COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

The Salvation Army
The Kroc Center
4200 Wissahickon Avenue
Philadelphia, PA
Wednesday, April 18, 2012
6:30 p.m.

PRESENT:
COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

BILLS 120164, 120165 and 120166
RESOLUTION 120167

- - -

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good evening, everyone.

I'll say it again. Good evening, everyone.

(Good evening.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: There you go. Sound like you want to be here.

It's a pleasure to be here. I got to tell you before we start the official proceedings, I got to tell you, I just did a tour of this building and this thing is like wow. I've never seen anything like that. To our friends in the Salvation Army, the good friends from the Kroc family, I really thank them for bringing such a wonderful facility to the City of Philadelphia and particularly to the 4th and the 8th Councilmanic District. And we've been allowed to have a wonderful event tonight.

I just would like to say for the record, my name is Council President Darrell Clarke. I have the pleasure of

serving with these wonderful members of Council. We have made a decision as a part of a process as we move ahead that we're going to maximize opportunities to talk to the citizens of the City of Philadelphia. In years past, we had -- can you hear?

Too many people talking. We'll deal with that once we bang the gavel.

In years past, predominantly the, quote/unquote, public testimony was had in City Council Chambers in City Hall, and we understood that there was a challenge for a lot of people to make it down there after a hard day of work. The parking down there is obviously much too high. So the Councilmembers made a decision, wherever possible, we would get out in the neighborhood and hold official Council budget hearings, because this is a part of the budget process that we're currently having throughout the last -- this is actually two, three months before we can establish our final fiscal budget

for the City of Philadelphia. So it is truly a pleasure to be here this evening.

Before we proceed, I would like to ask the two host Councilmembers if you please give some opening statements.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good evening, everyone.

(Good evening.)

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: My name is Cindy Bass. I'm the new Councilperson for the 8th Council District, and I just want to welcome you all. Technically this is not my district. My district is across the street on the other side of Wissahickon Avenue, but it feels like home, and maybe one day it will be, Councilman.

But I just want to thank everybody for coming out tonight. It's really important to be a part of the process. It's really important to be engaged and to know what's going on, what's happening in your communities, what's happening in your neighborhood,

and, in particular, what's happening in reference to our City's budget and finances and how are we going to spend our money and what are we going to do, what are the priorities. That's really what tonight is all about.

So I look forward to hearing from all of you making a statement in terms of what you think the priorities ought to be and taking that under consideration as we make some very difficult decisions going forward.

This is not easy, but we plan to do the very best that we can and represent you and most efficiently. So thank you so much for coming tonight.

Thank you.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Councilwoman Bass.

This is the 4th District. Across the street is the 8th, and it's going to stay that way. You're more than welcome to visit, work out, but we are glad to have the Kroc Center in the 4th

District. But it's a regional center and it services the Greater Philadelphia and everyone is welcome here.

Thank you all for coming out tonight. It is important that we hear from you. Council President Clarke mandated and insisted that we go across the City and listen, be ready to listen, listen to the things we like, listen to the things that we don't necessarily want to hear, some of the tough truths, but then be ready to lead. But then be ready to lead. And I think it was true vision and leadership on his part to insist that we do that in various parts of the City.

This is the second in a series of, I believe, four across the City and we're sharing it with the 8th District. So we are ready to listen to some of the interests, priorities, concerns that you have.

We're going to have to make some grown-up decisions. We're going to try to make a dollar out of 50 cents

every which way we can, but there are some things that are indispensable. We got to make decisions about education, the one equalizer among generations that frees generations to go on and seek the middle and upper class halfway out of poverty, and we have to make decisions about that. And we're ready to make them, but what we found out -- and I'm not a freshman anymore. I'm actually in my second term. Time flies when you're doing work.

But the thing of it is is I learn more from you than I will ever learn from the departments that we always hear from. Good ideas don't only come from the second floor of City Hall. They come from the people that we work for, the taxpayers, and we're ready to listen and we're ready to lead.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

Before we proceed, I'd like to

introduce probably the people that I've had the most pleasure to deal with over the last, some cases, four years, some cases 12 years, some cases three months, my wonderful colleagues. It's pretty much because they're pretty much the only people I see, because that's all we do is work.

I'd like to recognize Councilwoman Marian Tasco.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilman David Oh, Councilman at-large.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilman Bill Green.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilman W. Wilson Goode, Jr.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilman Kenyatta Johnson, 2nd District.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: And Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: And I would also like to thank Reverend Bonnie for hosting us and doing, as usual, her wonderful job as it relates to making sure that we take care of our business.

Now we're going to start official business. This is the continued public hearing of the Committee of the Whole regarding Bill Nos. 120164, 120165, 120166 and Resolution 120167.

Ms. Lewis, I would please ask you to read the titles of the bills and resolution.

MS. LEWIS: Bill No. 120164, an ordinance to adopt a Capital Program for the six Fiscal Years 2013 to 2018 inclusive.

Bill No. 120165, an ordinance to adopt a Fiscal 2013 Capital Budget.

Bill No. 120166, an ordinance

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adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2013.

Resolution No. 120167, a resolution providing for the approval by the Council of the City of Philadelphia of a Revised Five Year Financial Plan for the City of Philadelphia covering Fiscal Years 2013 through 2017, and incorporating proposed changes with respect to Fiscal Year 2012, which is to be submitted by the Mayor to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority (the "Authority") pursuant to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement authorized by an ordinance of this Council approved by the Mayor on January 3rd, 1992 (Bill No. 1563-A), by and between the City and the Authority.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

One other piece of business.

If you look to the rear, you'll see individuals with laptops flipped up in the back. Although we are here to talk about budget priorities, if we have potholes that need fixing or some constituent service request, we're prepared to take those issues in as we speak. There will be e-mails generated from those requests and sent to the department heads tonight. So we have that available to folk who are interested.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you, Councilman.

We will be asking you to come forward to testify by name based on the sign-in sheet. We will ask you to, if at all possible, limit your questions or statements to the budget, because we are here to talk about aspects of the budget that we will ultimately have to vote on. As Councilman said earlier, we want to make sure that we're full service, so if

you do have other issues, we can give those to the individuals in the back.

So right now, if it's okay with my colleagues, we will start, because this is your night and we want to hear from you. It is very important as we move through this deliberative process that we hear directly from the people that we represent. So thank you.

If there's anyone who has not signed up who wishes to testify, please make sure you sign up in the back, because that's the list that we will be calling you from.

Ms. Lewis, will you please call the name of the first individual who wishes to testify.

MS. LEWIS: Reverend James Royal. James Royal.

(Witness approached microphone.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: One last thing. What we're going to do is, we want to ensure that everyone has an

opportunity to testify. We're going to ask you, if at all possible, to limit your comments to around five minutes. We want to make sure that everybody gets a chance to speak, because the list is ever growing.

Good morning, sir -- good evening. I'm sorry.

REVEREND ROYAL: Good evening to the Council President and to all of you. I'm here representing fundamentally two groups, one the Aces Museum in Germantown, Philadelphia, 5800 Germantown Avenue -- excuse me; 5801, and also the President of Strawberry Mansion Smart Business Association. Both of these concerns deal with finance.

We have the only, shall we say, museum that's authentic in Germantown that has not received any funds in the last seven to eight years, but the Lord has blessed us to build to watch our veterans, and we would request your support. It only takes about $50,000 to

put that building back into shape and it would be producing its own income for the veterans as well as the children that we serve in that community.

So I will tell you from the President of the Strawberry Mansion Smart Business Association, we need to have development in the neighborhood. And so what we want to build in Strawberry Mansion is a movie theatre, bowling alley and skating rink. We want to redo the Fletcher Horse Stable. We also want to work to put fishing in the reservoir. There are four containers. There's one that's available. We want to create fishing in the neighborhood to create jobs. We also want to work with other businessmen in the North Philadelphia area.

The end view is if we can't build and have dollars coming directly to us as we do to the other developers that are coming out of the neighborhood, if you spend a hundred million dollars in

Strawberry Mansion, we should get 50, because we've been there for the last 50 years. The new people coming in will not really serve our community.

So we put these few words out there so that you'll understand that we have qualified people. We have a lot of young people that need to be trained. We're going to work to fix our school. You got to fix our school. That's a whole other thing. But we got to fix the school in order to create the employment, in order to create the business in the neighborhood. So we're looking for your help in that regard.

Thank you so much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much, sir.

MS. LEWIS: Dr. A.V. Hankins. A.V. Hankins.

(Witness approached microphone.)

DR. HANKINS: Good evening.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good

evening.

DR. HANKINS: My name is Dr. Hankins and I'm also representing Aces Museum and the children in the neighborhood. Aces Museum is a veterans organization that was created because we discovered the original Parker Hall where black veterans were in World War II. We've restored it.

The building is stable, but it needs rehabilitation, and the second two floors have been closed for almost two years when with $50,000 we can be open.

We have the head of the National Military Museum coming in from California on May the 26th. We have 300 veterans organizations that come from around the country, including the NAACP, to support Aces Museum. We take care of our veterans, and we have used our program as the basis as an educational enhancement program that had an 85 percent success rate. We took the drugs off of the corner of Germantown and

Price, and these same drug dealers send their children to Aces Museum. But yet we can never get funded.

That's all right. Because if we can get help, we can be self-sufficient. We have done this for ten years, ten glorious years. And in July of 2010, the Battleship Berkeley, ten veterans on their way to war, where they would die possibly for us, stopped to see Aces Museum. You can check them out and check us out on YouTube. It brought tears to my eyes that they thought even though they might die, that it was important for them, black veterans, white veterans, Native American veterans, Hispanic veterans, to stop by and see Aces.

We hope that you all, City Councilmembers, stop by and see Aces. It is an oasis of love for our veterans and for our children. And it gets its name because of the 1940's, they used to call black people Spades, and we said if you

had to be a Spade, we know you were the Ace.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

MS. LEWIS: Bernie Strain. Bernie Strain.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: Howard Moseley. Howard Moseley.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: Brenda Williams.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. WILLIAMS: Good evening, Council President and Councilwomen and men. My name is Brenda Williams. I'm the President of Wynnefield Residents Association. Wynnefield Residents has been in operation since 1957, and just recently I became the President. But I found that even before I became President, being a person that works in the community, that we have lack of

recreation for the youth. We have the drugs that are on the -- possibly in the driveways and on the corners, but the youth -- I know we have a PAL Center. The PAL Center is not big enough for the youths that are not able to attend.

Also, the one rec center that we have is not the type of rec center where we can have things for the youth to do at. It's just a small center. It's not zoned to have recreation in it.

So I would just like to be part of that budget to help with recreation for the youth and also for young children. At this point in time in Wynnefield, there are no places that a person can come and sit with their child and have them climb a jungle gym or any of that. They have to stay in the house. And I notice that all through West Philly I see all these little jungle gyms popping up in the neighborhood, like on 52nd Street, there's a brand new one there, but it's very seldom when I ride

by that I see it even being used. But I know if it comes to Wynnefield, it will be used by our neighbors.

So I'm just asking that you turn our youth idle time into positive time and not jail time.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

MS. LEWIS: Sheliah Simmons.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. SIMMONS: Good evening. My name is Sheliah Simmons and I'm a member of Parent Power. I'm also a public school parent and a constituent here in the 4th District.

Today's Daily News featured a story about Mifflin Elementary School in East Falls and about the new entrance the school has gained from parents whose children attend the soon-to-be-closed St. Bridget's School, which is located directly across the street from Mifflin.

One observer noted, We're seeing a trend of families claiming the schools with their original purpose, educating children right where they live. It's very exciting. The observer was Paul Levy from the Center City District. But his comments should reflect a move in every district in the City.

