

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PROPERTY & PUBLIC WORKS
Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, May 22, 2024

PRESENT:

COUNCILMEMBER KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMEMBER MICHAEL DRISCOLL
COUNCILMEMBER JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILMEMBER JIM HARRITY
COUNCILMEMBER QUETCY LOZADA
COUNCILMEMBER MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMEMBER JEFFERY YOUNG, JR.
BILLS 240187, 240303, 240370, 240423, 240425,
2403431, 240435 RESOLUTION 240383
- - -

1 5/22/24 - PUBLIC - BILL 240187, ETC.

2 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Mr. Cameron,
3 will you please call the roll to take attendance
4 of members. Members that are in attendance will
5 please indicate that you are present when your
6 name is called. Also, please say a few brief
7 words when responding so that your image will be
8 displayed on screen when you speak.

9 THE CLERK: Council Milizada.

10 COUNCILMEMBER MILIZADA: Present.

11 THE CLERK: Vice Chair Squilla.

12 (No response.)

13 THE CLERK: Member Gauthier.

14 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Present.

15 THE CLERK: Member Driscoll?

16 COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL: Present.

17 THE CLERK: Member Harrity?

18 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Present.

19 THE CLERK: Member Young.

20 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: present.

21 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you. A
22 quorum of this committee --

23 COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL: Don't worry, I
24 got you Kendra.

25 THE CLERK: And we're recognizing

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2 Member Brooks as a guest.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you. A
4 quorum of this committee is present and this
5 hearing is now called to order. This is a public
6 hearing on the Committee of Public Property &
7 Public Works regarding Bill Numbers 240187,
8 240383, 240303, 240370, 240423, 240425, 2403431,
9 240435. Mr. Cameron, will you please read the
10 title of the bills.

11 THE CLERK: Starting with Bill Number
12 240187. An ordinance amending Chapter 16-700 of
13 the Philadelphia Code entitled Philadelphia Land
14 Bank to allow interested parties to require open
15 bidding when the Land Bank seeks to exercise
16 special authority to acquire property at a
17 sheriff's sale and allow prior owners to redeem
18 property when such special authority is
19 exercised, all under certain terms and
20 conditions.

21 Bill Number 240383, an ordinance
22 authorizing the city's chief innovation officer
23 or their designee to enter into a cable
24 television franchise renewal agreement with
25 Verizon Pennsylvania LLC, renewing the cable

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2 television franchise granted by the city to
3 Verizon for franchise areas 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the
4 city, all under certain terms and conditions.

5 Bill Number 240435 an ordinance
6 authorizing the commissioner of public property
7 on behalf of the city to acquire a free simple
8 title or a lesser real estate interest to all or
9 a portion of all parcels of land situated at 121-
10 25 East Cheltenham Avenue, Philadelphia,
11 Pennsylvania, all under certain terms and
12 conditions.

13 Bill Number 240303. Norton's
14 authorizing acceptance of the grant to the city
15 of two certain areas located on either side of
16 Hunting Park Avenue east of Whitaker Avenue a
17 slope easements under certain terms and
18 conditions.

19 Bill Number 240370 ordinance renaming
20 and designating the property, commonly referred
21 to as the West Oak Lane Library, located at 2000
22 East Washington Lane, as the Dwight Evans Library
23 of West Oak Lane in the city of Philadelphia.

24 Bill Number 240423. An ordinance
25 authorizing the commissioner of public property

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2 on behalf of the city to acquire fee simple title
3 or a lesser interest in real estate by purchase,
4 dedication, donation, condemnation, agreement in
5 lieu of condemnation or otherwise, and parcels of
6 land along the Schuylkill River and the
7 Wissahickon Creek for public recreational
8 purposes under certain terms and conditions.

9 Bill Number 240425. An ordinance
10 authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property
11 on behalf of the City of Philadelphia to acquire
12 a fee simple title or lesser interest in all or a
13 portion of a parcel or parcels of land from the
14 Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, the
15 Philadelphia Land Bank, and the Philadelphia
16 Housing and Development Corporation, all under
17 certain terms and conditions.

