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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON
PARKS, RECREATION and CULTURAL AFFAIRS

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- - -
Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Thursday, May 10, 2007, 2:16 p.m.
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Bill 070229 - Amending Chapter 9-200 of the
Philadelphia Code entitled "Commercial
Activities on Streets," by adding a new
section providing for the certification of
tour guides and establishing requirements for
such certification.

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COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

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Blondell Reynolds-Brown, Chair
W. Wilson Goode, Jr., Vice Chair
Darrell L. Clarke
Frank DiCicco
Frank Rizzo

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of the Preservation of Landmarks

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2 THE CLERK: The Committee on
3 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs
4 has been recessed until 2:00 today this
5 afternoon.

6 Thank you.

7 * * *

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

9 Good afternoon. This is the City
10 Council on Parks, Recreation and
11 Cultural Affairs is now in session, and
12 I would like the clerk to please read
13 the title of the bill.

14 THE CLERK: Bill No. 070229,
15 an ordinance amending Chapter 9-200 of
16 the Philadelphia Code, entitled
17 "Commercial Activities on Streets," by
18 adding a new section providing for the
19 certification of tour guides,
20 establishing requirements for such
21 certification, and providing for
22 penalties, all under certain terms and
23 conditions.

24 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

25 Thank you.

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2 Joining us at this committee
3 meeting are Vice Chair Councilman
4 W. Wilson Goode and members Councilman
5 Frank DiCicco and Councilman Darrell
6 Clarke.

7 We would now like to call up
8 the first panel of witnesses. And
9 shall we ask the Administration to
10 start first? Not here? Very well
11 then. They submitted testimony.

12 Then please let us invite to
13 the witness table:

14 Ron Avery, a local tour guide
15 and historian and actually the trigger
16 and seed for this bill. And we thank
17 you for this, Mr. Avery.

18 Amy Needle, President and CEO
19 of Historic Philadelphia, Inc.

20 Victoria Schwartz, President,
21 Washington Guild of Professional Tour
22 Guides.

23 And Paula Spilner, Director
24 for the Philadelphia Society of the
25 Preservation of Landmarks.

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2 (Witnesses come forward.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

4 You're all welcome to have a seat.

5 Also joining us this afternoon

6 is Councilman Frank Rizzo.

7 We want to indeed welcome all

8 of you here. I will say to you that

9 this is a circumstance that was brought

10 to my attention by Mr. Avery, and then

11 I actually took a tour with my daughter

12 to see if such circumstances exist, and

13 the answer would be yes.

14 So we've now moved to this

15 forum, where we get a chance to have

16 input from citizens of all types and

17 from all parts of the world as we

18 proceed with action on this piece of

19 legislation.

20 With that, we will start with

21 Mr. Avery, a local tour guide and

22 historian. Good afternoon.

23 MR. AVERY: Thank you very

24 much. I have some brief written

25 remarks.

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2 And I made a list of 78
3 mistakes that I've heard over the years
4 by various tour guides, and I hope
5 photocopies were given to the members
6 of the panel. Do you have those?

7 THE CLERK: They're in the
8 folder.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
10 They're. Yes, they are. We thank you.

11 MR. AVERY: Okay. All right.
12 I want you folks to imagine a
13 university English professor at a large
14 university who tells his class that
15 William Shakespeare was a Russian poet
16 and never heard of Earnest Hemingway.
17 Now, of course this is impossible
18 because to be a university tenured
19 professor, you must study and have a
20 bachelor's, a master's, and a
21 doctorate.

22 Imagine going to a physician
23 and telling that physician you have
24 migraine headaches, and his cure is to
25 cut off your left foot. Of course,

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2 that can never happen because to become
3 a physician, it's five, six years of
4 medical school and internship and so
5 forth.

6 Try to imagine a volunteer
7 guide at the Philadelphia Museum of Art
8 pointing to a Rembrandt painting and
9 telling visitors it's a work of Jackson
10 Pollack. This just can't happen
11 because to be an unpaid volunteer guide
12 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, you
13 go through one-and-a-half to two years
14 of training before you do your first
15 tour.

16 Now try to imagine a
17 Philadelphia guide, like a carriage
18 driver or a trolley guide, for
19 instance, that tells tourists that
20 Jacqueline Kennedy spent much of her
21 childhood in a house on Third Street in
22 Society Hill; that Dr. Benjamin Rush,
23 signer of the Declaration of
24 Independence, killed George Washington.
25 Imagine a guy that has no idea what the

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2 population of Philadelphia is, a guide
3 that tells you that Ben Franklin
4 fathered 80 legitimate children and
5 weighed 300 pounds when he died of
6 syphilis.

7 It's not hard to imagine these
8 things; I've heard them all. And it's
9 been going on for years.

10 I said, how can we ever
11 improve this situation? And I finally
12 came to the conclusion that
13 voluntarily, nothing will ever change,
14 that we'd have to get government
15 involved. I'm very sorry to say that.
16 And if there's another way to do it, I
17 think I would support that. But I
18 think people must be compelled to learn
19 the facts and to be tested and to be
20 licensed.

21 And I would like to keep this
22 as low as possible. I gave a tour
23 yesterday. I think I make for the
24 entire year with my tours maybe \$1200
25 to \$1400 a year. It's not a big deal;

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2 it's a part-time thing for most of us.

3 And my proposal for this, and
4 I'll shut up in a minute.

5 Let's create a booklet with a
6 facts sheet. I already have most of
7 this on my computer already, and I'd be
8 willing to do this free of charge and
9 involve all -- for instance, ten facts
10 on Carpenters Hall, and I go to the
11 Carpenters Hall people and I say, "Look
12 at my ten facts; are they wrong? do you
13 want to add anything? do you want to
14 subtract anything?"

15 Whatever the number of facts
16 is on the Rodin Museum and the Art
17 Museum, and I'll go to those people and
18 say, "What do you think we should add
19 or subtract?"

20 The booklet could probably be
21 done by Kinko's. It could be given to
22 everybody who wants to become a guide
23 in the city. Every question on the
24 test will be answered there, plus they
25 could use that if they want in their

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2 own tours and know that they have
3 correct facts.

4 And give a test -- no trick
5 questions.

6 You know, I just can't imagine
7 that -- whenever I give adults tours,
8 50 percent of the time, someone says to
9 me, "What's the population of
10 Philadelphia?" I've been asking this
11 to guides a lot. They don't know; the
12 most basic fact they don't know.

13 For instance, Howell House is
14 a very worthwhile place to visit, and
15 I'm a volunteer guide there. And I'm
16 sitting out front one day, and a
17 carriage driver goes by and he says
18 some ridiculous stuff about the Howell
19 House and then he says, "If you want to
20 visit here, you could get tickets at
21 the church down the street."

22 What is this man talking
23 about? You ring the bell, you pay \$5,
24 and you take the tour. What church?
25 And all day long, I heard this guy

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2 saying this. I couldn't run out and
3 correct him with the people sitting in
4 the carriage.

5 These are things you should
6 know. What day is the Art Museum
7 closed? I heard the Art Museum's a
8 great place to visit; well, how do I
9 get there and are they open every day?
10 Imagine a guide that couldn't answer
11 that question.

12 So this is what I'm proposing.

13 And one last thing. In
14 addition to studying this booklet, I
15 would propose free voluntary classes
16 for guides, and I would be glad to
17 teach 'em. I've met other guides that
18 have been around for 20 years that
19 would be glad to teach free.

20 And I talked just by accident
21 to two people with doctorate degrees in
22 history, and I said, "Would you give an
23 hour of your time free to talk to
24 Philadelphia guides?" and they said
25 yes.

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2 So I thank you for your time.

3 And if I have to run, it's because I

4 have to go to your doctor's at 3:00.

5 Go ahead.

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

7 We thank you for your testimony,

8 Mr. Avery.

9 Mr. Rizzo.

10 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you,

11 Madam Chair.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

13 You're welcome.

14 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I walked
15 out without my notes, and I had a note,
16 and the question I want to -- I hope I
17 can get it right -- is, have we
18 absolutely defined what a tour guide
19 is? Because there are so many people
20 dispensing information.

21 I see the person driving the
22 bus, the double decker bus. The driver
23 in some cases is also presenting the
24 information. And, you know, I've
25 noticed it a couple times and I thought

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2 that the looseness of the presentation,
3 making fun of some of our art work,
4 didn't particularly -- didn't
5 particularly sell well with me, what I
6 was hearing.

7 But do we absolutely know who
8 we're asking to draw into this? And it
9 would be a shame to draw in the people
10 that we don't have a problem with and
11 miss the ones that we do have a problem
12 with.