Public education, the education of every child in every neighborhood under every circumstance, is the bedrock of an educated community, an educated city, an educated America. It must be supported and held strong.

We know that in our city, where poverty is high and family stability is often too low, schools cannot do it all. So I call on you for help in strengthening school communities.

I want to thank our Councilpeople who have maintained their belief in our city's public schools and their need to be funded, but I also urge the City to play a bigger role, not just

with budget allocation but a role in building and strengthening the school community. The City can help with other services, from recreation where wonderful after-school and sports programs are offered, to mental and behavioral health services that are desperately needed in our schools.

While I congratulate the Inquirer on its Pulitzer Prize for its series on school violence, I cannot celebrate the situation out of which it arose. I implore you to provide City services and directions to schools to prevent -- again, I say to prevent -- negative behaviors and to set a respectful tone before crisis erupts, and to provide a safe environment that includes the community and not just the cops.

We recently celebrated the collection of tons of trash during this past Saturday's Philly Spring Cleanup. Well, I believe that if not the entire

city, our schools should be clean zones so that our children know they are cared for and loved.

Our city should also take opportunities to connect school students to the wealth of arts and environmental treasures located right within their own communities.

I heard Mayor Nutter last night at graduation ceremonies for Philly Rising's North Philadelphia community liaisons urging neighborhood businesses to hire neighborhood children this summer. If our city has any available incentive or matching funds to encourage such employment, I believe strengthening our young people's work skills and preparing them for the work world is a truly worthy investment.

I also urge that in considering and supporting any of these efforts for school children, that you call on parents and caregivers to be your partners. Whenever possible, I urge the City to

partner with efforts to make parents feel welcomed and valued when they participate in their children's education, and that their participation be authentic and respected.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for your continued commitment to the community and to children. Thank you, Ms. Simmons.

MS. LEWIS: Herman Davis.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. DAVIS: That's a hard thing to follow. That was very, very well spoken.

I'd like to thank you guys for taking an opportunity to listen, but this is an opportunity to be proactive with our youth. We have to save our children.

I am a member and one of the co-founders of an organization called Peace and Love. I was born and raised in Mount Airy. I've had a business in the section of -- Manayunk section of Philadelphia. I've lived in South Philadelphia. I now reside in the 4th District in Wynnefield. So I have seen a little bit of everything going on in Philadelphia, and our youth need some potential. They're angry, and I think if we can give them some activities, some arts, which art is a form of therapy, whether it's poetry, whether it's dancing, whether it's drawing, these activities are very important. That is almost fun and cheap therapy for these kids.

I think it's a great time to invest in our youth and also invest in our senior citizens, because a lot of senior citizen caregivers are of the kids today. We have grandparents raising these kids and there's a big age gap and

we have to bridge that gap.

Education is very important, but also the kids have to learn how to be kids. They don't do the activities that we did growing up. They don't jump rope. They don't go to football. They don't play hopscotch. They're not kids. A lot of these kids are taking on adult issues as kids. And you talk about a traumatic disorder? These kids are dealing with something that our future looks very dark. But they can be fixed. They can be saved, and Philadelphia can shine.

That's it.

But that was very good.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

MS. LEWIS: Mannwell Glenn. Mannwell Glenn.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. GLENN: Good evening, Councilmembers. As accustomed as I am to

speaking in front of a microphone, I'll do my best and try not to be nervous. But I can say that I know a couple of you up there, and I know that these hearings are a great idea and I'm glad you're having them.

On a serious note, as we all know, eight people have died a fiery death in the last week here in Philadelphia. As someone that just took the firefighter exam, scored 100 by the way, and someone that's very concerned about fire safety, if there are any provisions in this budget that will address the issue of smoke alarms, fire prevention, fire safety, it needs to be if there aren't.

I can't speak enough about fiery deaths. I myself was a victim of fire in Harrisburg. I lost my great-grandmother to a fire. She died smoking in bed, 92 years old, didn't have a smoke detector at all. So I know a little something about fire deaths and

fire prevention.

So I would hope, as I said, if there's a set-aside, some type of provision in this budget to address this continuous issue of unnecessary fiery deaths because of the lack of smoke alarms. It's something so easy, changing a battery, but obviously it's something that's also very difficult to do.

On a lighter note, the 4th Councilmanic District, I live there. I've lived there since 1971 off and on. A number of you live in the 4th or in the Wynnefield area. I just want you to think for a second, let it fester. Dog park. That's it. I'm going to leave it at that.

I thank you for your time. I thank you for having these hearings, and good to see all of you again.

Some of us who have pets, we're always told to curb our dogs, but in dog parks, you can take your dog to a place where they can frolic and run and do what

they do amongst other dogs and other pets. Curbing your dog is a given. Everyone will do it there. Seemingly it's more difficult and difficult to find these places and find a place to walk your pet, but everyone seems to have a dog.

So let's just be a little bit more, shall I say, disciplined and maybe have some fun by having a neighborhood dog park in Wynnefield. We're talking about a rec center for kids, which we needed in Wynnefield forever. I know, I grew up there. Let's have a rec center for the dogs and the cats of the world too. Can the dogs get a rec center? Dog park in Wynnefield; that's all I'm talking about. We in the hood have pets too. The hood can have a dog park too. That's all I'm saying.

Peace.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you for that suggestion about the dog park, Manny Glenn. We appreciate it. But on your first suggestion of fire safety, we are as a body taking a look at upping the standard a bit for fire detectors.

A startling statistic of 80 percent of the fire deaths -- don't hold me to one percent or another -- were due to no smoke alarms or batteries that had expired in the smoke alarm. And if you could see our Commissioner's face over the last weekend, the half dozen or so deaths, you could see it in his eyes that he's deeply hurt by this issue. And we as a body are going to deliberate on upping that to at least ten years lithium batteries and other independent power sources so that we have that.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you, Councilman.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Howard Moseley.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. MOSELEY: Dear members of Council -- can everybody hear me?

Members of Council, thank you for your ongoing commitment to openness and transparency and for providing me with the opportunity to speak before you today. My name is Howard Moseley. I'm the Director of Government Relations and Infrastructure for the Manayunk Development Corporation, MDC. The MDC was formed in 1992 as a non-profit corporation with both a primary business development mission and a cooperating community development mission.

As a business development organization, MDC takes primary responsibility to the management, promotion and positive business development of the Main Street business

district. As a community development corporation, MDC cooperates with other civic and community organizations in the Manayunk area to plan and carry out community programming and physical improvement projects of interest to both businesses and residents in Manayunk. MDC's proud merchant members and Board of Directors are the driving force behind the success in our district.

I'm here today to ask that as you go through this demanding budget process, that you keep in mind that neighborhood improvement districts, business improvement districts and community/commercial/economic development corporations exist in every thriving neighborhood in Philadelphia. This is not by coincidence. For the sake of this testimony, I'll just refer to everything as a CDC.

Philadelphia needs stronger CDCs and more CDCs, because they develop a sense of community in both commercial

and residential neighborhoods, spur economic development and increase real property values, and that's the short, short, short list, only because I want to be as brief as possible.

As we all know, currently our nation is economically challenged, and Philadelphia is not immune to the effects of a dreadful economy. Yet places like Manayunk, Roxborough, East Passyunk Avenue, Chestnut Hill and others manage to remain clean, walkable, thriving neighborhoods that attract tourism and generate revenue for the City. It's the work of CDCs in partnership with the City of Philadelphia and other partners that make this possible. Our city can only benefit from investing more in the existing CDCs and encouraging the development of new CDCs in areas that need and want them.

Not only can CDCs perform a variety of functions for neighborhood or business corridors, including daily

street sweeping, administration of capital projects, community festivals and event production and business development services, but they/we can stretch our dollars much farther than a for-profit company or even the local government.

We are mission-based organizations. We do the work that we do because the work makes us what we are. We are ambassadors, diplomats, problem-solvers, think tanks, community builders, liaisons, the list goes on. Most importantly, we're your partners in building a better Philadelphia, and it's only through the great relationship that MDC has with Councilman Jones' office and other City agencies that Manayunk can host three major outdoor festivals, participate in the CDC tax program, fund our operations through parking, improved parking in our district, receive emergency assistance during floods and other natural occurrences, work through difficult zoning issues.

I have no specific budget request today. I know that you will work hard and that you will have to make difficult decisions. So my request is simple. Please keep in mind the following: CDCs are strong partners that can be the eyes and ears of the City. CDCs can earn revenue in ways that the City cannot - fundraisers, parking revenue, ticketed events, property assessments. CDCs can get more from a dollar than local government or for-profit business. CDCs care about the work that we do.

I also ask that for every dollar that is allocated in this budget, you ask the following questions: What does this expenditure do to help strengthen our CDCs? How does this expenditure help to develop more CDCs in areas that need them? And is there a way that we can lower the expenditure by developing CDC-specific legislation?

Thank you for your time.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I know I'm not supposed to do this, but, Councilman Goode, could you briefly -- because I know Councilman Goode has been like one of the most aggressive people in ensuring that CDCs in the City get some support.

Councilman, can you just briefly reference the legislation that you've been pushing as it relates to CDCS, I believe tax credits and other issues.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yeah. I have two CDC-specific pieces of legislation. The first is for the CDC Tax Credit Program, which was created in 2002 and just finished its first ten years. It consisted of 30 partnerships between big business and CDCs where big business gave $100,000 a year for ten years to CDCs to undertake economic

development activities, and there are CDCs around the City that have taken it. The program is in its second decade. We're actually expanding it to 35 groups beyond the original 30.

In addition to that stream of funding, also Community Development Block Grant funding comes through the City. Early on around 2001, we mandated that at least 5 percent of all Community Development Block Grant funding has to go toward economic development activities undertaken by CDCs. So we actually created a steady stream of funding for community development corporations at least ten years ago, which is why we have so many thriving CDCs involved in economic development now.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much, Councilman. Continue great work.

I'd just like to -- the Chair would like to note for the record that Councilman Mark Squilla and Councilwoman

Sanchez have joined the Committee meeting.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Ruth Seeley.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. SEELEY: My name is Ruth Seeley, and thank you for this opportunity to testify. I'm here to testify to the importance of restoring the 8 million to the operating budget of the Department of Parks and Recreation.

Philadelphia's Parks and Recreation facilities have been underfunded for many decades. The Department has not received one cent of the money promised from the increase in the parking tax from Fiscal Year 2009 to today, and unfortunately our city and its citizens are suffering the consequences.

I am a member of Friends of Vernon Park in Germantown. It's at Germantown Avenue and Greene Street and close to Chelten Avenue. This is a very

heavily used park, and it's an important anchor in our community. In spite of the hard work of volunteers and the staff of the Department of Parks and Recreation, Vernon Park has many problems, and I know that many of these are common to other facility parks.

There are piles of trash overflowing from our trash cans because they're not emptied frequently enough, and there's quite a lot of criminal activity at night and sometimes during the day, including drug dealing, drinking, prostitution and occasional holdups. The lighting is broken down.

The Germantown Enrichment Center, which is just getting going again, is out across the street directly from Vernon Park and has no place of its own for kids to play and they've just started using the baseball diamond in Vernon Park. It has an uneven surface full of holes and bumps and needs regrading.

A lot of families in Germantown hold birthday parties in Vernon Park, and volunteers are working really hard to make it a place where families can come and picnic and children can play on equipment safely. The Friends of Vernon Park and the underfunded Department cannot keep up with the maintenance.

The health of Germantown's business district, its historic buildings and residential neighborhoods depend in great part on Vernon Park being maintained and kept healthy. When things go wrong in the park, it spreads out everywhere in the neighborhood. And we're right next to Aces that was mentioned earlier.

Please work with the citizens of Philadelphia as we strive to maintain our neighborhoods. We can't do it alone, and the Department can't do it with a budget that is flat lined. So please restore the 8 million in the promised funding to the Department of Parks and

Recreation.

