say, How many of you would have

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 preferred to have made a film instead of
3 write a book report when you were in
4 school, and all of the hands go up, it's
5 a powerful experience. It's something
6 that's sometimes hard to wrap your head
7 around unless you're with us in the
8 rooms, in the spaces, at a Germantown
9 open screening that was part of the
10 community-wide film -- Friday films and
11 things like that where we were screening
12 some student work there. But it's
13 powerful.

14 None of this would be possible
15 for our arts organization without the
16 support of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund
17 that provides organizations, small
18 organizations like ours -- we're not big.
19 We're lean and mean, but we're mighty in
20 terms of the gains that these youth make.
21 And it wouldn't be possible.

22 And so what I'm talking about
23 tonight, which you've already heard
24 about, is a request to really think
25 carefully and considerably about the full

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 restoration of that 3.2 and what it
3 means, because what it means is restoring
4 the youth arts after-school program
5 grants, where the school districts are
6 falling short. We know that they're
7 challenged and we know they're doing
8 their best, but we also know that there
9 are impediments there and it's going to
10 take some time for that change. We're
11 making the change. We're on the ground
12 making the change. We've recalibrated
13 our curriculum and connected it to common
14 corporate English language arts, and last
15 year I can proudly report to you that
16 youth were eligible for accruing credit
17 toward daytime English because of the
18 out-of-school program, the after-school
19 program that we provided at Parkway
20 Northwest Peace and Social Justice High
21 School, at Lincoln High School. We've
22 been at Dobbins for years and years.

23 This 21st century skill of
24 communication and media and technology,
25 we all know it's right here and it's

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 present in our lives, and it's critical
3 that youth have these skills moving ahead
4 in their lives. And what we hear from
5 them is how powerful that experience is
6 for them. Yes, it keeps them off the
7 streets. Yes, they're engaged. The
8 attendance rates are huge at the end of
9 the program just as they are at the
10 beginning. Where many other programs may
11 fall short and see that dive and that
12 dip, those students come and ask to come
13 to our programs on professional
14 development days when the schools are
15 closing early. So we know something is
16 happening there.

17 The increase will support our
18 programs. They will support the other
19 programs. I know Representative Parker
20 has been at one of our community-wide
21 screenings at PCAPS a few years ago so
22 she could see it, she could understand
23 it. She heard the parents saying, When
24 are you coming back? That's the critical
25 piece for small non-profit arts

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 organizations like ours around the City,
3 and you know it. I know that you know
4 it, and we appreciate the support that
5 you give to us.

6 We're relying on foundation
7 support, that mix between foundation,
8 individual giving. But it's really
9 important if the Cultural Fund can have
10 that youth arts piece back in the budget,
11 then we're going to be there. Regardless
12 of what other budget cuts exist, we're
13 going to be able to be there and make a
14 difference in the lives of youth across
15 all of your Council districts.

16 What I want to also share is as
17 important, and that's really around the
18 impact that we have with youth in these
19 districts. We're in conversations to
20 also come into the rec centers in a much
21 more powerful way than we have in the
22 past. That's more a vision of mind, but
23 I think it's shared with other members
24 who I've met and am continuing to meet at
25 the City level, because that's a vision.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 It's another way to engage our youth.
3 They'll come and play basketball, but I'd
4 love to see them also be able to come
5 upstairs and edit and work on films if
6 they'd like to do that.

7 So this is beyond our schools,
8 our charter schools that we serve,
9 community arts organizations we serve,
10 behavioral health organizations like the
11 Bridge Therapeutic Center at Fox Chase,
12 drug and alcohol rehabilitation centers,
13 Salvation Army in West Philadelphia.
14 We're everywhere K through 12, also that
15 older out-of-school youth through age 25
16 that need to complete their GEDs and they
17 also need to build these kind of
18 vocational opportunities for youth.