18 Bill Number 240431. An ordinance
19 authorizing the commissioner of public property
20 on behalf of the city to acquire fee simple title
21 or a lesser interest by purchase, dedication,
22 donation, condemnation agreement, lieu
23 condemnation or otherwise of certain parcels of
24 land along the Delaware River in the Tacony
25 Holmesburg area for the purpose of making,

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2 enlarging, connecting, extending, operating, and
3 maintaining public parks for recreational use
4 under certain terms and conditions.

5 And Bill Number 240428. Prohibiting
6 the commissioner of public property or any other
7 official of the city of Philadelphia known as the
8 city, acting on behalf of the city, from entering
9 into, executing or authorizing a lease extension,
10 lease amendment, lease renewal, or new agreement
11 by and between the city and the Commonwealth of
12 Pennsylvania for or on behalf of any Commonwealth
13 Department or Agency at the property located at
14 2100 West Girard Avenue, all under certain terms
15 and conditions.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Before I ask the
17 clerk to call the first panel, would any of my
18 colleagues like to make any comments? Mr. Clerk,
19 will you please call the first panel? We have --

20 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: I do --

21 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: -- to testify
22 this morning on Bill Numbers --

23 THE CLERK: Councilwoman.

24 (Witness approached witness table.)

25 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: I do have

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2 comments.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I'm sorry.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank you.

5 Thank you, Council Colleagues and to the
6 committee of Public Property & Public Works for
7 your consideration of the priority bid bill. I
8 have been advocating for this legislation for a
9 year and I want to thank Mayor Parker and the law
10 department for drafting the bill.

11 I also want to thank Council President
12 Johnson for recognizing the key role community
13 gardens play in our city and having me introduce
14 the bill on his behalf. This legislation
15 clarifies that the Land Bank has a priority bid
16 for properties going through sheriff's sale, a
17 tool that is essential to get community gardens
18 into the spaces of joy, education, food, and
19 community.

20 Protecting these gardens means a lot to
21 me personally because I know firsthand the impact
22 that they have on people and neighborhoods. In
23 the absence of this official legislation, many of
24 our community gardeners are considered squatters
25 by the city.

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2 We have seen residents who have faced
3 decades of disinvestments in our neighborhoods
4 take the initiative to clean up abandoned lots
5 and transform them into vibrant community spaces
6 through gardening. These gardens have a plethora
7 of benefits for our neighborhoods. A study by
8 Dr. Gina South of the University of Pennsylvania,
9 showed that cleaning and greening vacant lots
10 reduce crime by 29 percent.

11 These gardens also provide green space
12 and fresh food in neighborhoods that have often
13 have very limited access to these things. The
14 gardens also give our children a place to explore
15 their interests in nature and in science. Far
16 from being a squatter, these residents are some
17 of the untold heroes and sheroes that have helped
18 bring healing to neglected communities.

19 We need to make these legal and make
20 sure they remain in the hands of the individuals
21 who have been caring for them for years. Two
22 weeks ago, we held a hearing on urban
23 agriculture. And at the hearing, we saw the
24 people power behind the movement to restore
25 community gardens to rightful ownership so they

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2 can continue to benefit our Black and Brown
3 neighborhoods.

4 Dozens of gardeners turned out and
5 testified about the importance of their community
6 gardens. And by the end of the day, the whole
7 building was talking about it. It was one of the
8 most well attended hearings that we've had this
9 session and a beautiful presentation of people
10 power in action. And I know this because a
11 couple of my colleagues complimented the word
12 that went into the hearing and even stopped by
13 just to listen in.

14 If you were not able to attend,
15 gardeners from across the city spoke about the
16 joy these gardens inspire in their neighborhoods.
17 And as I have built support for this initiative,
18 I've also seen how these gardens spark joy for
19 myself. I have spent a couple of years touring
20 community gardens and hearing from those involved
21 about all the wonderful programs and
22 opportunities they provide.

23 It has inspired me to get active in my
24 own garden, where I've learned to find peace in
25 the simple act of digging in the dirt and

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2 bringing plants to life. These gardens are one
3 of our city's best resources, and the bill we're
4 discussing today will ensure they remain that
5 way.