And I thank you very much for your time.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you, Mr. President.

I just wanted to make a note, Ms. Seeley, regarding Vernon Park, that we have done and are starting to really do a lot of planning work for the park. So you can expect some changes to be seen sometime in the very near future. And also we're organizing, because we can't do it alone. So we'll need your help and your input. And we have a table also in the back with some folks, Joe Corrigan and also Rashid from our office. If you'd like to just check in and make sure they have your contact information so we can follow up with you, we'd love to have

your support and input.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Ellen Wert.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. WERT: Members of City Council, welcome out to the neighborhoods. It's great to see you out here with us. I'm used to coming in to the City Council Chambers to see you. So this is a welcomed change. Thank you so much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: We're happy to be here.

MS. WERT: Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you about the vital importance of Philadelphia's Department of Parks and Recreations. You just heard one side of the story. I'm going to give you another side of a different park just four blocks away.

If in 1986 you had told me that Cloverly Park, the creepy, overgrown, abandoned park in my neighborhood filled with abandoned cars, the site of crimes, would one day be an asset to the neighborhood, an asset to the community, five-time first place winner in the City Gardens Contest, I would have assumed that you were smoking what they were selling in the park. But thanks to a group of committed neighbors and the staff and leadership of Fairmount Park, who believed in us, our neighborhood now has a beautiful park that attracts mostly positive use.

On any given day, we count families, neighbors of all ages as well as groups from preschools and after-school programs among those who spend time in the park. During the summer, several local church-based programs make use of the park on a daily basis. Moreover, the results of our 26-year effort have proved a magnet,

first for homeowners and then, more recently, developers who have carefully restored the historic apartment buildings across the street from the park. And based on that success, they've continued to make investments in our corner of Germantown and other areas nearby.

Over the past two years, the owners of a long-neglected parcel of land adjacent to the park, embarrassed, they told us, by the contrast between Cloverly and their abandoned lot, have turned it into an attractive community garden.

You've heard it many times. You've heard it many times from me. You know that Philadelphia's system of parks is vast and unique and important. You know the documented benefits of a safe, clean, good-looking neighborhood park, less crime, higher property values, more active children and adults. And you probably know that Philadelphia's park system generates more than $1 billion annually in revenue and savings.

But restoring Cloverly Park has led to other less quantifiable benefits. In this beautiful welcoming space, parents find common ground and their children learn to take diversity as a given. The work of reclaiming, improving and maintaining Cloverly Park has made people more vigilant about their neighborhood. When good is the norm, something not so good stands out. And when people work together, they know that they can call on another neighbor to help deal with a problem.

It has given neighbors an occasion to work together and to build trust and understanding. That experience has spawned active block associations and increasing involvement in community issues. In short, it has helped us become better, more involved citizens.

Since 1993, an important partner in our work has been the staff and leadership of Fairmount Park, now Parks and Recreation. Frankly, we are

amazed at what they can accomplish with so little money and so few people. But the staff's ability to do a lot with a little does not justify chronic underfunding, nor does the commitment of neighborhood volunteers and organizations such as the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and the Philadelphia Parks Alliance. There is only so much that they can do.

Here's why: Cloverly represents just one little slice of Germantown, just two acres in the vast Parks and Recreation system. Think of the many parks that are part of the fabric of this city's neighborhood and consider the impact, the potential impact, of each one. By adequately funding this city's unique system, you have an opportunity to make a strategic investment like no other. Please, please restore the funding for the parks.

Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

4/18/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, ETC.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

At this time, I would like to recognize our good friend and our state colleague, State Representative Cherelle Parker, who is the Chair of the Philadelphia Delegation.

How are you doing, my friend?

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for seeing how we do it here. Thank you.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Gina Snyder.

(Witness approached microphone.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Ms. Snyder, I think Councilman Squilla would like to have a couple words in reference.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I just wanted to say one thing concerning the Parks and Rec. I think now on Council we have a really big advocates, starting with your Councilwoman, Cindy Bass, who

is a great advocate for Parks and Recs and the Chair, and I just have a good feeling that we're going to be able to do some positive things. I don't know if Council is able to restore the whole $8 million to their budget, but we're going to do everything we can, and even if they won't, try to come up with different ways to raise revenue in order to give to the Parks. Because it's not only building the parks; it's able to keep the parks and have them maintained as long -- we could build all we want, but if we don't maintain them, they're going to eventually fall apart.

So I think the majority of Council knows that. We're with you. We're going to try to work the best we can to make that happen.

So I just wanted to make that comment.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

MS. SNYDER: Thank you very much. Good evening. Thank you for the opportunity to testify. My name is Gina Snyder. I'm the Director of the East Falls Development Corporation and the Vice President of the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations. East Falls is in the 4th Councilmanic District, and I recognize our Councilman, Curtis Jones.

Before I give my testimony, I want to just say one shout-out to Cloverly Park. We all have our neighborhoods and everything. I live in East Falls. Cloverly Park is my park too, and I take my two-year-old and my four-year-old there to play, and it is a beautiful place, and I thank the people who work so hard to make it so wonderful.

Tonight I want to focus my testimony on issues that are critical to meeting the needs of Philadelphia's residents and fostering the revitalization of our neighborhoods. The

first is the funding cuts versus new resources for housing and economic development.

The City, as we all know, is facing reductions in federal resources to address housing and community development and has lost 30 million, or 37 percent, of its federal and state funding for housing and community development in the last two years alone.

At the same time, we know that the City is trying to use its own resources and is facing very limited economic resources due to tax collection and so on.

We think, though, in the face of all of this, it's imperative for the City to commit and expand General Fund dollars and capital budget for affordable housing, neighborhood economic development and an effective vacant property system. Such system and support will help sustain communities until the economy rebounds.

In addition, because of the constraints of CDBG funds, we urge the City to follow in the footsteps of previous Administrations and provide more flexible resources from the General Fund or the capital budget to support commercial mixed-use real estate development and fit-outs, streetscape improvements, our neighborhood and commercial corridors, and revitalizations of disinvested commercial corridors surrounding moderate-income residential neighborhoods. Our neighborhood is not eligible for federal funding or some of these restricted funding, and these more flexible funds are the only funds that are available to meet these important needs.

The second item is maintaining and reusing vacant and blighted property. It's an incredibly expensive process for the City, spending over $20 million a year, and the City is using $2 million a year in unpaid taxes. We are just

encouraging the City to continue to invest in this kind of activity.

We look forward to the opening of the City's front door as a single point of entry for vacant property. It's hugely important. But we're also asking the City to commit to streamlining the land management system so it can increase the tax base of the City. We urge the City to take the next logical step and create the Philadelphia land bank.

The final item pertains to a circuit-breaker measure for low-income homeowners. I think there's a particular concern as we're moving towards the citywide reassessment based on actual value that some folks, particularly low-income homeowners, are going to be caught between a rock and a hard place, having purchased or owned their property at a value that they can afford and seeing much higher increases in property values around them. This leads to a serious crunch if all the sudden the

taxes are increased at a huge percentage. It is critical to keep people on fixed incomes in their homes and not push them out of the neighborhoods where they've always lived.

We're asking the City to make sure that there's adequate circuit-breaker measures in place before the residents are impacted by large increases and this kind of fear that a large tax increase would bring.

Thank you. I was done.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

Before I call on Councilman Green, I just want to say, one of the things that you just referenced, this whole issue about actual value and the City's changing the taxing system, is one of the reasons why we made sure that we got out here in these neighborhoods, because there will be an impact and we need to get a clear sense directly from

those individuals that it will impact, which will be everyone, some possibly negative, some maybe not at all, but some possibly in a positive sense, that we have a direct relationship with you to get a clear understanding as we move through this process. And I got to tell you, it is extremely complicated, that when we do it, that we get it right.

One of the reasons why, aside from the fact that I really like State Representative Cherelle Parker, is that the reality is that we will need the state to help us with some measures on the state level that will possibly create some buffers that will minimize any necessary negative impacts as it relates to this process.

So I hear you and I want to say it is very important.

Now I'd like to recognize Councilman Bill Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

I just want to thank everybody

that's testified so far and come out tonight. It's great to see so many people here taking an interest in what we're doing.

I want to briefly address three issues you raised. The first is land bank and abandoned lots, et cetera, under-cared-for properties, et cetera. Councilwoman Sanchez and I and co-sponsored I think by most people here tonight introduced land bank legislation and other legislation that will allow low-income homeowners to get back onto the good tax-paying rolls by paying as little as 5 percent of their monthly income, to enter into payment agreements that will be automatic and not have to be negotiated, so that people can feel ownership of their properties again. So we're trying to address that in two ways, by creating a land bank and allowing people who want to stay in their homes to stay in their homes.

With respect to AVI, we have --

the only measure that City Council can impose or the City can impose by itself, as Councilman Clarke was suggesting, is a smoothing so that it allows people to -- it moves us into -- it moves people into over three years the amount they'd have to pay for people who have to pay more. The problem is that people who are overpaying today get their taxes lowered over three years and, in theory, could all appeal because they would have a tax bill saying that they should be paying less and the smoothing is preventing them from paying less.

So we're not quite sure how that's going to work, and we do need state support to do any kind of circuit-breaker at all that's going to be effective and not subject to appeal at the Board of Revision of Taxes. But we are paying close attention to it.

You mentioned another issue and it's escaped me that I wanted to address. But thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. SNYDER: Thank you very much for being here and giving us the opportunity to talk.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Lou Agre. Lou Agre.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: Matt McClure. Matt McClure.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: James White.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. WHITE: Good evening, Council President, esteemed members of City Council. My name is James White. I reside at 624 Edgemore Road in Overbrook. Councilman Jones, my Councilman.

I am also a member of the Neighbors of Overbrook Civic Association, so I will be representing them in some of

my comments, as well as I'm employed as the Policy Coordinator of the Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporations.

PACDC, as you know, is a citywide association of 90 organizations, including 45 CDCs. You've heard from some of our members, some of our allies this evening. Thank you for providing us this lovely venue to talk about the City budget.

So I won't go into a lot of the things that our Vice President of our Board of Directors, Ms. Snyder, mentioned, but I will focus on one thing. It is near and dear to us. And that's dollars.

The City has lost 35 percent of its federal and state support for housing and community development over the last two years. And the City Council, yourselves, the Mayor and his Administration are facing some very difficult decisions on how to allocate

some very scarce resources.

For our part, we were able to successfully get state authorization on an annual amount for the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund last winter of $3.5 million. While it helps, it's not enough. We believe the City has an obligation to commit its own local resources to address these needs, especially given the dramatic reductions in federal and state funding for housing and community development. It is imperative that the City expand its commitment from the General Fund and/or from the capital budget for affordable housing, neighborhood economic development and an effective vacant property system. Such support will help sustain communities until the economy rebounds.

In the City's FY 2013 Preliminary Consolidated Plan -- and I know -- I just want to mention this, because I thought it was important --

both the Commerce Department and the Office of Housing and Community Development have zeroed out funding for the City's mixed-use development funds, which was created by legislation introduced by the Honorable Curtis Jones, Jr.

We all know the impact that rehabilitating vacant properties on neighborhood commercial corridors can have in restoring, in rehabilitating a community and lifting its residents and providing affordable housing. We believe that it's imperative in order to get more dollars, expand the tax base, increase affordable housing that the mixed-use development fund be restored. And we looked at the Mayor's Five Year Financial Strategic Plan for 2013 and 2017, and we discovered that 7 percent, or approximately $2.5 million of the City's 3.56 billion just for Fiscal Year '13, is General Fund revenues generated from non-tax revenues. As you know, these

locally generated revenues include various fees, fines, permits, other charges assessed by the City. We believe the City should recycle at least 50 percent of these revenues to address residents and neighborhood housing and economic development needs.