13 MR. AVERY: Well, there's a
14 definition in the bill introduced by
15 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds, and if
16 she wants to tell you -- if not, I
17 could just say it's that you've got to
18 be on the public streets of
19 Philadelphia, not in a building -- like
20 a carriage driver, like a walking-tour
21 person.

22 And you got to, according to
23 bill, the way I read it, you have to be
24 compensated.

25 So that's the definition.

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2 You're on the public streets,
3 you're giving a tour to a group for
4 compensation.

5 I'll stand corrected if I'm...

6 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, the
7 volunteers at the Art Museum, then,
8 would not fall into that.

9 MR. AVERY: No, absolutely
10 not.

11 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And can
12 tell you, I went on a tour with one of
13 the guides over at the Art Museum. I
14 was so impressed. I learned more in
15 that two-hour tour of one of the -- I
16 forget which event it was, but it
17 was -- it was the best time I ever had
18 at the Art Museum because I really
19 understood what I was looking at rather
20 than trying to figure it out myself.

21 But I just thought maybe the
22 sponsor can describe exactly who we are
23 pulling into this. And are we missing
24 anybody that we need to include?

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

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2 Well, I thank you. That is some
3 clarity to the definition.

4 Those arts and cultural
5 institutions who have staff purely for
6 that particular institution are not
7 considered in our definition of a tour
8 guide.

9 It is those who are setting
10 tours around Old Philadelphia,
11 Manayunk, Fairmount Park who we believe
12 should have a fluent, informed,
13 accurate, current knowledge of the
14 various historical stops in the City of
15 Philadelphia.

16 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So the
17 Preservation Trust that takes care of
18 the older historic homes in Fairmount
19 Park would not be included in that,
20 then, 'cause they don't get
21 compensation.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
23 They do not receive compensation;
24 that's correct.

25 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you.

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2 Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

4 You're welcome.

5 Please, Councilman Frank

6 DiCicco.

7 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank

8 you, Madam Chair.

9 Good afternoon, everyone.

10 Mr. Avery, are you the one who

11 did the WHYY tour? I recognize you?

12 MR. AVERY: Actually, it's not

13 on WHYY; it's on your channel, Channel

14 64.

15 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: 64, I'm

16 sorry, 64.

17 Very well done, by the way.

18 MR. AVERY: Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: And

20 either to you or to the other panelists

21 and maybe even to the chairperson: How

22 do other cities handle this? What is

23 it that they do, if they're doing

24 anything differently than what we do?

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

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2 Well, let me start with London just by
3 way of an example.

4 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Do we get
5 to do a trip?

6 (Laughter.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

8 In London, taxicab drivers are required
9 to undertake a course that includes an
10 in-depth study of London street routes
11 and places of interest.

12 The average preparation time
13 is 34 months. We're not suggesting
14 that; this is purely an example. And
15 if they don't pass the very tough exam,
16 they then cannot get a taxicab license.

17 So that's just one example of
18 what the city of London done.

19 Might any of you have an
20 example of what other cities are doing
21 that have been going through this
22 process like Williamsburg, Virginia, or
23 Charleston, South Carolina.

24 MS. NEEDLE: I know that
25 Savannah, Georgia has --

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2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

3 Please identify yourself.

4 MS. NEEDLE: Oh, I'm sorry.

5 I'm Amy Needle, President and CEO of
6 Historic Philadelphia.

7 And I know that Savannah,
8 Georgia, has an extensive training
9 because they have tour guides around in
10 their historic area, and I know that
11 have an extensive training procedure as
12 well as a test.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

14 So we're using -- and we'll be happy to
15 -- would you like to add to the
16 testimony? Please welcome and come
17 forward.

18 (Witness comes forward.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

20 Identify yourself, please.

21 MS. BROWNE: My name is Liz
22 Browne, and I have been a tour guide in
23 Philadelphia since 1960, and I worked
24 for a while as a consultant to start
25 Historic Philadelphia, Incorporated,

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2 and tried to develop -- wanted very
3 much to develop such a program for that
4 organization and did some research into
5 what other cities do.

6 And I have some information
7 that I brought with me that I'd be
8 happy to share with you.

9 But for instance -- well, I
10 don't think I wrote it down, but I have
11 a lot of information, including the
12 legislation from the city of
13 Charleston, South Carolina.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
15 Great.

16 MS. BROWNE: And some
17 information from New York City.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
19 Excellent. And this will be a part of
20 your testimony that you wrote?

21 MS. BROWNE: Yes.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
23 Okay.

24 MS. BROWNE: And from
25 Washington, D.C. and a little

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2 information from Hawaii even.

3 And I can also tell you that
4 in Paris, where I lived for a while,
5 they have a college-level courses that
6 all guides are required to take,
7 lasting two to three years. So they
8 are very, very well prepared, yeah.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

10 Okay.

11 Councilman DiCicco, is that
12 helpful?

13 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: (Nods
14 head.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

16 Thank you very, very much.

17 Okay, please.

18 MS. NEEDLE: Good afternoon.

19 I appreciate the members of the
20 committee allowing me to testify. My
21 name is Amy Needle, and I am President
22 and CEO of Historic Philadelphia and
23 Once Upon a Nation, and I am here today
24 to express our support for Bill No.
25 070229.

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2 Historic Philadelphia is a
3 nonprofit organization that produces
4 and runs programs, tours, storytelling,
5 and performances seasonally in the
6 historic area. HPI employs over 80
7 actors and storytellers each season.
8 We run eight historically-accurate
9 tours and thirteen storytelling
10 benches, with each storyteller telling
11 approximately five stories for 101 days
12 throughout the summer.

13 Everything that we do has been
14 thoroughly researched by historians and
15 vetted through the experts at our
16 historic sites and partners at the
17 National Park Service.

18 Three years ago, with the
19 start of Once Upon a Nation, our
20 storytelling and tour component, we
21 created a school for the actors and the
22 storytellers to attend called the
23 Benstitute. It is a three-week
24 intensive training session, complete
25 with a final exam and a graduation, and

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2 it employs historians from Penn,
3 Temple, Villanova, St. Joe's, Haverford
4 College, and storytelling
5 professionals, experts in acting, vocal
6 technique, communication skills, and
7 visitors service.

8 We have received very positive
9 feedback from both the media and those
10 visitors who've experienced our
11 programming.

12 As an example, in June of
13 2005, Philadelphia City Paper rated all
14 of the Philadelphia-area tours on
15 entertainment and factual accuracy.
16 Our Benstitute-trained actors and
17 storytellers received an 8 out of 10
18 for entertainment, and we were the only
19 tour program to receive a 10 out of 10
20 on factual accuracy.

21 Clearly, we love what do, and
22 we take our role in contributing to the
23 overall success of Philadelphia's
24 tourism industry very seriously. And
25 we would like to thank Councilwoman

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2 Reynolds-Brown for recognizing the
3 importance of this issue and for her
4 leadership.

5 It is time to begin the public
6 process to ensure that Philadelphia's
7 visitors leave with not only a sense of
8 satisfaction and a strong desire to
9 return, but with the secure knowledge
10 that what they've heard and learned
11 while in historic Philadelphia was
12 historically accurate and authentic.

13 I would like to again thank the
14 Councilwoman and her staff for their
15 combined efforts and the opportunity to
16 be here to show our support for
17 initiative that will bring the highest
18 level of quality and experience to our
19 visitors in historic Philadelphia.

20 I would also like to add that
21 our Benstitute is currently happening as
22 we speak, and I want to invite any
23 number of Council and the committee to
24 attend the Benstitute. Our graduation
25 is on May 24th.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

3 We thank you for that invitation.

4 Councilman Frank Rizzo?

5 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: In this
6 process, is there an audit process
7 where you send people that critique the
8 presentation for any flaws?

9 MS. NEEDLE: Yes. Part of
10 what we learned is that it's not just
11 -- it's -- I should say there's sort of
12 two parts.

13 One is, before any storyteller
14 or tour hits the street, we have
15 researched the story or the tour and
16 had it, you know, sort of taken through
17 the process of National Park Service
18 historians so that before it even hits
19 the streets, we know that it's accurate
20 of.

21 But what we've also learned is
22 over the course of the summer, the
23 storytellers and actors and people that
24 are on the streets need to be audited.
25 And so we do have people that we call,

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2 you know, "secret shoppers," who will
3 stop in and make sure -- people on our
4 staff who will make sure that the story
5 hasn't changed from day 1 to day 101,
6 because it's hot out, and we want to
7 make sure that people continue to tell
8 the right story.