6 We have hundreds of these spaces all
7 over our city, and 70 percent of them are in high
8 poverty neighborhoods where the majority of the
9 residents are people of color. But as the
10 property values rise, the threat to these gardens
11 is growing. Philadelphia used to be home to over
12 500 gardens, but over the past 25 years, we've
13 lost a third of those gardens.

14 Once the land is sold, we never get it
15 back, and we lose the opportunity to make
16 Philadelphia a greener, more beautiful city for
17 our children. As lawmakers, it is our
18 responsibility to protect these community spaces
19 and to support the people who care for them.
20 This is an environmental issue, a public safety
21 issue, and a racial justice issue.

22 By passing the priority bill out of
23 this hearing, we will continue the progress our
24 city has made in returning ownership of this land
25 from the big banks to our neighbors. Thank you.

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2 And I look forward to today's testimony.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Can you hear me
4 now? Thank you, Councilmember. Will the clerk
5 please call the first panel for Bill Number
6 240187.

7 THE CLERK: The first panel will be
8 Angel Rodriguez, Mike Moran, Jennifer Greenberg,
9 Mimi McKenzie, Garrett O'Dwyer.

10 (Witnesses approached witness table.)

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Good morning.
12 Please state your name for the record and begin
13 your testimony.

14 MR. RODRIGUEZ: Good morning. My name
15 is Angel Rodriguez. I am the executive director
16 of the Philadelphia Land Bank. Good morning,
17 Honorable Chairperson and members of the
18 committee. I'm here to speak in support of Bill
19 Number 240187, which amends the Chapter 16700 of
20 the Philadelphia Code entitled the Philadelphia
21 Land Bank.

22 This bill would allow interested
23 parties to require open bidding when the Land
24 Bank seeks to exercise its priority authority to
25 acquire property at a sheriff's sale and allow

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2 prior owners to redeem property when such special
3 authority is exercised, all under certain terms
4 and conditions.

5 The purpose of this ordinance is to
6 create certain mandatory processes in connection
7 with tax sales that will allow the Philadelphia
8 Land Bank to lawfully exercise its priority bid
9 under the state law.

10 The administration, City Solicitor, and
11 Philadelphia Land Bank drafted, introducing this
12 bill so the Land Bank can resume fulfilling an
13 important part of its intended mission, which is
14 returning tax delinquent, vacant, underutilized
15 property back to productive use.

16 Honorable chairperson and members of
17 the committee, I respectfully request favorable
18 consideration of Bill Number 240187 and would
19 also ask the suspension of the council rules to
20 allow first reading on May 23, 2024. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: If it's okay,
22 we're going to ask everyone that testifies to
23 stay on this side and at the end of the panel,
24 then we'll ask questions.

25 MR. MORAN: So, my name is Michael

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2 Moran and I'm here representing Iglesias Garden.

3 Do I begin my testimony? Yeah. So, good

4 morning, everyone. I appreciate the time. As I

5 stated, I'm here representing Iglesias Garden,

6 and today I will submit our organization's verbal

7 testimony in support of Bill 240187, legislation

8 that will grant priority bid to the Philadelphia

9 Land Bank.

10 I'm here today to express our support

11 for this bill because we believe it will allow

12 the Land Bank to serve the community in a more

13 productive manner and facilitate important

14 functions of its mission, such as protecting

15 community green spaces from being lost at

16 sheriff's sales and supporting community focused

17 land development.

18 For decades before even the Land Bank

19 existed, local residents have returned vacant

20 land to productive use while profit motivated

21 developers are currently purchasing and being

22 awarded dozens of lots to gentrify whole

23 neighborhoods. Long time residents and gardeners

24 are still waiting for land security tied up in

25 red tape. The reality is that our invitation to

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2 develop our communities usually comes in the form
3 of sheriff's sale announcements.

4 A core belief at Iglesias Garden is
5 that land sovereignty is essential to the
6 foundation of truly empowering communities. We
7 are a multicultural nonprofit made up of
8 neighbors, caretakers, educators, artists,
9 entrepreneurs, elders, and the youth, and so on.
10 Yet, with all these skill sets combined, we have
11 struggled to navigate the process to save green
12 spaces threatened by sheriff's sales and the US
13 Bank liens.