Thank you for your time.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony and your continued support.

MS. LEWIS: Drew Bantly. Drew Bantly.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. BANTLY: Thank you, members of the Council. I appreciate the opportunity to talk before you. I had a couple items today. The first thing that I would like to really bring attention to is the two last speakers that we talked to. Currently, I'm the President of Wissahickon Neighbors Civic Association as well as the spokesperson for a

coalition of civics in the Manayunk, Roxborough area, and we also want to talk about points about neighborhood development. Since we've already heard some discussion on that, I'll kind of skip over that, not to embellish that anymore.

I had a second item that I wanted to really talk about today, and that was trying to establish some extra funds for License and Inspections. I'm sure all of us in the room here are upset over the tragedy that occurred recently with the firemen, so I don't really want to get into that, but the other point is, many of us in the community really do want to help License and Inspections. We think that the progress that that group has really done in the last couple years has really progressed, but the next step is really giving them the money and the tools to really work with the community and the neighborhoods creating online systems. 3-1-1 was a great starting

point, but there is some disconnect between them.

We would also like to have L&I findings for housing inspection license. Many of us, many of you work with some of the local universities, Temple University, Saint Joe's, University of Pennsylvania, where there are some housing issues there with some of the rental properties. We'd also like to see some of the -- what has gone on in some of those properties, inspection reports, things like that.

President Clarke just mentioned the impact on neighborhoods. These are the type things that we feel as community members we can actually work with City services, if you start to provide more tools for them in order to start to work back with the community. So that was the one thing that I had wanted to talk about.

And then I have one last item about a capital project that I had wanted

to do, but I think it's really more appropriate that I speak to Councilman Jones directly about that. So I'll leave that with his office in the back.

So thank you for your time. I appreciate it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

MS. LEWIS: Judith Robinson. Judith Robinson.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: JP Miranda. JP Miranda.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: Helena Riley. Helena Riley.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: Majeedah Rashid.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. RASHID: Good evening, everybody.

(Good evening.)

MS. RASHID: My name is

Majeedah Rashid. I'm Chief Operating Officer of the Nicetown CDC. We're a member of the Philadelphia Association of CDCs. I'm also the Executive Director of the Nicetown CDC NAC.

Members of City Council and especially our new Councilwoman, Cindy Bass, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to give testimony today. I want to first recognize and acknowledge the daunting task that you all have to address the issues, concerns and needs across the City and in our area, the 4th and 8th Council Districts.

My talking points have been prioritized according to the needs of the neighborhoods that are served by the Nicetown CDC as they are related to the priorities of the City.

Number one, I want to mention that we need to increase new housing and produce new housing units. The Nicetown CDC has only begun to effectively address the need for affordable housing with our

most ambitious development to date, Nicetown Court. One hundred percent leased up since December 31st, 2011, this project produced 37 general family rental units, which we were in dire need of in our area. More than 600 applicants from across the City and beyond applied for housing at Nicetown Court, and many others have already asked to have their names placed on the waiting list for Nicetown Court II, which is being built at the Wayne Junction area. This is just one example of the need that must be addressed in order to reduce and eliminate homelessness and unacceptable living conditions in Philadelphia, which is another priority of the City.

We recognize that the City has lost more than 30 million, or 37 percent, of its federal and state support for housing and community development over the last two years, but at the same time, we have been successful in obtaining state authorization to increase annual

revenues for the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund. While this is a milestone and an achievement for housing, this $3.5 million annual gain is only a small percentage of the massive cuts.

With all of this being said, the Nicetown CDC believes the City still has an obligation to expand its commitment from the capital budget for affordable housing and neighborhood economic development. If the City can find $20 million in its capital budget to renovate Love Park for the second time in ten years, then it should also be able to identify and allocate funds needed to address the housing needs of our residents and the economic development needs of commercial corridors such as Nicetown's.

Additionally, we urge the City to adopt best practices from previous Administrations and provide more flexible resources from the City's General Fund or capital budget to support commercial

mixed-use real estate development and fit-outs, streetscape improvements on neighborhood commercial corridors, and revitalization of disinvested commercial corridors surrounded by low- and moderate-income residential neighborhoods.

Number two, we want to bring attention to the need for creating jobs by attracting and retaining businesses. Commercial corridor support and small business lending drive this priority of the City, and the Nicetown CDC has been working diligently to implement this component of our neighborhood plan. Nicetown's corridor has been previously labeled as disconnected, especially with the Roosevelt Boulevard running right across it. Nevertheless, we were successful in attracting Temple Physicians, Inc. as our anchor tenant for Nicetown Court. Nearly 100 construction jobs and 20 permanent jobs were established with that development alone,

and Nicetown Court II, which is going to be across from the Wayne Junction train station, we're looking for that to do even better.

In order to continue achieving these types of successes on our corridor, we need to continue building our capacity. A commercial corridor manager and the resources to establish a corridor of maintenance and public safety initiative would not only create jobs but it would help to enhance and optimize our sustainability.

Many difficult decisions are being made as it relates to the CDBG funding that drives City programs. We want to emphasize that the return on investment is inevitable when these resources are placed in Nicetown.

Last, but not least, I have to say that we want to focus our priority with our neighborhood advisory committees. The Nicetown CDC NAC has been around for the last ten years and

has delivered services in a 12 census tract area. And just to summarize, part of the CDBG cuts included a 15 percent budget cut that affected the Nicetown CDC NAC and causing a layoff.

Simply said, shouldn't the NACs be worth their weight in gold? NACs are often the first responders to poverty reporting and monitoring crime, getting utility bills paid and numerous other things that are taken for granted. Foreclosure diversion, block captain organizing, vacant lot and alley cleanings, you name it, we are a one-stop shop for getting it done, and if we can't do it, we can tell you who can.

How much is the City -- is the budget for the City's 20 NACs? It's about $1.3 million. That's simply amazing and unbelievable. The NACs are critical to all of the priorities of this city, so can't we find a way to build their capacity? We are asking that you take a closer look at the very component

that makes it possible for all of the resources outlined in the Con Plan to come to the City, the one that was put there to guarantee citizen participation in the planning process, neighborhood advisory committees.

Respectfully submitted, thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

The Chair recognizes --

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you, Mr. President.

I also want to thank everyone that came out tonight, particularly the work of the community association, the Pennsylvania Association of CDCs and the NACs.

I completely agree, we are extremely challenged with our CDBG funding, but I make a note that we have

to really have a discussion about the City's commitment to supplementing and leveraging that money. We're the only major city that doesn't provide general operating support to CDBG. And some of the efforts as those efforts of Councilman Jones with the mixed use, we've complicated your ability to put that money in the street because of the type of funding that we use.

So I'm encouraged by the discussion today. It's one that I know for many of us we've been having about how do we leverage general operating fund so that we can cut some of the red tape that limits the work that CDBG allows you to do in the street. And I am particularly concerned and I'm glad it was brought up today of the NAC funding. I do not think that this notion of across-the-board cutting when NACs have demonstrated to us time and time again, whether it's Nicetown, Hunting Park, we have many in my district, you guys know

how to leverage money. So we really need to sit with you before we come up with a Con Plan that just does 5 percent, 15 percent and figure out how we better leverage that money.

But we completely appreciate the work that you do and understand that we have to have a policy shift about how community development gets funding. We don't expect more money to come from the feds, so we have to step up to the plate, and I think some of us are prepared to do so.

So thank you so much for your work.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

Ms. Rashid, your testimony reminded me what I wanted to say to Ms. Snyder, which was that I personally have talked to Councilman Jones and

Councilwoman Brown and other people about organizing a cleanup for Love Park, where we go take some soap and water and scrub it, and then make that $20 million available for neighborhood economic development in the capital program.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So I will not be voting for funding for Love Park, and hopefully when we organize the Love Park cleanup, we'll get some participation from Cloverly and Vernon and other places to help us clean that up so we can spend that money in the neighborhoods.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Quibila Divine. Quibila Divine.

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: She submitted written testimony. It will be

read into the record.

MS. LEWIS: Colin Johnson.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. JOHNSON: Good evening, Councilman, Council staff. I'm basically here representing the African American construction community. I'm a member of the Council Roundtable. I'm a member of the National Association of Minority Contractors. And one of the problems we have with Philadelphia is that when it come to construction, they've been kind of unfriendly to the African American community.

When you see the construction sites, when you see the courthouses coming up, when you see Dilworth Plaza coming up, you see an absence of African American members, particularly young men.

What we're trying to strive for in Philadelphia is construction diversity, where you go in the jobs and you see the construction sites looking

like Philadelphia. Most of the time we go on the job sites, we try to get opportunities, and one of the first things they say is that you have to be in the union. And historically African Americans, we haven't been predominantly in the unions, and today we're still not in the unions.

So what we really need the civic leadership to do is create some union diversity. If we're going to be a union town, let's let the unions have some diversity.

Right now, specialty trades, particularly specialty trade unions, they're dominated by white males, electricians, plumbers, carpenters. The staffing, there's white males. The executive staff is white males. And most of the membership are white males. And the problem we have -- we're not anti-union. We just want to -- if we're going to be a union town, let's make it a union town for all the ethnic groups.

Let the unions look like this Council chamber. We have Asians, we have whites, we have African Americans, and that's what we're really trying to do, particularly if it's a public works job.

(Applause.)

MR. JOHNSON: If we got public funds on the job, the job should look like the public.

Construction is one of the biggest budgeted items in any major entity, whether it's a city, state, federal government, hospital, university. Construction is one of the biggest budgeted items out of that entity. So construction, you're going to have human beings look above the builders. So if we know that construction is a big budgeted item and we know that it's pretty much a male-dominant industry -- no offense to the women, because my niece is an electrician, and I trained her. But it's a male-dominated industry.

Now, if it's a male-dominated

industry and you pretty much don't have that diversity, then you're leaving out large quantities of other ethnic groups. And we think that if you're going to be a benefactor -- we think that the public or African American contractors and our youth should be benefactors of these public workshops too. It just shouldn't be one dominant community, particularly white males, being main benefactors of the public works jobs.

I was at a community meeting the other day and public monies in the job, and the first thing that the representative said is, a union job. I mean, here, a community full -- this is West Philadelphia. It's a hall full of community members. And when the guy said that this is a union job, nobody is in the room in the union.

Now, I'm a card-carrying electrician. And there was -- Jihad Ali happened to be there. He's a retired carpenters union guy. He still carry his

card. But everybody else was just plain regular, you know, folk just trying to get opportunities. And when he said you had to be union, it kind of like put a damper on the whole project in terms of participation, because we're just not in the unions like that.

So what we would like the civic leadership to do is try to get these unions to diversify. Our young men, if they're not in the industry, then we're not going to have any future contractors, because public works jobs, those are jobs where you build your capacity, you build your business, you get your warehouse, you get your trucks, because you need these six district contracts to build capacity. Now, if we're not in there, then we kind of like stunt our growth a little bit when it comes to benefactors of public works jobs.

We was working -- when Goode was Mayor, the City wasn't signature to the union when Goode was Mayor. He was a

good -- we was working. We was doing public project, public works jobs. And then when Ed came along, he did the signature with the unions. The City became signature with the unions. So we had eight years of Ed Rendell, then we had eight years of John, all signature to the unions.

Now, remember, we're not anti-union either. We just trying to become pro-African Americans when it comes to the job site.

So what we'd like to do is, we would like to see our youth into the construction trades so they -- because they're going to be the future contractors. They're coming to me all the time, Come on, give me a job. But, you know, you can't hire the community if you don't get the contract to support that.

So we're constantly trying to get some of these public works jobs, but they throw that -- you got to be

signature to the union. Well, you need a $60,000 bond to be a union contractor. To be in plumbers union, you need about $20,000, $30,000 just from the beginning to get time into the union.