9 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

11 Thank you very much of.

12 Please provide the additional
13 details for May 24th to my staff.

14 Please state your name for the
15 record.

16 MS. SPILNER: My name is Paula
17 Spilner. I represent the Philadelphia
18 Society for the Preservation of
19 Landmarks, nonprofit organization
20 dedicated to historic preservation and
21 public education.

22 Specifically I am here in my
23 role as director of landmarks tours, a
24 program of guided architecture walking
25 tours in Philadelphia and the region.

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2 In addition, I have been a volunteer
3 guide in this program for 16 years. I
4 can hardly believe it.

5 The mission of the landmarks
6 tours programs is to interpret the
7 past, present, and future of the
8 Philadelphia region as expressed
9 through its architecture, urban design,
10 and social history.

11 We now offer more than 50
12 different tours of Philadelphia, from
13 Center City to neighborhoods like
14 Tacony, Frankford, Spruce Hill, to name
15 a few, that are not typically visited
16 by tourists. And I brought some of our
17 current -- a brochure of our current
18 scheduled tours if you're interested.

19 Tours are open to the public
20 for a nominal fee and are offered
21 weekly from May to December.

22 In the 20 years that we have
23 been presenting tours, we have welcomed
24 tens of thousands of visitors drawn not
25 only from the region but from around

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2 the country as well as from around the
3 world. We consider ourselves to be not
4 only educators but good will
5 ambassadors for the City of
6 Philadelphia, sharing not only our
7 knowledge but our enthusiasm for this
8 unique and precious place.

9 All of our guides, currently
10 about 60, are volunteers. But they
11 take their mission and their
12 responsibility to the public very
13 seriously. We pride ourselves on
14 communicating well-researched,
15 accurate, and reliable information.

16 To maintain this high level of
17 quality, all prospective guides are
18 required to attend a 12-week course of
19 lectures, 24 hours of lectures. I have
20 the curriculum for the lecture series
21 that concluded about two weeks ago.
22 Ph.D.'s from Drexel, West Chester
23 University, Bryn Mawr College,
24 architects and professional and design
25 professionals.

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2 By the way, all prospective
3 guides pay out of their own pockets for
4 this course, and they also attend
5 additional practical training workshops
6 in addition to the course.

7 I am not suggesting that all
8 tour guides in the City of Philadelphia
9 need the kind of extensive training
10 that we offer. I do, however, want to
11 call your attention to the wealth of
12 resources in our own organization as
13 well as in other city libraries, tour
14 operators, and so forth, as well as
15 individuals like Ron Avery.

16 This wealth of resources
17 should make it imminently feasible to
18 provide at least basic information and
19 training to all who, in effect,
20 represent the City of Philadelphia as
21 tour guides.

22 Landmarks -- I speak for
23 Landmarks when I say we'd be happy to
24 contribute whatever expertise, whatever
25 is needed to ensure that visitors

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2 experience our city not only as
3 enjoyable but informative and based on
4 accurate information.

5 I would hope that an
6 opportunity to become a certified
7 Philadelphia tour guide would come to
8 be seen not as an onerous bureaucratic
9 requirement but as a point of pride,
10 indeed a point of honor, among those
11 who represent our city to its many
12 guests.

13 And I thank the Councilwoman
14 for taking this initiative to make sure
15 that all tour guides reach a basic
16 standard of competence and quality.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

19 You're welcome.

20 Any questions, comments from
21 members of Council?

22 (No questions.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

24 Let me underscore two points that have
25 been made by the testifiers.

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2 One. Yes, this is the
3 beginning of a public process, where we
4 are now and what the bill looks like
5 now, we're fairly confident, will be a
6 different, better bill once we've had a
7 chance to gather input from all
8 stakeholders.

9 And we also do not want it to
10 be viewed as an onerous requirement, so
11 hear that so that we're all clear about
12 where we are and where we hope to end
13 up.

14 I thank you all for your
15 important testimony.

16 PANEL: Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

18 Thank you very much.

19 The panel next up: Miss Vicki
20 Sand, the Executive Director of the
21 Atwater Kent Museum.

22 Paul Levy or a representative
23 of the Philadelphia Center City
24 District.

25 Meryl Levitz, or her

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2 representative, for the Greater
3 Philadelphia Tourism Marketing
4 Corporation.

5 And William Moore,
6 Independence Visitors Center
7 Corporation.

8 (Witnesses come forward.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

10 Good afternoon, everyone.

11 MS. SAND: Good afternoon.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

13 Welcome.

14 MS. SAND: Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

16 And we'll start with the leadership at
17 the Philadelphia Atwater Kent Museum,
18 Vicki Sand.

19 MS. SAND: Hello. Thank you
20 very much. I am Vicki Sand, Executive
21 Director of the Atwater Kent Museum,
22 and I am here to present testimony
23 related to the proposal to amend
24 Chapter 9-200 of the Philadelphia Code.

25 First, I want to recognize the

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2 leadership of Councilwoman Blondell
3 Reynolds-Brown for bringing this issue
4 to this public forum and for bringing
5 together many of us who have an
6 investment in providing engaging,
7 satisfying experiences for visitors.

8 To be successful, we believe
9 that a program to professionally-
10 certified tour guides needs to reflect
11 historical integrity and current
12 scholarship. It needs to be based on
13 an understanding of the expectations of
14 visitors, and it needs to be
15 sustainable over time.

16 In addition, a program needs
17 to draw upon the rich historical and
18 cultural resources of Philadelphia,
19 including the Atwater Kent, the
20 Mid-Atlantic Branch of the National
21 Archives, the City Records Department,
22 and the Historical Society of
23 Pennsylvania, among other archives. It
24 also needs to have appropriate
25 financial support.

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2 Success will not only depend
3 upon accurate factual information but
4 also upon the integration of compelling
5 stories selected to illuminate the full
6 300 years of Philadelphia history,
7 including people in eras long
8 neglected.

9 To think of this guide
10 certification process as a simple one
11 of memorizing dates only contributes to
12 the common misperception of history,
13 that "it's just one damn thing after
14 another," to quote Arnold Toynbee.

15 To provide tour guides with
16 opportunities to tell stories with
17 appeal to a broad public audience makes
18 their work more enjoyable and tourists'
19 visits more satisfying.

20 Success will also depend upon
21 creating a process that's sustainable.
22 It will require resources. As with
23 everything successful in Philadelphia,
24 it will require bringing together the
25 communities, many of whom are here

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2 today.

3 What are the expectations of
4 tour promoters? What are the demands
5 and limitations of tour operators and
6 guides? What are the expectations of
7 visitors? How do we integrate
8 stimulating new information and monitor
9 that over time? How do we best deal
10 with turnover have guide staff? Why
11 should business or individual
12 entrepreneurs participate in such a
13 program? which I happen to believe
14 should be volunteer. How will this be
15 added? How will added effort be
16 recognized and promoted by the City and
17 by those who are directing visitors?

18 As the City history museum
19 with a long tradition of successful
20 education programs, the Atwater Kent
21 would be pleased to partner with others
22 to help frame a program that would
23 address these and other issues.

24 We would also be pleased to
25 initiate efforts seeking private

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2 funding to support such an effort that
3 could be matched with potential City
4 commitment.

5 Again, historical integrity is
6 the first step. The ongoing
7 educational commitment with financial
8 support will provide long-term success.

9 Thank you for your
10 consideration. We look forward to
11 working with your office and your staff
12 in advancing this important and
13 significant effort.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
15 We thank you very much for your
16 testimony.

17 Please. Good afternoon.

18 MS. PATTERSON: I'd like to
19 thank Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown and
20 the Committee on Parks, Recreation and
21 Cultural Affairs for inviting us to
22 speak to the committee about the
23 licensing of tour operators. My name
24 is Angela Patterson, and I'm the Vice
25 President of Special Projects at the

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2 Greater Philadelphia Tourism Marketing
3 Corporation, GPTMC. Meryl Levitz,
4 GPTMC's CEO and President, regrets that
5 she cannot be herself today to testify
6 to the committee.

7 In survey after survey
8 conducted by GPTMC, we have confirmed
9 that history is one of the main reasons
10 tourists give for visiting
11 Philadelphia. Our tourists enjoy a
12 wide range of experiences, but it is
13 our history that most often gets them
14 here.

15 In 2006, there were
16 1.8 million visits to the Liberty Bell
17 and 642,000 visits to Independence
18 Hall. One third of our visitors
19 surveyed during the summer of 2006
20 reported that they took a guided tour
21 of some sort during their stay.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
23 They took a what kind of tour?