14 As a collective and with the support of
15 many in this room, last year we made some
16 progress in that struggle through intense
17 organizing that raised awareness, which
18 encouraged city council to step in and allocate
19 funds to secure and buy some of these distressed
20 properties. We often discuss generational wealth
21 through land ownership, but let's also include
22 generational wellbeing and good health through
23 preserving community green spaces.

24 Without this legislation, we won't be
25 able to complete the work to protect dozens of

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2 community-controlled parcels from being lost to
3 profit driven developers. We ask the city
4 council to support the longtime residents and
5 future generations by passing this bill. Thank
6 you, Council.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you.

8 MS. GREENBERG: Good morning.

9 Chairperson Lozada, Vice Chair Squilla, and
10 members of the Public Properties and Public Works
11 Committee thanks for the opportunity to speak in
12 support of Bill 240187 to allow Philadelphia Land
13 Bank to exercise its right to be sold bidder at
14 tax sale under the conditions outlined in the
15 bill. My name is Jenny Greenberg.

16 I serve as executive director of the
17 Neighborhood Gardens Trust, Philadelphia's Land
18 Trust for the protection of community gardens and
19 shared green spaces. Across the city for
20 decades, self-organized groups of residents, and
21 nonprofits have responded to abandoned properties
22 in their neighborhoods by taking matters into
23 their own hands, transforming neglected lots into
24 places of community strength, healing, and self-
25 reliance.

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2 These residents act out of love and
3 commitment to their community, investing their
4 own time and money to transform what is often
5 considered a public nuisance into a community
6 asset.

7 Just to echo some of the statistics
8 Councilmember Brooks cited, close to 70 percent
9 of community gardens and farms in Philadelphia
10 are in high poverty neighborhoods and service
11 sources of healthy food, safe green space, relief
12 from summer heat, and respite from the stresses
13 of urban life.

14 Studies from the University of
15 Pennsylvania have documented that cleaning and
16 greening vacant lots reduces gun violence by 29
17 percent and significantly improves mental and
18 physical health of nearby residents, including a
19 69 percent reduction in feelings of depression.
20 Despite these and other proven benefits, upwards
21 of 200 gardens and farms face an existential
22 threat because the people caring for them do not
23 have legal land tenure.

24 NGT's mission is to address this by
25 acquiring title for the gardens and holding

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2 ownership in perpetuity for the community's use
3 as green space so they can't be lost to
4 development. We've been able to preserve 53
5 gardens to date and are working with 30 more
6 threatened gardens that have asked for our help.

7 Once NGT acquires a garden, we can
8 provide insurance and support stewards on the
9 ground to troubleshoot challenges that arise. We
10 work with Pennsylvania Horticultural Society to
11 provide technical support, supplies, materials,
12 and infrastructure. Community gardens often
13 comprise multiple parcels with different owners.
14 To protect a single garden, we often assemble
15 land held by the various city-landholding
16 agencies and private property owners.

17 The toughest are gardens located on
18 abandoned tax delinquent land, where the owner is
19 deceased or can't be located. These keep us up
20 at night because of the frequency with which they
21 flip to developers. The Land Bank's ability to
22 exercise priority bid at sheriff's sale is
23 crucial to bringing longtime abandoned properties
24 back into city control. We've seen how this
25 process can work successfully.

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2 NGT was able to preserve the Five
3 Loaves Two Fish Garden at 55th in Jefferson after
4 Land Bank acquired key parcels as sole bidder at
5 tax sale, cleared title, and transferred them
6 into our protection. It's essential that the
7 Land Bank be able to resume acquisitions so that
8 it has the resources to scale up the number and
9 pace. If not, the city will continue to lose
10 gardens and we will continue to scramble to save
11 them when they're acquired by developers.

12 The Growing Home Garden in the First
13 District, Emerald Street Community Farm in the
14 Seventh District, and New Jerusalem, now Peace
15 Garden in the Fifth are just a few that would
16 have been bulldozed and built on in the past few
17 years if we'd not been able to purchase the land
18 or do land swaps with developers. To protect and
19 amplify all the good that gardens and farms do,
20 we need a less reactive, more scalable, and
21 equitable strategy.