19 What I can also share with you
20 and congratulate you with is that many
21 youth from all of your districts are
22 probably the first in the United States
23 to have worked on a feature film, and I
24 will be sending you invites, like I
25 always do for all our screenings, when we

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 screen this feature film. It's just been
3 released this year.

4 But these are important moments
5 and important opportunities to not
6 overlook, and so I thank you for
7 considering the full restoration for the
8 Philadelphia Cultural Fund for the \$3.2
9 million.

10 Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
12 much for your testimony.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Pastor.

15 REVEREND WILLIAMS: Good
16 evening, everyone. I'm Reverend Chester
17 Williams, President and founder of the
18 Chew and Belfield Neighborhood Club since
19 1981. We are an organization that
20 believes in the community in a unique
21 way. We don't just speak about it.
22 We're doers.

23 If you know anything about us,
24 we wanted to clean Chew Avenue,
25 Washington Lane, the whole 59th Ward,

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 10th Division, and we're free. We are
3 based and built upon volunteer programs.

4 I'd like to say also we're the
5 ones that cleaned up the Water Works when
6 they first started. We're the volunteers
7 that came down and cleaned up before they
8 planted flowers. We go wherever we're
9 needed to help people show that cleaning
10 is the next thing to Godliness.

11 We found out with proof that if
12 you clean where you at, it stops crime.
13 It cuts it down. We give tips and tell
14 people how to brighten up their area
15 where they live at.

16 We want to say thank you for
17 Councilwoman Cindy Bass. She knows
18 that -- she's all that, because we really
19 thank God that she's with us. And I'm
20 saying this to the whole body.

21 The Chew and Belfield needs
22 more funds. I mean, we need it in more
23 ways than you think. Now, on top of
24 that, we have been truly blessed by God's
25 gift. Green Tree School brought into our

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 community after much prayer and struggle
3 and with them to be a face and they
4 actually open. Also, we prayed and
5 worked with Wissahickon Charter, which
6 broke the grounds and building a brand
7 new school there. We also worked with
8 Bottom Dollar Food Store at Washington
9 Lane and Chew, and God has blessed that
10 to come into reality.

11 Out of all that God has blessed
12 to do is brighten up our community and
13 make people realize that we do exist in
14 that community. But we need something
15 from the City that many people here are
16 not speaking about. We have a lot of
17 senior citizens in our neighborhood.
18 We've been asking for the -- I guess you
19 call them potbelly trash cans. We have
20 the XH. We have the 8 -- the XH, the 18,
21 and the train station stops right in our
22 area. We need benches on those corners
23 for our elderly to sit, and we need the
24 potbelly trash can to help keep our
25 community clean.

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2 Why do I ask you for something
3 basic? Because this is something you
4 already say you got.

5 Wherever it's going, come off
6 of Germantown Avenue for a while. Come
7 into the grassroot neighborhood where
8 we're out there. We have movie nights.
9 We have block festivals. We're planning
10 another one this year. And most of you
11 know that we are doers, but we can't do
12 it ourself. In all these years, we have
13 never asked the City for anything. We
14 did it all by ourself with \$12 dues and
15 the faithful volunteers.

16 We have a free math tutoring
17 class at the Coleman Library from 10:00
18 a.m. to 12:00 noon, from ages 7 years old
19 to 99 are welcome, and we have every age.
20 People come from Montgomery County, drive
21 all the way there to come to our math
22 tutoring class. Our children have got
23 the highest SAT score by coming to our
24 math tutoring class.

25 We have a volunteer program

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 that works during the summer usually
3 twice a week or once a week, every
4 Wednesday, and we clean up everything you
5 holler for. Churches that need lots
6 cleaned up where the church is at, we do
7 that. And we train our volunteers how to
8 operate this equipment in a safe manner,
9 how to dress for it, and also how to be
10 able to be proud of what they're learning
11 that they can take it back to their
12 neighborhood and help clean the
13 neighborhood, not just in our area but in
14 their area as well.