24 MS. NEEDLE: A guided tour.

25 Together, these historical

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2 experiences and tours define how
3 satisfied people are with their trip to
4 Philadelphia, how likely they are to
5 tell positive stories to others about
6 their trip, and how likely visitors are
7 to return to do something else in
8 Philadelphia or bring others with them
9 the next time.

10 It is, therefore, extremely
11 important that our visitors' experience
12 of historic Philadelphia be excellent
13 one. We also hear from visitors that
14 it's Philadelphia's authenticity which
15 distinguishes our city from other
16 places tourists could choose to visit.

17 From the historic sites that
18 are the real deal not reproductions, to
19 our neighborhoods and unique
20 architecture, visitors are impressed by
21 how real everything in Philadelphia is.

22 Preserving that sense of
23 authenticity is crucial, and that
24 includes what visitors are told by
25 their tour guides. Ensuring that

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2 visitors receive accurate information
3 about our nation, our historic sites,
4 and our neighborhoods is a necessary
5 part of maintaining that authentic
6 experience.

7 If our visitors feel that they
8 have been misled or misinformed, we
9 have damaged the credibility of our
10 destination and its most defining
11 feature -- authentic historical
12 experience.

13 There is now more for visitors
14 to see and do than ever before in the
15 historic district: The National
16 Constitution Center, the new home of
17 the Liberty Bell, the reconstructed
18 Franklin Square, and the about-to-be-
19 completed Independence Mall and
20 Presidents House.

21 We need to ensure that the
22 tour operators who are part of our
23 visitors' experience offer enlightening
24 and accurate information so that
25 visitors have a good experience, are

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2 inclined to return and bring others
3 with them, visitors recognize that
4 Philadelphia is tourist-ready and
5 tourist-friendly with a well-defined
6 program to offer them knowledgeable
7 tour guides, and that Philadelphia's
8 reputation as the place to learn about
9 our nation's history in an authentic
10 setting is maintained.

11 Thank you for opportunity to
12 express our support for a plan to
13 ensure well informed-and well-trained
14 tour operators in the City of
15 Philadelphia. We look forward to
16 working with you on this important
17 initiative.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
19 We thank you for the testimony of
20 GPTMC.

21 Good afternoon, Mr. Moore.

22 MR. MOORE: Good afternoon.

23 How are you.

24 Thank you for the invitation.

25 My name is William Moore, and I'm the

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2 CEO and President of Independence
3 Visitors Center. I'm going to ask my
4 share my testimony with you today.

5 I would like to thank the
6 Committee on Parks, Recreation and
7 Cultural Affairs for affording me the
8 opportunity to speak on behalf of the
9 city's tour industry.

10 But also, I would like to
11 thank you personally, Councilwoman
12 Reynolds-Brown, for introducing an
13 ordinance that recognizes that
14 Philadelphia's economy depends on
15 tourism and acknowledges our civic
16 responsibility as one of the most
17 historically-rich cities in the United
18 States to ensure that visitors receive
19 an exciting, informative, and accurate
20 introduction to our city.

21 The hallmark of any visit to a
22 great historic city is a great tour;
23 and yet, up until this point, neither
24 the tourism industry nor the City has
25 been able to guarantee a great tour,

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2 regardless of which tour operator the
3 visitors choose.

4 While the City certainly has
5 some outstanding tour operators, some
6 of which I'm pleased to see here with
7 us today, extremely knowledgeable tour
8 guides, our ability to (indiscernible)
9 a great tour with credible tour guides
10 is at the crux of our ability to remain
11 a top domestic tourist destination.

12 Some are questioning the
13 importance of this bill and its
14 urgency. Let me try to address some of
15 those concerns.

16 From where I sit, at the
17 Independence Visitors Center -- a
18 facility that just this week, nearly
19 five years old, welcomed its
20 10 millionth visitor -- it's
21 increasingly clear that Philadelphia
22 has truly regained the reputation of a
23 world-class city. People are staying
24 longer, spending more; and according to
25 our surveys, they are reporting that

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2 they're more likely to come back.

3 Tourism has spiked in recent
4 years, leading to an industry boom not
5 experienced since the bicentennial
6 celebration.

7 But our industry, like any
8 other, remains vulnerable, and that
9 means preserving a reputation is
10 critical. Therefore, we should operate
11 under the assumption that each and
12 every unsatisfied visitor -- our
13 customers, if you will -- can
14 potentially tarnish the image of the
15 city; and ultimately, over time, too
16 many unhappy customers can hurt our
17 industry, which, as we all know, is
18 closely connected to the strength of
19 Philadelphia's economy.

20 Certifying tour operators is
21 hardly a new or untested concept. It's
22 my understanding that at least ten
23 other American cities and European
24 cities require the testing and
25 licensing of tour guides and have

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2 required licensing in some cases for
3 decades.

4 It only makes sense that a
5 city like Philadelphia, as visitor-
6 focused as we are, would enact similar
7 provisions as another way to increase
8 visitor satisfaction and enhance the
9 overall experience of our out-of-town
10 guests.

11 As I've already mentioned,
12 Philadelphia has many exceptional tour
13 operators, but it would be naive to
14 think that their reputation is
15 invulnerable also to the poor standing
16 of others. Certification shouldn't
17 hinder their individual businesses;
18 instead, certification will ultimately
19 strengthen their industry together.

20 This bill is a great idea. It
21 can certainly be potentially a remedy
22 for a situation that's important for
23 all of in us the tourism industry as
24 well as for our visitors.

25 I think additional thought and

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2 consideration should be given on the
3 structure of the bill, but I think this
4 bill can present a reasonable solution.
5 We should take a little but of time
6 ironing out the details and take a
7 closer look at the requirements to make
8 sure the bill is effective and can be
9 implemented fairly.

10 This bill means more than just
11 better tours; it means we can better
12 show off everything that is great about
13 our outstanding city, from its
14 unmatched history to its unique
15 culture.

16 And I should add that more
17 satisfied visitors clearly means more
18 dollars spent, and that's usually good
19 for all of us.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

22 Thank you all for your very important
23 testimony.

24 Any members of the committee
25 have additional comments or suggestions

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2 questions?

3 (No questions.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

5 May we all receive copies of your

6 testimony? You have submitted that?

7 MR. MOORE: Yes, ma'am.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

9 Very well. We thank you all very, very
10 much.

11 MR. MOORE: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

13 So all of you have testimony over to my
14 left? The panel that just finished,
15 you all provided your written testimony
16 to the table over here to my left?

17 Please, that would inform us going
18 forward.

19 We welcome our next panel:

20 The chairman of the
21 Constitutional Walking Tour, Jonathon
22 and Leslie Bari.

23 We welcome Philadelphia
24 Trolley Works, Michael Kates.

25 And we welcome the City Hall

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2 Tour Director, Greta Greenberger.

3 Please come forward.

4 (Witnesses come forward.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

6 Good afternoon, everyone.

7 MR. BARRY: Good afternoon.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

9 Please state your name for the record,
10 and you may proceed with your
11 testimony.

12 MR. BARI: Sure. My name is
13 John Bari, Chairman of the
14 Constitutional Walking Tour. Good
15 afternoon, Honorable Councilmen and
16 women. I appear here today along with
17 Leslie Bari, Vice Chairman of the
18 Constitutional Walking Tour.

19 I want to thank Councilwoman
20 Blondell Reynolds-Brown for her efforts
21 to enhance the City's arts and cultural
22 community, and I also want to thank the
23 members of City Council's Committee on
24 Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs
25 for giving us this opportunity to

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2 testify before you today.

3 We know that the issue of
4 tour-guide licensing sincerely concerns
5 many of us. And to that end, we know
6 that there are strong feelings on both
7 sides of this. We respect the views of
8 everyone and we appreciate City
9 Council's attention to this matter.

10 First, we absolutely agree
11 with the importance of Philadelphia's
12 tour guides providing accurate,
13 informative, and engaging tours. And
14 to that end, the Constitutional Walking
15 invests considerable resources to
16 provide what we feel is Philadelphia's
17 best sightseeing experience, hosted by
18 Philadelphia's best-trained tour
19 guides.

20 We would also like to extend a
21 special invitation to City Council to
22 take a field trip and follow in the
23 founding fathers' footsteps with us so
24 that you can see first hand how the
25 Constitutional's tour content is

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2 accurate and comprehensive.

3 That said, we are absolutely
4 opposed to any legislation of the and
5 the current form which licenses tour
6 guides. From a big-picture perspective
7 as business people in the City of
8 Philadelphia as well as residents of
9 Philadelphia, we are troubled by the
10 fact that tour-guide licensing has
11 arguably seemed to have become a
12 fast-track legislative initiative by
13 City Council at a time when the City
14 faces much more daunting and immediate
15 challenges in terms of crime, finances,
16 and schools, as well as even more
17 global opportunities as presented by
18 Center City District's wonderful new
19 five-year strategic plan.