So either we need to -- we're asking the civic leadership to do something about this issue, because as long as we become a union town and as long as everything stays the same, you're not going to have that -- it's not going to look like -- it's going to continue to look like it is now, and it don't look like us when you come to these job sites, because we're just not in the unions.

I mean, you know, the membership of the unions' executive staff, they looking out for their life, their folk. I mean, people do that. They look out for their group. Well, because there's no representation, there's no African American representation in the electricians union, the plumbers union, the carpenters union,

there's no black BAs, there's no African American BAs, there's no African Americans in the executive staffing. So we really don't have a representation there. So our youth aren't really going into the apprenticeships like we would like them to be. So we want them to learn the latest innovations, the latest technology in construction.

So we're asking the civic leadership -- you know, we appreciate the legislation that's going forth, but until we create some union diversity, we're going to -- this problem will probably be around for a while.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Right. Can I --

MR. JOHNSON: So we're really asking you guys to come around and help us out and see if we can do something about this.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Can I --

COUNCILMAN GOODE:

Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilman, go ahead.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Go ahead.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

Thank you. How you doing tonight? We had the pleasure of working together on a number of things.

Today, this morning, I had an opportunity to visit YouthBuild -- I'm sure you're familiar with that program -- along with the Chairman of the School Reform Commission, Pedro Ramos, and I was quite encouraged by the school took a lot of individuals who may have had some challenges but got them in the proper direction and engaged in learning construction opportunities and going on to apprenticeship programs and all. And while I was sitting there and I was encouraged that the people I was talking to and how successful the program is, the reality is, they said, Well, we only have

200 members, 200 students.

I said, Well, why do you only have 200 students?

They said, Well, the reality is, we have to be in a position, one, we don't get significant funding from the School District to have more. Two, there's limits in terms of certain federal and exterior funding. And the third thing, we have to really have an interaction directly with the individual.

So I said, Well, we need to create more of these. Maybe we can only have 200 in this particular school. Why can't we create more YouthBuilds? And it wasn't a real answer that I was really comfortable with, so I talked to Pedro Ramos, the Chair of the SRC, and I said as we in Council currently deliberate, because this is a part of the process that they're asking for additional funding for the School District to basically ensure that the budget is whole, as a part of that process maybe we

have to create additional YouthBuilds in the schools, so at the end of the day, if it's going to be a union town, then we create an environment where individuals coming out of school, one of the things that I always thought was appropriate, to be able to take the apprenticeship test when you come out of the school and be a part of the process that allows you to be an apprentice and ultimately a journeyman. Because I agree with you, we have to be engaged and diversify those unions.

Now, we fortunately actually have a current -- as you talk about diversity, we now have again a member on the Council who is actually a member of a union, and some of the conversations I've had with him -- you know who it is -- that talked about a process that we need to establish with this Council, with the School Reform Commission, with the Administration and with the unions to talk about fulfilling that promise that

years ago, maybe it was four, five years, ago when Vallas was here, he said that he would create a process in the School District that would allow individuals to learn and have the unions involved in the schools to come out and be prepared to go in the construction trades. Because I agree with you, that we got to diversify, but we have to be adequately educated to be ensured that we'll be -- because trades are not what they used to be. You got to learn. You got to have a knowledge of a whole lot of different things.

So as we move ahead, I want to make sure that we include you all. And I know you and Jihad for a long time and all the wonderful work you've been doing. So I'm sure you have our commitment. Councilman Goode, I know, is actually working on a lot of legislation.

Let me recognize Councilman Goode real quick.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,

Mr. President.

Let me try to make it as plain as possible. The issue is not just union diversity. We have women and people of color within the unions who are qualified who can't get work. If we have more women and people of color within the unions, that doesn't mean they're going to get sent to the job.

The only way we can actually enforce this is enforce who actually does the hiring, and it's not the unions who actually do the hiring. They get people hired and send people to the job sites. It's the actual developers and project owners who do the hiring.

And so when they send people to the site, if it doesn't look like what we've requested in terms of diversity, they're supposed to send people back and send some other people. And that's the way it has to happen. It's not just about holding unions responsible for diversity. It's about whether project

owners that receive the actual taxpayer dollars, developers who actually receive the taxpayer dollars are following the rules in terms of what they're supposed to do.

So until we penalize and debar people for allowing the unions to send people to the site without diversity, it's not going to move forward.

That being said, the next step is also look at some of those project owners. If the project owner is the School District, we have a problem. If the project owner is the City of Philadelphia, we have a problem. That's internal.

Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. JOHNSON: We appreciate your commitment and we appreciate your legislation.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: First of

all, again, let me applaud our President for insisting that we come out and listen, because it strengthens our resolve as we make those tough decisions about what we prioritize.

I had an opportunity to travel up to Lehigh where they had an industrial school, high school, 3,200 students, not a metal detector in sight, not a curse word, not a fight, because these young people understood that upon graduation, they were actually going to get a job in a trade.

A young man 14 years old was measuring twice and cutting once, learning those basic trades principles. He knew that the metal that he was cutting was going to wind up on a Space Station. Nanotechnology, other things that are actually housed out of Philadelphia, they were being taught to take the jobs to.

So what I'm encouraged about is that, first of all, we're going to have

to do some heavy lifting when it comes to our public school, but I hear a commitment that all roads don't lead to Harvard. Some of them lead to roofing, electrical, and if they don't, what are we paying for?

So we're going to ask those tough questions as we deal with the SRC and the education. Councilman Goode and other members on this body, many of them, are fighting about inclusion, but if you don't have tradespersons that can measure and do basic math, then what are we getting set-asides for?

So it's a two-pronged approach, as the Councilman talked about. You have to hold the contractors' feet to the fire, but we have to produce craftsmen just like you.

I had an opportunity to grow up with you, so I know the road you traveled to become the electrician you are. But that saved your life. Your hands, your trade saved your life. I'm not

testifying about you. You could testify about yourself, but I do know you. And the point of it is, we need to replicate your success story over and over and over again.

So we're listening.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Councilman.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

I agree with everything Councilman Goode, Councilman Jones and Councilman Clarke said. I want to add to that that one of the major problems we have is the City public works. The City itself spends $600 million on outside contracts. Some of that is for construction. Some of it is for security guards. Some of it is for people to work in food service in a City facility like

the Prisons or a nursing home or somewhere else. And I have introduced a bill co-sponsored by most of the people up here that would require that 100 percent of the jobs go to City residents. That is a constitutionally permissible --

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- designation. And I do need public support for that measure, and so I hope that you will all come in and testify in favor of that when I hold hearings on it, those that support it.

Thank you.

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

MS. LEWIS: Shelah Harper. Shelah Harper.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. HARPER: Good evening, Council. Thank you so much for coming out to the community. I am Shelah

Harper. I'm with the Asia Adams Save Our Children Foundation, and just as I say, we are focused on children, to the last breath I have in my body.

Teen dating violence has become the number one killer for young women between the ages of 16 and 24, one of the number one killers. We have been working in this area for the last seven years. As you noticed, within the last three years, nationally everybody is caught up with everything in terms of understanding that teen dating violence is one of the leading causes of death of young women, which is why the nation's federal government has now recognized it.

One of the things that I am deeply concerned about is children who are at risk. The children who are at highest risk are children that very often come through the child welfare system, because of the fact that they don't have parents, they don't have role models, they are subject to doing riskier

behavior. And I notice when I looked at your 128-page budget last night that was full of numbers, what's going on with DHS? I looked at Grants Revenue, and it went from in the year 2011, it went from 25 million that was estimated to 5 billion in 2012 that was estimated to be spent on the budget, and then all of the sudden it dropped 90 percent to 574 million. I don't understand those numbers. It's on Page No. 55 of the document that the Mayor submitted on March the 8th.

Those numbers are crazy. They make no sense. You can't go from 25 to 5 to 574 down to 540.

I also see that the state has decreased its funding to the City, it looks like about 50 percent. How are we going to make up that difference? I know that the City -- I'm sorry; that the state Commonwealth has also said no more focus on prevention funding. Therefore, we're going to focus on just foster care

and adoption.

What about all the preventive services, especially given the economic situation, in terms of job stability, in terms of homelessness, in terms of a whole lot of things that put adults under pressure to abuse and neglect their children, combined with cutbacks in the SNAP program that leaves children at a very vulnerable state?

My concern, because it is a very highly vulnerable population, if the numbers are varying so vastly like that, what is the solution? What are we coming up with since the state has decided to give us this boot? What are we going to do? What's our plan? Why would somebody estimate some crazy number like $5 billion that gets cut back to 574?

And so my concern is, we need some answers to that, because right now the numbers of children over the last ten years that have gone into the child welfare system has increased like 200

percent. So given the circumstances and the environment economically, our children are even at higher risk. The combination of the fact that we don't have adequate schools, we don't have adequate after-school programs, all that stuff, that leaves our children in a really vulnerable state.

So I'd like to really get some answers to that question. And that's basically all I wanted to say to you.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

MS. LEWIS: Reggie Walker.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

Good evening, everyone. Let me first go on the record as well to say thank you for showing up, because you really do affirm where many of us are already in terms of priorities, but as has been said, the heavy lifting has just

begun with deliberations where we sit, and coming out to hear from you up close and personal affirms where we could be and should be.

To the lady that just spoke, you are the sixth individual that has spoken that has indicated that children and youth is your priority. You should know that we have not yet heard from DHS. We are in budget hearings and they will continue until the 1st of May. I do believe the budget schedule says that DHS is to scheduled to come before us next week, and we will hear up close and personal the numbers that you have just articulated.

Now, you're absolutely right, the state has dramatically cut the mandated portion of DHS budget, and it is a harsh reality for us that we have to figure out if and how we can make up for what the state budget cut is. I don't know that as I sit here.

Your ultimate question is, what

are the solutions. So I offer one.

If you are a 501(c)(3) organization and you are providing services to young people in the areas of arts and culture, early childhood education, parenting workshops, athletic programming and early childhood education, then there is a fund at the Philadelphia Foundation known as the Children's Fund. And you should know that that fund was created in 2000 during the negotiations of the building of the new stadiums. It is now five years old. Every year I ask to see who they are funding, because I want to make sure that the Philadelphia Foundation is honoring the spirit of that legislation.

So if you are a 501(c)(3), you can go to the Philadelphia Foundation website and pull down the document that speaks to the Children's Fund. And if you're providing services to kids at any of those areas, then you can apply for those dollars.

Now, the reality is, it still has not yet -- each year I look at that list, and never yet in the five years that it has been in existence have we exhausted the dollars available for that year. Now, part of that is awareness. So I use moments like this to remind those of us who make children and youth a priority that that funding exists. That's one of the solutions available to those of us who want to make children and youth a priority.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It is the Philadelphia Foundation and the category of grant is the Children's Fund.

(Ms. Harper speaking without microphone.)

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Can you come to the microphone.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Ma'am, we can't hear.

(Witness approached

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microphone.)

MS. HARPER: It doesn't matter who the organization is. That's not really important. What's important is there's a big hole in the Northwest region. Because that particular organization is no longer operational in this Northwest region, there were certain programs that they were operating, like the Safe Lead program, like certain Healthy Start programs. Who is taking over their position? What's going on? There's like a big hole in the Northwest. When you have one group that pretty much has the lion's share, what is the plan for Northwest?