15 So I say this very quick. It
16 is good to hear the charter schools got a
17 point, to have parents must participate.
18 I wish that law was in the School Board
19 for the public schools. That's what's
20 making parents not having a voice.
21 They're not demanding that they have to
22 have a part of their children's education
23 in the School Board. And I even checked
24 on that. They said normally that's not a
25 part of the rules.

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2 I said, Well, why isn't it? If
3 the charter schools can have it in
4 theirs, why can't we make the parents in
5 public schools say you must participate
6 in your children's activity by being to
7 the meeting, come to the school.

8 These children that's doing the
9 research, these children know their
10 parents' schedules better than they do,
11 and that's how they act up.

12 I raised two boys by the grace
13 of God and myself and three nieces when
14 my sister passed. All of them graduated
15 from public schools. All of them went to
16 college. All got degrees and got full
17 scholarships, only by the grace of God.

18 So I'm saying to you, help
19 these parents in the public schools so
20 they can have a rule that say you must
21 participate in your children's growth,
22 and then they'll feel proud like they got
23 a part to do in the School Board.

24 Thank you.

25 (Applause.)

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Thank you so much for your testimony.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Nice to

6 see you again.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm

8 sorry. The Chair recognizes Councilwoman

9 Bass. I think she had a statement.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

11 I just wanted to follow up on
12 Reverend Chester Williams in terms of
13 some of the things you'd like to see on
14 the Avenue, the benches and the Big Belly
15 trash cans. I'd be happy to sit down and
16 talk to you and figure out how we can get
17 some of those things out there.

18 But I also wanted to recognize
19 you, because a lot of people don't know
20 and you don't talk about that you have
21 been instrumental up and down Chew Avenue
22 in terms of the cleanups. On any given
23 Saturday, if folks are out there and they
24 drive by, they'll see you and a team of
25 volunteers cleaning up, picking up,

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 mowing, just doing it. And so I wanted
3 to thank you.

4 And beyond that, there was a
5 situation which you don't talk about
6 where there was a very disturbing
7 situation where a parent attacked a baby,
8 a small child. And I won't go into the
9 details, but it was very, very
10 disturbing, and you snatched the baby up
11 and drove to Einstein and saved the
12 baby's life. And so --

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So I just
15 wanted to -- whenever I get a chance to
16 say thank you for all that you do, I want
17 to say that. So thank you for everything
18 that you do. And you do a lot, and you
19 spend your own money, and I know this.
20 And so we're going to be helpful to you.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

23 Thank you, Councilwoman.

24 Thank you so much for your
25 testimony and your good work.

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.

2 Ms. Lewis, do you have any
3 other names on the witness list?

4 MS. LEWIS: Council President,
5 there are no more witnesses on the list.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
7 There being none, I would like to thank
8 you all very much for your testimony and
9 your willingness to participate in your
10 government. We really appreciate you
11 coming out tonight in this inclement
12 weather, and please be safe going home.

13 Councilwoman, did you have
14 anything you want to say?

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I just
16 want to thank everyone for coming out in
17 this weather. It means that you are
18 really committed to your community and to
19 the institutions you represent, and we
20 appreciate that we were not talking to
21 the bleachers. And we enjoyed the
22 testimony, because we learned a lot of
23 information that we may not have as we
24 deliberate the budget. And certainly we
25 are looking forward to hear those who

1 4/30/14 - WHOLE - BILL 130489, etc.
2 came to discuss the School Board issues,
3 School District issues to come, and we
4 will be there when you have the testimony
5 next week.

6 Thank you all so much, and I
7 want to thank everybody for coming out.
8 Thank you.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The
10 Chair recognizes Councilwoman Bass, the
11 other co-sponsor.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just want
13 to say what Councilwoman Tasco said,
14 ditto. Thank you, everybody, for coming.
15 Thank you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: This
17 concludes the neighborhood budget hearing
18 for this evening. The Committee will
19 stand in recess until Monday, May 5th,
20 2014 at 10:00 a.m. in Room 400.

21 Thank you all so much.

22 (Committee of the Whole
23 concluded at 8:15 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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