20 I'm joined with our thoughts
21 by pragmatic disagreement, I guess, to
22 this through editorials by David
23 Yadgaroff, Vice President and General
24 Manager of KYW News Radio, who aired
25 his editorial, which stated: "The last

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2 thing Philadelphia needs is another
3 layer of bureaucracy to oversee the
4 process. Leave government out of it."

5 Further, Bernie Dagenais,
6 editor of the Philadelphia Business
7 Journal, published his editorial
8 against this legislation in which he
9 stated: "As long as there are ways at
10 arriving at historic accuracy that have
11 not been tried, creating another law is
12 just another restriction on liberty in
13 a city that is a poster child for
14 freedom. Councilmembers should be the
15 ones to revisit the past if only to be
16 onerous taxes and senseless rules were
17 once grounds for revolution."

18 I'm going to step back for a
19 moment and give you some background on
20 the Constitutional and our content and
21 tour guide training. We employ tour
22 guides on a year-round basis. We
23 operate under very strict self-
24 regulated standards, adhering to
25 detailed script that has been

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2 fact-checked by qualified personnel
3 numerous times.

4 Our content was created
5 through qualified individuals
6 academically and professionally,
7 including historical researchers and
8 interpreters from the National Park
9 Service. Most recently, even Ron Avery
10 read our 7,000-word script and couldn't
11 find an error in our script.

12 Have we ever made mistakes on
13 our tours? Absolutely. We're all
14 people, we all make mistakes. Mistakes
15 will undoubtedly occur again regardless
16 of whether tour guides are licensed or
17 not.

18 The only way to really avoid
19 this would be to have every tour
20 scripted, vetted and recorded verbatim
21 and then played back verbatim to ensure
22 absolute accuracy each and every time.

23 While the Constitutional does
24 offer an award-winning audio tour, we
25 believe that live tour guides, though,

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2 do serve a real purpose and can really
3 bring history alive to visitors.

4 Whether you're a tour guide or
5 whether you're the president of the
6 United States, mistakes will happen no
7 matter how much training, no matter how
8 much regulation, and how much
9 practicing exists.

10 For example, just earlier this
11 week, President Bush welcomed Her
12 Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II to the
13 White House and stated, "You helped our
14 nation celebrate its bicentennial in
15 17 -- uh, 1976." "1776" almost slipped
16 out of the president's mouth, and the
17 crowd on hand erupted in laughter.

18 Unfortunately, though,
19 licensing tour guides in the present
20 shape and the present form as drafted
21 is no laughing matter to those of us
22 who will pay the price for what we
23 believe is this good-intentioned but
24 poorly conceived plan.

25 I want to share with you the

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2 top ten reasons that we feel that
3 Council should vote no to this proposed
4 ordinance as written.

5 We feel that the proposed \$150
6 fee and a weekend worth of training is
7 both excessive and burdensome; and in
8 all likelihood, we as a tour operator
9 would have to subsidize these costs for
10 our tour guides and, accordingly, these
11 will become a tax on our business.

12 We also think that as such,
13 that this will likely increase consumer
14 prices, as tour operators will, in
15 fact, pass this on to consumers.

16 We think as well from research
17 we've done that this will actually
18 deter qualified guides. We employ many
19 people who are Ph.D. students at
20 Temple, law students at Temple, at
21 Penn, and what have you who are very
22 qualified, who just would not want to
23 sit for a weekend at Community College
24 and pay a \$150 fee to do this.

25 A couple of other reasons that

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2 are more specific is that we don't
3 think that this should be
4 revenue-creative or additive to the
5 City of Philadelphia. We think, if
6 anything, it should be revenue-neutral.

7 And according to what we've
8 heard through presentations made at
9 Temple University by the Councilwoman,
10 that \$100 would go to the City's arts
11 and cultural staff out of the \$150 fee.
12 We think that that is wrong.

13 We also think that it has the
14 potential to focus on too narrow of a
15 scope. Councilman Rizzo voiced an
16 interesting point earlier about who
17 would be governed by this. And we feel
18 that just licensing tour guides would
19 actually be too narrow of a scope.

20 We would think, arguably
21 speaking, that it should be all
22 customer-facing or guest-facing
23 employees who are compensated; and in
24 turn, that would include all of those
25 people at the Visitors Center who are

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2 employees of the National Park Service
3 as well as the Independence Visitors
4 Center who greet guests, provide them
5 information on our country's history,
6 on the area's tours, on the wonderful
7 tourist attractions. So we shouldn't
8 cast too small of a net to the extent
9 that as it's written.

10 Just last month, I was
11 standing at the Visitors Center desk
12 and, anecdotally, while this may an
13 isolated incident, I heard a guest go
14 up and ask one of the park service
15 rangers where Antique Row was, and the
16 woman responded, "I know it's around
17 here, but I just can't remember where."

18 Now, again, this is one of
19 those things. This woman's probably
20 very qualified, but if we're going to
21 be licensed guides, so too should the
22 staff.

23 Most importantly, we think
24 that accepting the fact that errors,
25 omissions, and exaggerations will

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2 happen and continue to happen with or
3 without legislation and licensing.

4 Just because someone has a license
5 doesn't mean that they won't err, that
6 they won't exaggerate; in fact, it may
7 give them greater likelihood to do it.

8 Don't think that we're all
9 just against this and say no, no, no.

10 We do have in our written testimony
11 additional points of consideration and
12 some practical solutions that we'd like
13 to share with Council in terms of no
14 legislation and/or modified
15 legislation.

16 We would like to see a common
17 fact sheet, like Mr. Avery spoke to.
18 We believe that self-regulation is
19 something that is actually working
20 quiet well, and you've heard from not
21 only myself about our self-regulation,
22 but you've heard from Amy Needle at
23 Once Upon a Nation, Historic
24 Philadelphia, and their self-regulation
25 seems to be working wonderfully.

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2 You've heard from a woman at
3 Landmarks, and her self-regulation
4 seems to be working wonderfully as
5 well.

6 I'd like you to look at what
7 the market forces here are and to see
8 that there are those that are deeply
9 concerned in this and that accordingly,
10 we should not, in essence, be lumped
11 into a group if there are certain other
12 groups who don't provide as much
13 self-regulation as we do there.

14 We think that we should
15 provide a framework of knowledge that's
16 relevant and timely. For example, our
17 guides don't tour Germantown, but in
18 essence, they might have to learn about
19 the battles in Germantown, and I'm not
20 sure that that's necessarily
21 appropriate if you're a tour guide in
22 Valley Forge or if you're a tour guide
23 in the City of Philadelphia or what
24 have you.

25 I also think, practically

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2 speaking, there are many tour guides
3 that come into the city every day every
4 week with tours from outside of the
5 market, and they're not licensed, nor
6 is there necessarily a way to
7 accurately identify who those people
8 are. So if they're not licensed, then
9 it would be discriminatory, arguably
10 speaking, to just license those that
11 live and/or work in the City of
12 Philadelphia.

13 I really would encourage you
14 to consider viable alternatives to
15 legislation with self-regulation.

16 And you had asked what other
17 cities do. Other cities, including
18 Boston and Chicago, according to the
19 National Federation of Tourist Guides
20 Association self-regulate themselves
21 among tour operators to ensure that
22 factual content is accurate and there
23 is integrity to it.

24 I have provided you with
25 written testimony as well as full

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2 copies of the editors on KYW News Radio
3 the Philadelphia Business Journal, and
4 I thank you for your time.

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

6 And we thank you very, very much for
7 your testimony.

8 Frank Rizzo.

9 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: This is
10 very risky. Antique Row, is it east
11 Pine Street? East Pine? Excuse me?

12 (Laughter.)

13 MR. BARI: Your bus goes
14 there, Mike. Yes, yes.

15 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Okay, good.
16 Phew! I wanted to make sure I knew
17 that.

18 MR. BARI: You can be a tour
19 guide now.

20 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: 12th and
21 Pine, I know.

22 MR. BARI: If only you had
23 been at the Visitors Center that day.

24 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: That's
25 right.

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2 My father was the captain of
3 the police district there; it was the
4 19th Police District at 12th and Pine.
5 And he always used to refer -- I used
6 to remember him referring to that block
7 as Antique Row, so that's what made me
8 remember that.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

11 You're welcome, you're welcome.

12 Please, sir.

13 MR. KATES: Thank you. My
14 name is Michael Kates, and I run the
15 Philadelphia Trolley Works Big Bus
16 Company, 76 Carriage Company, and
17 several other entities under the 76
18 Carriage Company umbrella.