The numbers in the Northwest are going higher than they were in the prior years. So for the last three years, we've had nothing. So that's the other part of my concern. That's all I wanted to ask.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

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(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Councilman Johnson. I'm sorry; Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I just wanted to add to Councilwoman Blondell Reynold's point that on Monday, we will be hearing from DHS. We've experienced about $47 million in direct cuts. The Mayor's proposal does not seek any money to replace that. So if there's any replacement of the hole created by the state, it will have to be done by this body.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you. And it's good to see you. We've met and talked many times about your foundation and all the work you do in the community, and it's always a blessing to see you. And as we all know, that there are some

changes happening in the Northwest. We're doing things differently. We had a situation where there are a number of organizations that didn't do the best job that they could have done, frankly, in my opinion, for the community. But we're moving forward. We're doing things differently. We're starting new organizations. There are a number of groups in Germantown that are doing things differently that we're putting together, we're putting on the map, and we're going to get some things done.

So I look forward to working with you. Like I said, we worked together before. We've spoken before, and I look forward to you being a part of whatever it is that we decide to do in Germantown.

MS. HARPER: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Reggie Walker.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: Reggie Walker.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: Bernice Holman. Bernice Holman.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. HOLMAN: Good evening, Council. Thank you so much for this opportunity to speak to you this evening, and good evening to everybody.

My name is Bernice Holman. I've been a resident in Philadelphia all my life and in Logan section for the last 22 years. I have been a child and family advocate for the last ten years and working specifically with the Logan Olney EPIC Community Stakeholders group. EPIC stands for Equal Partners in Change, and the stakeholders at the community stakeholders, there are ten groups, neighborhood groups, around the City. We are a coalition who work together to find solutions in the community for children

and school communities and families.

I'm standing before you tonight with some things that I believe you need to hear about that affect all communities, whether it's Logan Olney or any other area, and it has to do with some questions that I have about the City of Philadelphia and the way that it does business, because it affects all of us, if I may.

First, I wanted to ask you about the deficit. The expected adjusted operating deficit is approximately $15 million for FY13. I want to ask you about that. You have an expected deficit. However, there are some situations that have already been highlighted within the news recently whereby the City has not collected its revenues when they should have.

Specifically, everyone is aware that there is a group of people, businesspersons, who are in New York and they have properties here in

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Philadelphia, 30 properties it's been reported, and their real estate taxes have not been paid.

Let me ask you, if you or I as individuals, residents of the City of Philadelphia, who own one piece of property and decide we want a second or a third or a fourth piece of property, can we purchase their piece of property without having paid any back taxes? No.

What is going on with the City of Philadelphia doing business with individual companies, corporations? When they want to purchase properties in the City of Philadelphia, how can they do this over years and years repeatedly and not pay any prior taxes? How does that happen?

(Applause.)

MS. HOLMAN: That's just one example. I'm only asking out of respect and out of love for the residents of this city, those of us who do our best if we're homeowners to pay our taxes, our

small businesses and CDCs who pay our taxes, have the difficult time, and then these large corporations get away with this. It makes no sense to me. Help me understand that.

And then the other part. Doing business in every single department of the City of Philadelphia, I believe we have the responsibility of doing it efficiently and effectively. One way of this is to make sure that whatever we print, we print it correctly. And again what I'm going to point out is of love, not to be harsh. But if you look on your booklet, City of Philadelphia, this pink booklet, and in every category, there's a listing that says "personal expenses." Can you tell me if that's supposed to be personal or personnel? And I mean no disrespect, but if it is personnel, meaning paying of staff, then you tell me who is signing off on that ticket when you pay someone to do a job? Did anybody proofread that? And there's lots of

other examples around the City where you do work, but are you really paying attention to what are you paying for?

So I'm simply asking if the City can find monies to build an ice rink or do anything else, take a look inside, go inside your house and see if you can do a better job with the monies that you're already spending. You might find some more money that you can spend to help our children, our families and our neighborhoods and our communities.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Mr. President.

I just wanted to answer some of the questions. And I think us on Council are very adamant about trying to go out and collect some of these taxes. I know

we had Revenue in the hearing in Council, and that's one of the main questions that we have about going out there. And there is -- one of our colleagues I think is introducing something tomorrow, a good neighbor bill, to hopefully start the process of doing that and go after these people who actually own, some of them, over 50, 60, 70 properties, and if they owe taxes, they shouldn't be able to get renters license from L&I. And we have to make sure that we're able to coordinate our different operations so that they speak to each other, so they could go if they do owe taxes, they're not being able to get licenses or permits to do anything else. And I think that's something that Council is really looking at right now. And I agree with you, we should not be taxing people who pay taxes, and then go after the people who don't pay taxes.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. President.

I just want to answer your question how does that happen directly. These are in no particular order, but there's three reasons: incompetence, no consequences and lack of resources.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

MS. LEWIS: Isolene Nelson.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. NELSON: My name is Isolene Nelson. I do volunteer work with the Youth Panel and I do volunteer work with the court system. And my pet peeve with the City is education.

I think we need to do away with one-third of these charter schools, because every time we pick up the paper, somebody is being investigated because

they've embezzled the money. I think instead of putting all this money in these charter schools, we need to go back to putting the money into our regular schools.

The gentleman was talking about the electricians and all. How can we get our children jobs when they cannot even use a ruler? If you ask them what one-fourth is, they're like, What?

I think we need to get back to spending more money on our education, because if you teach a man how to fish, he can feed his family. And we need to go back to basic education, and that's how I want my money spent.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The Chair recognizes Councilman Johnson.

COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you, Council President Clarke.

I really was here to observe

this evening, but I also want to just chime in on as we move forward, I think everyone up here, at least from my understanding, is also always focused on aggressively the issue of public education, rather it was saving the School District from themselves and trying to find funding during the last budget hearing prior to me becoming a City Councilman or the various other areas that I've watched my new colleagues engage on as it relates to making sure we educate our children.

But I also want to follow up on a component that when we also talk about education reform and making sure that we have high-quality teachers. We're not talking about beating down on teachers, but the reality is, the same way you hold us accountable, we have a job to do and we put our best foot forward and make sure we provide quality constituent services, quality legislation, the same thing goes for the public school system.

A lot of times when we do decide to move forward to move beyond the status quo, when you talk about making sure that you have a quality teacher in the classroom that's passionate, that has a commitment -- at least that's the area that I grew up in when Constance Clayton was the Superintendent of the Philadelphia School District, where a teach were come to my home for my behavior, a teacher would come to my home after hours regarding my grades, not asking for pay, not warning with the Administration, making sure that because they stayed beyond the school day an extra hour or two, they had to be paid.

So we're going to have a frank conversation about improving public education, and we also ask for your support to stand with us when we make those tough decisions to make sure we have -- and the same thing goes for quality administrators as well. I mean, I believe a principal should have the

opportunity to direct the sailing of their ship, because in every other agency, the leadership -- responsibility falls on the leadership. If the Eagles lose a game, they all point to Michael Vick first and foremost, because he's the quarterback. And I also believe in the same context, when we look at making sure our young people get a quality education, we have to take a reality look at how we support and hold accountable rather it's the Administration, the teachers, and also find ways to make sure that the school system is inviting to parents and community members.

I think once we took out NTAs and once we took out the lack of community and parental involvement, we started to see, from my personal opinion, the lack of spirit and high expectations of teaching our young people. And so I just wanted to put that out there, my response.

(Applause.)

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much, Councilman.

MS. LEWIS: Jane Pray and Robertson Pray, I guess.

(Witnesses approached microphone.)

MS. PEARSON: Good evening. My name is Robshebra Pearson. Thank you, Councilman Jones, Councilwoman Bass and others for this chance to speak for Philadelphia families and their two early childhood programs, Nurse-Family Partnership and Nurse-Family Visiting programs.

I ask that when you do your very important work, you remember these programs and what happens when public health nurses and home visitors partner with mothers to reach their life goals. These and other childhood programs help Philadelphia families become healthier and productive citizens. I know, because these programs helped me to have a healthy pregnancy, a healthy child and

become self-sufficient.

Thanks to my special nurse, Ms. Lois, and my home visitor, Ms. Paula, I completed 30 months with the Nurse-Family Partnership program, and I am a proud graduate. And my four-year-old son, Maurice, is enrolled in Mabel Morris Home Visit program. He is very bright and doing well in a great Head Start program. Ms. Lois is here tonight, as well as other nurses and family and friends.

I think Ms. Lois and Ms. Paula are special and so do 440 other mothers enrolled in the services. Twenty-five staff help new mothers learn so much about themselves, children and many school work and work opportunities in Philadelphia.

This is how it works: Each nurse has 25 mothers and make home visits four times a month until moms and children graduate. We work together in learning labor and delivery, caring for newborns, helping your child develop and

learn, dealing with toddlerhood, managing demands of school, family and work.

When I was 19, I was a first-time mother. I wanted to learn as much as I could to have a healthy baby and reach my heart's desires.

I learned more about how to be my own person, a parent, and what I wanted for myself and my son. It has been a lot of work on my part, and here are some of what I'm most proud of.

I kept my prenatal appointments and asked lots of questions to prepare for my birth experience. I breastfed Maurice for a year and helped him to get a great start in his life. I've learned breastfeeding helps babies be brighter and smarter. Breastfeeding support group -- I've helped a breastfeeding support group for family and friends. My son has had all his well checkups and shots and is protected from any diseases. Maurice is very smart and the Head Start staff tells me all the time. I know he's

going to be ready to start school.

I have a full-time job working for developmentally delayed adults in residential settings for the Salvation Army. I am now a first-time homeowner and busy planning a November 2012 wedding to Maurice's father. I'm a part-time student at Community College and I completing an AD degree to go to the university and major in psychology.

I tell you this so that you know how much it can help if a mother is involved in these programs, and many more mothers would tell you the same if they had the chance. We have -- we and the City are stronger because of the work of public health nurses and home visitors.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

MS. LEWIS: A.V. Hankins.

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(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: A.V. Hankins.

(No response.)

MS. LEWIS: Herbert Rodwell.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. RODWELL: First, I want to thank the Councilpeople for coming out tonight. It's been a blessing. I'm supposed to be at my church conducting a prayer meeting and I'm not there, but I'm going to ask you, the next time you have a session, please be on time and start it on time. Because I'm late.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: We will try, sir.

MR. RODWELL: I might ask you to write a letter to my pastor to tell where I've been.

My name is Herbert S. Rodwell. I'm the 52nd Ward, 5th Division. I am a committee person there. And I am concerned about the driveways in Wynnefield. They are deplorable. Some

are holes and others are cracks and what-have-you, and they need to be repaired. And I can give you some places where they are in pretty bad shape, that 5700 to 5738 Wynnefield Avenue, which was a common driveway between 5701 Drexel Road up until 5755 Drexel Road. The driveway is really in deplorable state. Also, the driveway between 5800 Woodcrest and 5800 Woodbine is in deplorable state. It is highly deplorable state.

Now, my second complaint is this: Non-operational cars. We have them all over Wynnefield. I see them. It's disgusting. Nobody bought a house in Wynnefield that a car was sitting in the back, or they wouldn't have never bought it. Flat tires, some sitting on crates. It's pitiful. It's really pitiful. But we have those, and we need to take our driveways and these non-operational cars away from the neighborhood. They are a menace to us. And I think we should do something in

your legislation, some money prepared in there too, that we could take corrective action to move these dilapidated individuals -- well, I shouldn't call them individuals, because they don't have a heartbeat, but anyway, these cars away from where they are. I was in an area today and has five cars that's flat tires. They're just there. They're just there.

And also, the last place that I saw was 2400 block of North 56th Street. There's five of them in that block in the rear. We could take those cars somewhere and sell them and get some money out of them. You know, we're talking about budget. Well, why don't we get rid of those?

Thank you for your attention.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

MR. RODWELL: And I'm going to pray for you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

We'll try our best to be on time next time. Thank you.

Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm probably going to -- I think Councilwoman Tasco is probably going to comment on this as well, but, Mr. Rodwell, put the word in to pastor for all of us, please.