19 I would also like to thank you
20 for the opportunity to testify and just
21 give you our feelings on this.

22 We believe that the
23 legislation is in its infancy right
24 now. We will hold most our comments
25 until we see legislation that takes

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2 into account all of the feedback that
3 you've heard today.

4 A few things I would like to
5 mention, and I hope that the Council
6 would consider:

7 We at Philadelphia Trolley
8 Works have changed our logo several
9 times and have changed how we operate,
10 and we're about ready to change it to
11 "You legislate and we'll try to
12 survive," because that's what it comes
13 down to.

14 And it gets really frustrating
15 when, as a private entity without
16 funding, without subsidies for
17 training, without any assistance to
18 provide training, we provide excellent
19 training on an ongoing basis.

20 You had mentioned at the start
21 of today's testimony about the tour
22 that you took with your daughter. I
23 would love to know who that was with
24 and how that justified in your mind why
25 this type of licensing or this type of

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2 regulation is required.

3 We do support the idea of
4 licensing. We think it would help our
5 business to say our tour guides are
6 licensed.

7 But what we also believe is it
8 will change nothing. It will not
9 change the accuracy or the level of
10 accuracy or inaccuracy. The only thing
11 that does that is training and the
12 operators providing that training. You
13 can give a class, you can give classes
14 every year, and the people who give
15 these years will continue to misspeak.

16 What we ask the Council to
17 consider other than legislation is to
18 understand what we go through as a
19 private business.

20 I've got a huge investment in
21 the Philadelphia area. Last year, we
22 carried 114,000 people in a motorized
23 tour environment. Our auto insurance
24 last year was \$965,000. We have got a
25 significant investment in the

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2 Philadelphia area; we can't afford any
3 more costs.

4 Of the people that we carried,
5 we have a satisfaction guarantee. If
6 you don't like the tour for any reason,
7 we will give you your money back. We
8 gave 11 refunds last year, 11. Our
9 percentage of satisfied customers is
10 incredible. I'd put it up against any
11 other business in this city.

12 Have we misspoke? are there
13 inaccuracies? Absolutely. Will
14 legislation change it? I think we're
15 naive to this so.

16 So as I sit here in front of
17 your, I can commit to you all of my
18 efforts, all of the efforts of my
19 owner, all of the efforts of my manager
20 to get it right. And I think, for the
21 most part, we get it right.

22 Mr. Avery sat here and said
23 he's created a list of 70-some. I bet
24 you he's probably got 700 or so.

25 But the issue is, my guides

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2 speak for a 90-minute fully-narrated
3 tour four or five times a day. On an
4 average day, we'll give 24 tours that
5 leave from that stand; that's a lot of
6 facts. If there's 70 misstatements, I
7 think we've got to be congratulated,
8 not legislated.

9 And I think we do a real nice
10 job with managing every aspect of our
11 business, accuracy being a key aspect
12 of our business, and we'll continue to
13 do so.

14 And if you choose to legislate
15 in any way that you legislate, it will
16 follow along, and we'll be the best
17 legislated guides in the City.

18 You know, it's certainly not
19 due to lack of effort. We don't put
20 people on the street that we don't
21 believe represent the city the way the
22 City deserves to be represented.

23 I agree with Mr. Bari: There
24 are much bigger problems. But if you
25 want to legislate what we do, we'll

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2 take that legislation, we'll be guided
3 by it, and we'll be the best motorized
4 tour company in the city with licensed
5 guide.

6 We've been here for 30 years.

7 No other company, nobody in this room
8 can say that. We've been providing
9 tours in this city since 1976. Many
10 have come, many have gone. Many
11 accurate ones have come, many
12 inaccurate have come, but they're all
13 gone. We're left here for 30 years of
14 providing quality tours of the city.

15 And the tours are one thing.
16 We're a partner to this city. We're a
17 full transportation company that lends
18 its efforts to many charities
19 throughout the city. We are a partner
20 to the Philadelphia community.

21 It seems, as I sit here,
22 whether it's the carriage legislation,
23 whether it's increased permits and
24 fees, whatever that is, the Council
25 concentrates on what they can do to

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2 hurt the private business, the tour
3 operator. I would like you to look at
4 what you can do to help.

5 And, quite frankly, this may
6 be a way to help us. If you provide
7 legislation that is thoughtful, that is
8 helpful, that there are no fees
9 associated with, let us all go to the
10 Benstitute, let Amy teach all of my
11 guides the proper thing to do.

12 Now, again, I'm not in a
13 six-block-square radius; I'm a
14 90-minute fully-narrated tour that
15 covers four miles of the city, that
16 gets about 112,000 people on a vehicle,
17 spending money, not in the mall area,
18 you know, up in the museum district,
19 over in Antique Row, down in Penn's
20 Landing.

21 This is an invaluable resource
22 to the city. Just, please, don't put
23 any more tax burdens on us. Don't cost
24 us more to operate than you already
25 have because, eventually, there's a

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2 breaking point, and I would hate to see
3 the city without a motorized tour
4 operator.

5 And if we're not there with
6 our 30 years of experience, somebody
7 else will be. Now, whether they're
8 from Branson, Missouri, or London,
9 England, or wherever they're from,
10 they'll be here and they will make that
11 money and they will take that money
12 back to Branson, Missouri, or London,
13 England, or wherever they come from.

14 We are trying to survive. We
15 provide a huge tax base in the City of
16 Philadelphia, with 125 full-time
17 employees. And just please consider
18 that when you make your decision.

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

20 Thank you.

21 MR. KATES: Thank you for your
22 time.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

24 And we thank you for your very
25 important, informative, instructive

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2 testimony.

3 Please, good afternoon.

4 MS. GREENBERGER: Good

5 afternoon. And thank you, Councilwoman

6 Blondell Reynolds-Brown and Councilman

7 Rizzo and Councilman DiCicco and

8 Councilman Clarke, for giving us this

9 opportunity to recognize a very

10 important part of our city's story and

11 its history. We have so much wonderful

12 experiences for people to have here in

13 Philadelphia.

14 And my name is Greta

15 Greenberger, and you probably recognize

16 me as the tour director here at City

17 Hall. And in that capacity, we also

18 have a Visitors Center, and our

19 visitors come into our office every day

20 from all over the region, all over the

21 country, all over the world.

22 And I've come basically to

23 support the efforts of this bill,

24 recognizing that there are aspects of

25 it that should be looked at more

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2 carefully.

3 But certainly, the fact that
4 often we hear misinformation. We have
5 visitors come and ask questions from
6 things that they've heard on other
7 tours such as, Is that Benjamin
8 Franklin on top of City Hall? We hear
9 too much of this sort of
10 misinformation. And yes, we are all
11 guilty of making mistakes and slips of
12 the tongue.

13 But basically, we also know
14 that we have fabulous venues,
15 incredible history, wonderful
16 architecture to share with people. And
17 we support the idea of having a
18 training, having a manual that is
19 created by the efforts of all of these
20 organizations so that we can feel
21 confident that our visitor experience,
22 that we tour guides, as ambassadors of
23 the City, are truly doing a quality
24 job, and that we recognize that people
25 leave here, share their experiences

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2 with others in other parts of the
3 world, and we want the story to be a
4 good, entertaining story, but also one
5 that has correct facts and information.

6 So as I said, I really come to
7 just support this effort and to thank
8 everyone who has taken the time to come
9 here today and share in the concern of
10 the quality of our tours.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

12 Okay. We thank you also for your
13 testimony.

14 Comments or questions from
15 members of the committee?

16 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Other than
17 Mr. Kates' company's performance is
18 excellent. I wish you'd get into the
19 airline business.

20 (Laughter.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

22 Let me state a few things.

23 One, be assured that this bill
24 is not on the fast track. And yes, it
25 is indeed in its infancy stage. And

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2 yes, we're going to slow-walk this to
3 make sure factored in and reconciled in
4 a way that is okay with the testimony
5 presented here today, reconcile the
6 very legitimate concerns, and quite
7 frankly, new aha moments I've
8 experienced by listening to your
9 testimony.

10 So simply be assured that this
11 is not a fast track. No one is served
12 by fast-tracking anything. And we want
13 to end up at a different place than
14 where we are now.

15 The good news is that we have
16 tour operators in the city who already
17 get it in some respects and already
18 have in place a formula for ensuring
19 that visitors receive accurate,
20 informed, current, exciting information
21 about our city.

22 So I state that for the
23 record.

24 Thank you all for your
25 testimony.

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2 PANEL: Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

4 Our last and final panel is:

5 Tamara Qayyum; Elizabeth
6 Browne; Michelle Von Deak, Director of
7 Development for Once Upon a Time; and
8 Donna Miller, Administrator for the
9 Historic St. George's Church.

10 Please come forward.

11 (Witnesses come forward.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

13 Good afternoon, ladies.

14 MS. QAYYUM: Good afternoon.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

16 Welcome.

17 MS. QAYYUM: Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

19 We'll start with Tamara Qayyum, and
20 please state your affiliation.

21 MS. QAYYUM: "O Si Yo," which
22 is, in Cherokee, means "greetings to
23 all." I'm Tamara Phoenix Qayyum, a
24 member of the Southeastern Confederacy
25 of Pennsylvania. On behalf of Chief

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2 Buffy Red Feather Brown, my father
3 Marshall Jeffries, and our ancestors,
4 we are here today to support
5 Councilperson Blondell Reynolds-Brown
6 and Ordinance No. 070229 of the
7 Philadelphia Code.

8 It is noteworthy to mention
9 that the last time a Cherokee woman
10 addressed this body was in 1787 in a
11 letter that can be found in the
12 Pennsylvania Archives. It was also
13 during turbulent times. I think the
14 letter was even written when the
15 fathers of this nation, on May 14,
16 1787, were meeting, trying to reach a
17 quorum about the Constitution.

18 She wrote to ask them to smoke
19 the pipe of peace. And although the
20 times in Philadelphia, with a murder
21 rate of more than 150 in less than six
22 months, civil war, and the war in Iraq,
23 global war, the words that my sister
24 wrote on that day are truly needed now.

25 But I am not here to speak to

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2 you about violence and war, maybe
3 another day. I'm here to share some
4 history and ask you to assure complete
5 history be told.

6 And in 1787 Native-Americans
7 and, most impressively, a Cherokee
8 woman wrote a letter to President
9 Franklin, and she did not send up smoke
10 signals, nor did she ride down Broad
11 Street on horseback, whooping. And she
12 most didn't start her eloquent letter
13 with "how"; she took pen to paper. And
14 today, May 2007, a Cherokee has come to
15 ask that you make certain her story is
16 told.

17 Coincidence? I think no not.
18 History is destined to repeat itself if
19 you choose to forget. Native people
20 have been all but written off by the
21 people who built the Constitution
22 Center. I beg that you not allow the
23 truth to fall silent from the lips of
24 those creators who will greet and guide
25 visitors. There are children who must

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2 not be allowed to grow up thinking the
3 city disappeared one day, risen from
4 the ashes like the mystical bird I am
5 named in honor of.

6 Please assure that they know
7 that even the document which this
8 country was built, the words in that
9 document were taken from the Iroquois
10 laws. Yes, the Constitution of the
11 United States is based upon Iroquois
12 laws that governed the tribes of this
13 region and the southeastern regions,
14 tribes named Allegheny, Susquehanna,
15 Mohawk, Mohican, Lenape, Algonquin,
16 Pequot, and Tsalgi, which is Cherokee,
17 all lived by those words.

18 I witnessed firsthand the lack
19 of knowledge of our tour guides just
20 last summer. My family, husband,
21 daughter, grandson took a ride on the
22 Duck. The guide spoke many
23 half-truths, but the one and only thing
24 he spoke regarding local Native
25 Americans was related to the only

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2 reference point he passed, and that was
3 the statue of the Lenni Lenape chief,
4 and he didn't know this great man was a
5 chief who governed the land along the
6 Delaware.

7 I beseech that you review your
8 history, that you make sure your
9 children know specifically this city's
10 history, that you make positively
11 certain that the people who employ to
12 transmit that history know the truth
13 via education, certification, and/or
14 penalties.

15 Maybe, my Anglo, African,
16 Hispanic brothers and sisters, maybe in
17 knowing the truth, the turbulent spirit
18 that haunt our times will return to a
19 more peaceful spirit.

20 Succinctly, I say "Wado,"
21 which means "thank" you in my language,
22 for the opportunity to give you this
23 testimony. I would like to extend the
24 resources of the Southeastern Cherokee
25 Confederacy of Pennsylvania Earth Band

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2 as a point of reference to everyone
3 here for any questions regarding Native
4 People in this region. Our number is
5 215-549-4191.

6 Thank you, Councilwoman.

7 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

8 Thank you very, very much.

9 Please state the name of the
10 Southeastern --

11 MS. QAYYUM: Southeastern
12 Cherokee Confederacy of Pennsylvania
13 Earth Band.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

15 Thank you very, very much for your
16 informed testimony.

17 Please.

18 MS. BROWNE: Hello again and
19 thank you for the opportunity to speak.
20 My name is Elizabeth Browne. I live on
21 Second Street. I have lived in Society
22 Hill since 1964, and during most of the
23 years since then, I have been a tour
24 guide for a variety of organizations
25 sometimes as a volunteer and sometimes

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2 paid.

3 From 1994 to '99, I served as
4 a consultant to Historic Philadelphia,
5 Incorporated to develop walking tours
6 and train the guides to give them. And
7 Ron Avery was one of those guides.

8 During that time HPI Director
9 Karen Butler and I developed a proposal
10 for a guide certification program,
11 knowing that the impressions that
12 visitors to our historic district take
13 away with them are, in most cases,
14 shaped by the quality of information
15 they receive from the wide range of
16 providers in the district -- carriage
17 drivers, dock and trolley tour guides,
18 INHP rangers, pre-arranged tour guides
19 on-street interpreters, even the Phlash
20 drivers and the taxi drivers.

21 We wanted to find a way to
22 ensure that accurate stories were told,
23 and certification seemed the best way
24 to do it. And as I mentioned earlier,
25 I researched how certification is done

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2 in other cities, which was very
3 helpful.

4 And as a result of that, we
5 organized a meeting of representatives
6 of many of the tour companies, some of
7 whom are here today, to discuss the
8 idea of guide certification. And as
9 today, the concept got mixed reviews,
10 and there was a lot of resistance to
11 compulsory certification by the City of
12 Philadelphia.

13 As a result, we developed a
14 proposal based on voluntary
15 certification and was based on
16 developing a series of videotapes -- we
17 would probably have a different format
18 today; this was in 1997. But it would
19 bring together local historians,
20 knowledgeable people who could give the
21 stories of Philadelphia's history as
22 well as guiding techniques and basic
23 facts about the city.

24 And we felt that this could
25 work on a volunteer basis because we

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2 would issue badges to guides who passed
3 the test to become certified guides,
4 and that anybody who wasn't wearing a
5 badge might not get the business.

6 So that it would be a real
7 incentive to the companies to have that
8 visible sign of quality, Housekeeping
9 Seal of Approval, if you will. And so
10 that would force, perhaps, those
11 businesses to comply or else suffer the
12 consequences.

13 Unfortunately, our proposal
14 was turned down by the Pew Charitable
15 Trust, so nothing happened, and so here
16 we are ten years later trying again,
17 and I really appreciate the fact that
18 it is.

19 And I feel so strongly that in
20 Philadelphia, we do pride ourselves on
21 the fact that the sites of our nation's
22 history are real ones and not
23 Disneyland. We need to back up that
24 authenticity with accuracy. Our
25 history is rich and full of surprises

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2 and great stories. We don't need to
3 make them up. The time has come to
4 certify the richness of our history
5 with well-trained information-
6 providers.

7 If this legislation goes
8 forward, I would be happy to discuss my
9 findings with whoever implements it.

10 And I do thank you for
11 allowing me to share my deep concern.
12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
14 Thank you very, very much.

15 Is there anyone else to
16 testify on this bill? Please come
17 forward.

18 Do any members of this
19 committee have questions for our
20 current testifiers?

21 (No questions.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
23 Not knowing if you have to leave,
24 Ms. Qayyum, I do want to thank you and
25 Vicki Sand of Atwater Kent who have

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2 spoken to the need for a diversity.

3 Wherever we end up, that the issue of

4 diversity that speaks to the richness

5 of our city is reflected wherever we

6 end up.

7 Thank you very, very much.

8 MS. QAYYUM: Just don't forget

9 the Native People.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

11 Indeed. Thank you very much.

12 Good afternoon. Do you want

13 to state your name for the record?

14 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon.

15 My name is Judith Robinson, and I'm

16 here today to testify on Bill No.

17 070229.

18 I am a certified tour guide

19 trained through the now-defunct

20 Foundation for Architecture. We had a

21 very in-depth -- I believe it was over

22 several sessions, and the last class

23 was in 2000. I was in that class.

24 Since then, tourism has really started

25 to expand in our city.