In the 52nd Ward, like in the 50th Ward, like in the 10th Ward, like in various wards around the City, we have a problem with the privately owned driveways. And when I talk to residents, they say, Well, if you didn't send two-ton trash trucks down the driveway, maybe we wouldn't have this problem. And my senior colleague, Councilwoman Tasco, has been very much on top of this issue trying to come up with a compromise and come up with solutions for the driveway question.

Driveways and alleys for me are very important, because I believe they are a public safety issue. Let me tell

you why I believe that.

If an alley can't be traveled or if a first responder can't get down there when they're looking for someone in the dark, in a fire, in a panic, have to know where the potholes are or where the debris is so that they can jump over it, those are precious seconds that that first responder or a police officer chasing a felon can't get to.

So, yes, they are private property, but I believe in a greater context, they are a public safety issue. And so from that point, we have begun a vigorous effort to do two things. One, to find the solution to the driveways that plague our city, but in the alleys in the 4th District, we have cleaned over 400 alleyways using PYN, using CLIP and others. Not so much because we want to abdicate the responsibility of the private owner, but if Ms. Johnson, Ms. Smith, my mom, your mom are in a fire situation, those first responders have to

be able to get to those individuals in a swift manner and in a safe manner.

So I don't know where the pilot program may be. I'll defer to my other colleagues to talk about where we might find some relief on the driveways.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

Good evening, everyone, and thank you so much for coming out. I know a number of you and I've seen you in the community before, and some of you have come to City Council, and it's nice for us to be in the neighborhood so that we can have more participation from the residents.

This is a subject after my own heart, since I've been dealing with it for the last 15 years, driveways. We looked at a map of the City where we have most of the driveways and they're in the

4th Councilmanic District and the 9th Councilmanic District. And as you know and you may not know, the driveways are common easement owned by the abutting properties to the driveway, and it is a public -- private property and the owners of all the houses that abut those driveways are responsible for the repairs.

What we have found, that neighbors want to do the driveways, but they can't get cooperation from every neighbor. So what we've done -- and we're working with the Mayor's Office to try and figure out how we can use the City's staffing or some effort through the City to be the enforcement arm of the process, and what we'd like to do is be able to set up a system where the money is collected from everyone, because, you know, one neighbor says, Well, I'm not giving my money to somebody I don't know, and they abscond with the money. So if we could find a way to have the City be

in control of the process, then we think we could get better cooperation. And it's not an easy answer to this question.

So I want you to know that we are working on it, and Councilman Jones and I'm sure probably Councilwoman Bass will -- she has some driveways, a number of them in her district.

The other thing on the abandoned cars, the City -- the Police Department can move those cars if you call them, especially have flat tires, because it is a health hazard and it's a danger. And so if you have cars in private driveways in the back of the house, they can be moved by the Police Department. So you just have to contact Councilman Jones and he'll take care of that tomorrow.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I'd just like to -- because we're going to leave. The young man who spoke earlier -- and I

think he left -- about funding for arts and culture for young people. We do have the Philadelphia Cultural Fund that is funded by the City, and if anyone would -- it's on the website, the City's website. You can go on and apply to the Cultural Fund for programmatic money to run a Cultural Fund program. And the City also has an Activities Fund that's available to community organizations through your Councilperson to provide some programmatic support for your effort in the neighborhood.

So those activities can be found on the website, www.phila.gov/citycouncil, and you can find them or call your Councilperson.

Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

We have a number of people left to testify and I would ask if you please summarize your testimony, because I've been informed that we do have to leave

this wonderful building by or before 9 o'clock. So I just want to make sure everybody gets an opportunity to speak. So if you can best possibly summarize your testimony.

Thank you.

MS. LEWIS: Catherine Adams.

(Witnesses approached microphone.)

URSULA: Hi, everybody.

(Hello.)

MS. ADAMS: This is my daughter, Ursula. I'm thankful that people are here representing those causes, because now I get to concentrate on something that's also very dear to me.

I'm here tonight speaking in regards or on behalf of Northwest Neighbors of Germantown. We're an organization that came together directly to address one main issue, but we are determined to stay together to support many issues that are happening within our neighborhood.

Our community has lived -- I want to read a letter, and I'll be fast. And I don't expect a response this evening. So I just really want to speak to this.

Our community has lived alongside an outdated, oversized and under-maintained structure for over 50 years. While we are in support of the demolition of the Queen Lane high rise, we question what type of renovation and design will take place to improve the appearance of the community.

We continue to support homeownership options. PHA has closed that door on us. We want to make sure that that is addressed.

Other than known to be 55 units flanking three sides of the hallowed ground of Potters Field, very little has been presented to us as a community, and we continue to attend the meetings with not a lot of answers.

I'm going to read a quote from

4/18/12 - WHOLE - BILL 120164, ETC.

Brian Hickey of -- I may have misspoken his name -- of NewsWorks: This new historical monument is the most historic -- in the most historic of American cities will be the point of discussion and celebration in the coming year and beyond.

What he speaks to is the Potters Field that has been discovered and is continuing to be discovered, and we're so excited that this blight that has been there has brought light actually to something that is underground.

In later statements about, We expect the development of the surrounded land will meet the significance of the hallowed grounds, as a community, we've had the opportunity to watch the video presentations of all the things that PHA can do and has done. Our question is, what will they do for us? What will they do for the community after what has happened? Are they going to make sure it's LEED certified? Are they going to

allow this place to be a role model for the rest of the country? What can be done in public housing? Why limit ourselves and downplay what can be given to people in the public who need support and housing?

Are they going to do family heating and cooling, solar power harnessing panels? Will they allow places for the community to be outside? Will there be places for children to play? Will the neighbors meet each other?

We want the renters, if they're renters, to be part of our community. We really would love them to be homeowners, but if they're going to be renters, be a part of our community.

The playground that was once part of this land was sold to PHA for $1, $1, without the community's knowledge or consent, leaving the children and the community without a recreational facility. We would like to see a

supervised playground equipped with a recreational facility provided with programming to be relocated in an area that is safe, that is not a territory for gangs, which is not a place where drugs are sold, which is not a place where parents have to be worried about their children and not allow them to play. What's the point of putting a playground somewhere where the children cannot play?

We want a place where the community can come together, the adults, the children, the teenagers, everybody. This is really important to us.

(Applause.)

URSULA: Good-bye, everybody.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good-bye. Thank you. Thanks so much.

MS. LEWIS: John Graves.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm sorry. Hold on.

Councilwoman Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you, Mr. President.

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Ms. Adams, I did want to just mention that the good news is that PHA is still talking to the community. There are meetings on a regular basis, and I know that there are a lot of discussions about what can be and what should be on the site, what's going to work for the people who live in the community and what's going to work for the new residents who are coming in. So that's the good news. There's a lot of discussion. And I don't know if you've been a part of that discussion, but that's great, and I think that we should continue, if there's anything that our office can do. We've been in discussion with PHA as well, but if you have any particular suggestions, feel free to be in touch with us.

And also I've been talking to a number of folks in the neighborhood about a replacement playground, because the site that was there before, you know, I think that it was inadequate. It wasn't

a great playground, and we can do so much better. We can do so much better in the neighborhood.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN BASS: And I've been in discussion with a number of folks, including Lisa -- I know Lisa was here earlier. There she is -- about what we can actually do in terms of making sure that there are adequate recreational facilities in the neighborhood. So we're working on it.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilwoman.

(Applause.)

MS. LEWIS: Mr. John Graves.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. GRAVES: Hello, City Council. I'm a resident of the City of Philadelphia. I thank you for the opportunity to come to your hearing to testify.

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Speaking on behalf of the Fair Hiring Coalition and I'm speaking with regards to the Office of Economic Opportunity, who issues the economic opportunity plans.

We have been demonstrating down at Temple University for inclusion on that job site specifically, and we would like for City Council to help us in that they make Temple or rather enforce the economic opportunity plan that Temple has down there as it stands right now.

We, the Fair Hiring Coalition, look at the City of Philadelphia and oftentimes when construction is talked about, it's talked about from a contractor perspective. We are the rank and file, and we're saying that we in construction do not have diversity with regards to Latinos, African American males and also women, and we're asking City Council -- we thank City Council for this forum so that we can speak, but we're also asking City Council if they

would put some heat on Temple and other contractors.

Once you give them the economic opportunity plan that's issued by the Office of Economic Opportunity, that they would act upon it. That's all we're asking. We're saying that Temple did not pull from the area codes that were stated on the economic opportunity plan. So we're just asking for that.

Secondly, we believe that that would help some of the budget area issues that you guys have, because there are residents like myself, card-carrying union members, been in the union for 16 years of good reputation and good standing, that are not getting the gainful employment, and we need your help. And I can't say it enough.

Also, thirdly, I just want to address one of the issues that one of the Councilpeople had brought up, and they said that they would like for future legislation to represent 100 percent of

Philadelphia residents. I would caution that, because we don't just want to tie our work just to the City of Philadelphia, because if that happens, then maybe Bucks County will say the same thing and people from the City of Philadelphia could only work in the City of Philadelphia.

I would say that we need to have a significant amount of representation from the City of Philadelphia, but I wouldn't just cap it and say all City residents, because you'll get the outlying counties, Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks and so forth and so on, saying, Well, we have a stipulation where we only want residents from our counties to work in our areas.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Sir, before you leave, see gentleman in the back, Will Carter, and give him your name. I represent Temple University, along with eight other -- I'm

sorry; seven other at-large members, but I am solely responsible, because that legislation, the equal opportunity plan, was attached to legislation that I passed. So if you can give your name to Mr. Carter and we'll follow up.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you for your point about that. That is something that we are taking into consideration. Of course, we're talking about public works projects, not all employment in the City. And I don't know how much public works employment people living in the City are getting in Bucks, Montgomery and Chester Counties, but I imagine it mostly works the other way, in their favor.

However, there is legislation in many other cities that do this. Chicago, for example, has a reciprocity with other counties. If their public works projects include Philadelphians, we

give them a credit in our jurisdiction. And there's lots of other specific details to be worked out, but that is one of them.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

MS. LEWIS: Irvin Shannon. Irvin Shannon.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. SHANNON: Good evening, esteemed members of Council. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I'm going to take a short period of time to credentialize myself, for I represent the lowest strata of our population here in Philadelphia of the 1.5 million people in the fifth largest city of the nation.

I hold you accountable. As an elected official, you've received my vote and those of our friends, family and

members, many of whom I already know. In order to be able to move our city budget of about $4 billion, we hold you accountable for that.

I'm the Executive Director of the Harmonious Volunteer Center, and over the past 14 years, it has been our mission to provide community service, volunteer training systems and assistance to community-based development organizations.

On a day-by-day basis, we are effectively partnering with our City agencies through the Philly Rising initiative, to which I am a recent graduate of the Citizens Engagement Academy. I am a member of the Philadelphia Police Civilian Academy, Class No. 30. I am the national -- not the national; I'm the Philadelphia Director of the national Remember Our Troops Campaign, and those that are returning from the citizens from incarceration, drug abuse. And that

population is not so much represented here in this room tonight, so I'm going to speak on their behalf.

We're asking for your help, and you have changed your way of doing business with the citizens, and we appreciate that. As a matter of fact, we applaud you, and when you run for office again, you'll get our votes again and you'll have your jobs. But for those that do not have jobs, our organization has programs in which -- I'm afraid I won't be able to have enough time on this medium, so I'm going to e-mail each and every one of you specific details on how we can raise revenue for our city, create jobs for our homeless people and provide for those that have a need that are in low/moderate income.

We have solutions, but sometimes we miss the answers when we look at all of the -- well, you got a big job to do. You've got to sort through what's already working and make it

better. And all I'll say to you is that we challenge you, because you've asked for our help.

I run a volunteer center. That's what I do. And you've asked for our help. I stand here before you committed to provide you with that congenial help, not only on behalf of myself and my organization, but on the citizens of Philadelphia.