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2 I am really concerned that
3 those of us that are trained now have
4 to go back and be retrained. I don't
5 mind updating my skills because I do
6 that in my profession to be relicensed,
7 but I am concerned that there is a
8 whole new process, and I wonder if
9 there's been any talk of grandfathering
10 in those of us that have been trained
11 in the past.

12 In addition, in this bill, it
13 talks about geography, historic sites,
14 objects, but it doesn't really talk
15 very much about history. Whose story
16 will be told? I trust that we will not
17 use revisionist history, as facts must
18 be told to our children and to anyone
19 coming to this town interested in
20 history.

21 I am concerned that in the
22 past, we have been told so many lies
23 quite frankly that we may have a little
24 trouble trying to find out what the
25 facts are. I'm wondering who's going

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2 to do the training. I read the bill.

3 I understand that there is a process,

4 but who is going to come with the

5 facts?

6 I would suggest that it must

7 read for every tour guide be how the

8 North promoted, prolonged, and profited

9 from slavery complicity -- I'm sorry,

10 complicity. How the North promoted,

11 prolonged, and profited from slavery by

12 Ann Farrow, Joel Lang, and Jennifer

13 Frank. Very, very in-depth research,

14 documentation, et cetera on what has

15 happened in our past.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

17 Specific for Philadelphia?

18 MS. ROBINSON: No, the North.

19 It's a must-read. It was very much

20 enlightening.

21 I think that it would be very,

22 very important for us all to be

23 enlightened in that regard, especially

24 in light of the fact of what's been

25 transpiring right now with the

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2 President's House.

3 I know because we're going to
4 be attracting tourism, some folks like
5 to make things sound nice and sexy, but
6 facts, reality are intriguing too.

7 So I just would suggest that
8 we not rush through with this process,
9 that we be clear on our obligation to
10 be factual, and that we do the right
11 thing as best as possible.

12 I just would like to suggest
13 that we look at several different
14 methods of training so that we can pull
15 from the best information presented to
16 us.

17 Thank you very much for the
18 time. Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

20 And we thank you very much for your
21 testimony.

22 Please state your full name
23 for the record.

24 MS. SAFER: My name is Julia
25 Safer. Can you hear me?

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2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

3 Yes. Why don't you pull the mic
4 closer.

5 MS. SAFER: Okay. I have a
6 private concern I'd like to discuss.

7 I have been going through an
8 unjust police investigation for quite a
9 few years now, and I would like to
10 speak to someone in the political world
11 about the situation I'm going through.

12 And that's why I came here. I
13 came here today spontaneously; it was
14 not planned. And I was just hoping
15 that there might be someone who would
16 be willing to speak to me about the
17 situation I'm going through.

18 It's really a horror story.
19 And if I spoke to you or anyone else
20 about it, I would tell you stories that
21 would turn your hair white.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

23 We'd like to think that you've come to
24 one of a number of possible places for
25 help, and we'll be delighted to, once

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2 we wrap up these proceedings and we're
3 at the end, to have you meet with I and
4 my staff immediately after we close
5 this hearing.

6 So it's not a problem at all
7 to sit with you in my office
8 immediately following this hearing.

9 MS. SAFER: Thank you very
10 much.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
12 You're very welcome and we applaud your
13 courage to step up and ask for help in
14 a public way.

15 MS. SAFER: My desperation
16 does. I really don't know where else
17 to turn or what to do.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
19 Okay. All right then. So please have
20 a seat right behind the bar, and you
21 will walk up to my office with us.

22 MS. SAFER: Thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
24 Okay, anyone else to testify on this
25 bill?

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2 MS. SAJET: I was not on the
3 list, but may I say something?

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
5 Now would be the time, yes.

6 (Witness comes forward.)

7 MS. SAJET: Hello. My name is
8 Kim Sajet. I am the new President and
9 Chief Executive Officer of the
10 Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

11 Please excuse me 'cause I have
12 not prepared formal remarks and I have
13 been on the job a little over a month.

14 But, of course, we've been
15 hearing about this in the paper. And
16 in my new role at the Historical
17 Society of Pennsylvania, our mission is
18 to collect and tell the stories of
19 Pennsylvania.

20 We are the designated
21 historical society for the County of
22 Pennsylvania. We are a certified
23 provider of education to the State of
24 Pennsylvania and the history and the
25 School District of Philadelphia.

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2 And one of the things that I
3 would just like to say is that we, as
4 an organization, are more than happy to
5 work with the many partners in
6 Philadelphia to see a resolution to
7 this.

8 The Historic Society has
9 21 million records. We are second only
10 to the Library of Congress in our
11 holdings of American history. We are
12 the number one in the United States on
13 immigrant history. We are number three
14 in the United States for genealogical
15 and family history.

16 We have the first proof of the
17 Declaration of Independence. We have
18 two Emancipation Proclamations. We
19 have the treaty with the Lenape
20 Indians. We have the source documents
21 right here up on Locust Street.

22 And so I think one of the
23 things that we need to talk about when
24 you go forward in this is really
25 partnering with the historical

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2 organizations.

3 Someone asked the question
4 about who's actually going to provide
5 the really facts? We have those facts,
6 so -- as does the Atwater Kent, the
7 Free Library, the Atheneum, and other
8 historical organizations.

9 And I think it's very
10 important to make sure that those
11 historical organizations partner with
12 the tourism organizations, that there
13 is a connection between the real
14 object, the real fact, that you can
15 actually hold Washington's diary in
16 your hands if you come to our place and
17 how it translates into the tour
18 operators.

19 So thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

21 Thank you very much for your testimony.
22 Congratulations.

23 This concludes our public
24 hearing.

25 * * *

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2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

3 We will now move into our public
4 meeting. And I will share with you --
5 after conferring with my colleagues
6 here, we will take two actions today.

7 First let me say thank you to
8 everyone who came forward to offer your
9 important perspective, and we have
10 decided that we will move the bill only
11 to what is called a first reading, and
12 then we're going to push the pause
13 button.

14 And I am going to convene a
15 task force that will meet over the next
16 90 days. And those of you -- any one
17 of you or all of you who are interested
18 to be a member of this group, we will
19 not burden you with a lot of meetings
20 because we want to, at the end of the
21 90 days, do something tangible. It may
22 be an amendment or two or it may be
23 further action beyond that.

24 So we will today want to take
25 an action, and that is to simply move

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2 it out of committee on the first
3 reading, hold it, convene a task force,
4 meet, factor in the various
5 perspectives that have come before us,
6 and then decide at the end of that task
7 force what the recommendations should
8 be going forward.

9 Very well. That said, can I
10 have a motion on -- we have to have
11 a... a quorum, so we're waiting for one
12 of our members of the committee to
13 return.

14 While we wait for Councilman
15 Clarke, again, let me underscore we're
16 not fast-tracking this. We've been
17 enlightened this afternoon in a number
18 of good and important ways, and I think
19 the best way for us to more than
20 adequately address both concerns and
21 interests that's been raised is to do
22 it through a back-and-forth over a
23 series of meetings.

24 So if you're interested in
25 serving on this task force, then we

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2 simply need for you to register
3 informally with Joe Meade so that we
4 have a means of contacting you before
5 at least one sit-down in the month of
6 June.

7 And Miss Elizabeth Browne, we
8 would welcome your input given the work
9 you've done already with the documents
10 that you shared today, okay?

11 So can I have a motion on Bill
12 No. 070229.

13 Councilman Goode?

14 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
15 Madam Chair. I move that Bill No.
16 070229 be reported out of committee
17 with a favorable recommendation and
18 that the rules of Council be suspended
19 so as to permit first reading at our
20 next Council session.

21 (Motion seconded.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:
23 Therefore, Bill No. 070229 has been
24 moved and properly seconded.

25 All in favor will say aye.

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2 All nos, opposed?

3 (None opposed.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

5 Therefore, Bill No. 070229 will be
6 reported out of this committee with a
7 favorable recommendation.

8 This -- forgive me? And that
9 the rules of Council be suspended so as
10 to permit first reading at the next
11 scheduled session of City Council.

12 This concludes the meeting of
13 the Committee on Parks, Recreation and
14 Cultural Affairs. I want to thank my
15 colleagues for coming and staying at
16 this important juncture of our process.

17 We want to thank you all for
18 your interest and for your testimony.
19 It will be read again as we prepare for
20 that task force.

21 We thank you all. Good
22 afternoon.

23

24 (Proceedings end at 3:36 p.m)

25 * * *

C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings of the City of Philadelphia Council Committee on Parks, Recreation & Cultural Affairs are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me on Thursday, May 10, 2007, and that this is a true and correct statement of same.

JOSEPHINE CARDILLO
Registered Professional Reporter

(The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)