I want to thank you for your moment of time, your attention and your accountability to the citizens of Philadelphia by appearing here in this public forum.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

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

MS. LEWIS: Sylvia Simms.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. SIMMS: Good evening.

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good evening.

MS. SIMMS: My name is Sylvia Simms and I'm the Founder and President of Parent Power, also a committee member of the 11th Ward, 19th Division.

I want to talk to you today about family engagement. I say family engagement because we have to start thinking outside the box and not only think about parent engagement.

I am a grandmother. I have a granddaughter that's ten years old, and I need help. I need help from my City Councilpeople to hold the School District of Philadelphia accountable. We know that the City Council give funds to the School District, and I need to know and we need to know, parents, caregivers, where are the money going to.

The School District of Philadelphia this year got funded $2.4 million in Title I funds. That money was doubled. Last year they got 1.5 million.

I had the crucial conversation with the Title I office and asked where are those funds going, because this money is supposed to be going to parental engagement.

Once asking that -- I used to sit on the state Parent Advisory Council. I used to serve Philadelphia School District in Harrisburg. When I started having the crucial conversation with the state and the School District, I was removed off that Board.

Because what happens to a parent leader once they become knowledgeable? There is nobody to help them, nobody to fend for them, and they are out there on their own.

We have solutions. We know where those funds are hidden, and we know where those monies should be going.

I'm also going to say something to the community partners out here. The School District is talking about autonomy and decentralization. That means the

principals will have a whole lot of power now.

I commend -- I would like each and every one of y'all to go into your lower performing schools in your community and I will also ask each City Councilmember to sit one of your members on those Boards and join your school advisory council. The school advisory council, 51 percent of that council supposed to be a parent, a principal, teacher and community partners.

We know what the problems is in our community. We just need our elected officials, people that we put into office, to stand up and support us.

That's all I have to say. But I know that the City gives the School District money, and my thing is, y'all have to start holding the School District accountable for where those funds is going. They get a lot of money in federal dollars, state dollars, city dollars. Where is that money going to?

It's time for us to stop playing games with our children and working with the community.

That's all I have to say.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

MS. LEWIS: Irv Ackelsberg.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. ACKELSBERG: Members of Council, thank you so much for visiting us here in the 8th and 4th Council Districts.

I feel like we should recognize the fact that we are here in this miraculous building instead of -- this was going to be a casino. We're certainly pleased --

(Applause.)

MR. ACKELSBERG: -- that this building, this transformative building, is here, not only for our workouts -- and I encourage you to come back tomorrow

morning at 6:30. There's a dynamite spinning class -- but to have meetings like this in our neighborhood. We're just so pleased to have you come here and welcome you. I want to welcome you as a member of the Kroc Center.

I want to just make two comments, one in my capacity as President of the Friends of the Free Library, a citywide role that I play, but also as co-chair of the Southwest Germantown Neighbors Association across the street.

In terms of the Library, I know you've heard from the Library and from the Friends of the Free Library this week, and I don't want to belabor the point. You all know how much the Library means to the citizens. I want to make sure that every one of you reads that report from Pew that came out. And there's a page in there, there's a table that shows what we kind of all knew and what we were all arguing about in 2008. But it's an amazing graphic that shows

all of the functions, the public functions, that are served by the Library, and it's an amazing visual.

And I bring that to your attention just to say that the money that was taken from that budget back in 2008 has done some real damage. And I know that there were prior witnesses that talked about the problems with across-the-board kind of cuts. We get tremendous bang for the buck out of the neighborhood branches of the Library in providing so many different kinds of services outside of what we have traditionally thought of as library services, and we have to begin gradually to restore some of those dollars so that those libraries are back open more than the four or five days a week that we're seeing.

In terms of my neighborhood hat, what you all hear -- I know whatever neighborhood you're looking at is the problem of abandoned, derelict properties

is just taking down good streets. I mean, I know that there are many good streets where there's that one property that is just sucking the life out of a good block. And I want to give you -- on your way out tonight, I want to give you an example of one of those properties.

When you pull out of the driveway and if you head north on Wissahickon, the very first property across from -- when you cross Route 1, the very first property is an abandoned property that is -- if you look on the roof, there's a billboard. This is a property, the first house at Abbotsford Road, that is essentially a base for a billboard. This was a building that was a residence and a business that is in atrocious condition and now it's just a base for a billboard.

We can't let this continue, and I encourage you just as our local -- it's just a local exhibit of a problem that you all know too well. I encourage you

to check that one out on your way out.

And, again, thank you so much for being here. We really appreciate it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

(Applause.)

MS. LEWIS: Lisa Hopkins.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MS. HOPKINS: Good evening, and I'd like to thank you all for your time in coming to this area so that we can present our concerns to you.

I am Lisa Hopkins representing the Northwest Neighbors of Germantown. We are a small grassroots community organization, and it's only been in existing for six months, but we have made a lot of noise. And we thank Cindy Bass for her support for the short time that she has been in office, and we are so glad that we have you as our new Councilperson.

(Applause.)

MS. HOPKINS: Our concern this evening is that we would like to share our pertinent concerns regarding the demolition plans for the Queen Lane high rise apartment, the only high rise PHA-owned building in the Northwest section of Philadelphia.

We strongly feel that PHA and HUD have not addressed the community's extreme concerns and decision of utilizing the safest method of demolition that will not damage the underground infrastructures of water and gas pipelines, compromise homes in close proximity of 200 feet or closer and indeed further harm the remains of the Germantown Potters Field.

We're requesting that HUD, PHA and City Council form a partnership so that PHA is held accountable to form communications with the utility companies; for example, the Philadelphia Water Department, Philadelphia Gas Works and PECO, to guarantee feasibility

studies of the age and impaired sewer and water systems located underground within Queen Lane, Pulaski Avenue, Priscilla Streets and Penn Streets.

It should be made certain that if a water main break occurs, that the City of Philadelphia and the Dale and Geppert contractor corporations will be liable for any damages.

Flooding in the area of Germantown has been a 40-year-old problem that many homeowners have endured, and we should be guaranteed that if this problem exists, that there will be liability.

Our additional concerns is that we need emergency plans for relocation of the Wissahickon Playground. It breaks our hearts that children are without a recreation facility. Our community members have witnessed children climbing over fences of the John B. Kelly School just to play basketball.

Last week we engaged in the citywide cleanup where we cleaned up four

lots. Everything was in these lots except for body parts. A child came up to us at 12 years old saying, Can I help you, and she did for two hours. After we were done, she said it would be nice if this lot was made to a playground right at Penn and Newhall.

So I thank you for your time.

Cindy, we stand behind you 100 percent and we thank you for your support.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much.

MS. LEWIS: Marcus von Heppinstall. Marcus von Heppinstall.

(Witness approached microphone.)

MR. VON HEPPINSTALL: Good evening, everybody. My name is Marcus von Heppinstall. I'm a member of Germantown for 53 years, and I just want to say it's an honor to be able to speak in front of you at one time and it's also

an honor to speak to somebody who has a strong effect on my past and somebody I think is going to have a strong effect on my future, and that's Marian Tasco, because she's had a strong effect on my past, and I think you will, because we're going to work with you in the future.

But some of the things that I want to talk about is transparency for one. I know you're taking over from the last Administration, so you're almost like Obama taking over for the Bush Administration. You got a lot of things you got to take care of and a lot of things that you are not responsible for, but we're going to still see some of the residual damage that was done from the last Administration. And some of these things I want to just bring to your attention so that we know those are what maybe not -- it might just be my personal thing, but I think some of the things that they need to look at. And one is that trash situation.

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What we had before -- and let me just tell you, I own a hair salon in Maplewood Mall for 30 years and I pay $300 a year for special services. Right now our special services consist of the Philadelphia trash company picking up the trash as they normally would if they were coming to your house. So that's not a special service. That's what we pay taxes for.

What they instituted in the last Administration was to put the trash outside, stores to put the trash outside at 5 o'clock. Anybody that knows if you got paper, plastic, cardboard, peanuts, it's going to be Beirut by 6 o'clock that night. What happens and her solution was to put a vacuum cleaner out there with a seat on it so the guy can ride up and down the street after 9 o'clock in the morning, when he should have been out there at 6 o'clock in the morning. Because when people get up to go to work at 6 o'clock in the morning and they see

Chelten Avenue trashed, they think -- they become oblivious to the obvious. They become de-naturalized by the fact that it's out there.

So one of the things I just wanted to bring to your attention is that I would like as a businessowner and also just as a resident of Germantown, I would like to be a part of who is going to be in charge of that trash cleanup committee that you said you're going to appoint. I would just like to be informed, because what happened before was, we were not informed about what happens to Germantown. We found out about it as it was happening, such as the Save-A-Lot.

Germantown being up and coming with the three colleges that we have that are graduating students and also building more facilities because they want them students to work at their facilities, so they want to move those people into this neighborhood, your main supermarket should not be a Save-A-Lot. You're not

given -- not you, but what we were given was, we weren't given an option. We weren't given a chance to go ahead and try to expand ourselves. What we were given is what you got, and that's all you got.

So social services is what we don't need. We don't need another dollar store. We don't need another chicken joint that keeps you from not being able to cook. What we need is something to bring people back and have a reason to have a soul on Chelten Avenue.

You can't get a pair of men's decent leather shoes on Chelten Avenue. You cannot buy a man's business suit on Chelten Avenue. There's something wrong with the thinking.

We don't need another -- I'm sorry. We don't need another what they call -- last statement. We don't need what they call another poppy store to open up one block from our major supermarket. It doesn't make any sense.

Chestnut Hill would not have it. Mount Airy would not have it.

And when it comes to the playground, I think that we should save a playground any means necessary, because if they don't have a place to play, it makes no sense for it just to be a hole in the ground.

So I appreciate your time. Nice to see you guys.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you, Marcus. Just a couple of things. Number one, there is going to be a playground in that area. So I just want you to know that I'm committed. There will be a playground in that area.

And, number two, I'm originally from North Philadelphia. I grew up in North Philly, but when we came to shop, we went to the Germantown and Chelten

corridor. So I know what it used to be. I know it well. You could get everything that you needed there, whether it was clothes, things for your home, you could eat, there were restaurants, and it was just so much more.

I know we're almost out of time, so I'm going to be very brief. But I know what it used to be on Germantown and Chelten. I know what it can be, and I know what it should be in the future, and I look forward to working with you on that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Mr. President.

I just want to -- I think that was the last speaker, and so I want to make just a 30-second point, and, that is, what has been requested so far here tonight is $8 million for Parks, make up some of the $37 million from the General Fund, a new rec center in Wynnefield,

which will be a couple of million dollars, a new dog park in Wynnefield, more money to support schools -- the Mayor has already proposed $90 million that we didn't support them with last year -- and more money for libraries, and I think the cut to libraries is about $8 million over the last years. So let's just say half of that.

All of that, when you add it all up, is about $150 million, which is a 14 percent tax increase for everybody in this room, just so you understand. So what we have to do, our choice is very difficult. We have to choose between competing ideas for good with limited resources.

So we appreciate all your input, and I hope you'll support us as we make those difficult choices.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

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Any other comments by members of the Committee?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Folks, on behalf of City Council, I would like to thank you so much for your participation this evening. This is what it's all about, citizen participation at its finest.

I want to thank our friends from the Kroc Center and Reverend Bonnie, and I would like to thank our two host Councilmembers, Councilman Jones and Councilwoman Bass, for pulling together, as promised, a great event.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you all.

This concludes the neighborhood budget hearing for this evening. The Committee will stand in recess until Thursday, April 26th, 2012, 10:00 a.m.

Thank you all very much.

(Committee of the Whole

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recessed at 9:00 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 on April 28, 2012, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

(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.)

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