22 With cooperative working partnerships
23 between community and city, we can streamline
24 fair and transparent pathways to garden
25 preservation. The city took a major step in this

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2 direction when it invested over a million dollars
3 last year to clear liens owed to US Bank that
4 encumbered 90 garden properties.

5 For years, US bank liens were the
6 single biggest threat to gardens because the bank
7 was sending them rapidly to sheriff's sale and
8 refused to stop or negotiate with us. This was a
9 huge step and an important one, but just the
10 first step. The properties are still privately
11 owned. Now the Land Bank must prioritize
12 acquiring them. I cannot emphasize enough the
13 urgency to do so.

14 Further once the Land Bank acquires the
15 gardens, it then must prioritize their
16 disposition so NGT and other community-based
17 groups can hold title and support the spaces long
18 term. I want to flag that there's a breakdown in
19 the system for garden disposition that also must
20 be addressed. The way the 2019 disposition
21 policy has been interpreted and implemented has
22 had a crippling effect.

23 Between 2015 and 2019, NGT acquired 44
24 parcels at 13 gardens from city landholding
25 agencies. But since 2020, we haven't been able

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2 to acquire a single lot. We have pending
3 applications for land at 10 gardens that date
4 back many years. Gardens and Department of
5 Public Properties inventory that were approved by
6 city council to be conveyed more than five years
7 ago have never gone to settlement or even been
8 transferred into the Land Bank.

9 This breakdown needs to be fixed so we
10 can support and invest in these precious green
11 spaces. It's extremely stressful for the
12 gardeners who've been in limbo for years with no
13 clear information or certainty for the future of
14 the gardens into which they have invested so much
15 over years and decades. Thank you, and I look
16 forward to continuing to work with you on this
17 important issue.

18 MS. MCKENZIE: Good morning. I'm Mimi
19 McKenzie, the legal director at the Public
20 Interest Law Center. For over 50 years, the Law
21 Center has been advancing the civil, social, and
22 economic rights of communities in the
23 Philadelphia region facing discrimination,
24 inequality, and poverty.

25 Some folks are surprised that a civil

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2 rights organization that overturned
3 Pennsylvania's gerrymandered congressional map in
4 2018 that recently had our system of public
5 education funding declared unconstitutional, also
6 advances our mission by preserving community
7 gardens and green space.

8 But these spaces are critical anchors
9 in Philadelphia's Black and Brown neighborhoods.
10 They are a place for residents to come together
11 to grow food, to seek shade and peace, and to
12 gather and play. Peer reviewed studies back up
13 what we all intuitively know to be true. Urban
14 gardens and green space have significant impacts
15 on public health. They increase community access
16 to fresh produce and improve neighbors mental and
17 physical health.

18 They improve air quality of critical
19 function, given that Philadelphia's children have
20 more than triple the rates of asthma compared to
21 other children around the country. Cleaning and
22 greening vacant properties results in significant
23 reductions in gun violence and overall crime.
24 And gardens and green space help alleviate the
25 impacts of climate change by creating cooling

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2 effects in blocks otherwise densely packed with
3 concrete buildings.

4 But many of these vital gardens in
5 green space are on land that is not secure. By
6 that I mean the neighborhood residents who are
7 stewarding the land, in some cases for decades,
8 do not have legal title to the land. Many of
9 these gardens are owned parcels that are
10 privately owned and tax delinquent. That puts
11 the gardens at risk of being lost at a tax
12 foreclosure sale to developers or real estate
13 speculators.

14 The Law Center provides pro bono legal
15 representation to nonprofit gardens seeking legal
16 access to land that they've been maintaining. On
17 occasion, we can quiet title for a garden client
18 by filing a lawsuit against long absent owners
19 using adverse possession.

20 For example, in 2018, our client New
21 Jerusalem Laura, a nonprofit addiction treatment
22 and recovery center in North Philadelphia run by
23 two nondenominational nuns, was able to use
24 adverse possession to obtain clear title to two
25 vacant parcels, it's been using for over two

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2 decades to grow food for its residents and
3 neighborhood children.

4 But many more organizations and
5 communities doing similar work with excellent
6 results are struggling to preserve their gardens
7 because we're not able to meet the required
8 threshold of 21 continuous years of adverse
9 actual exclusive, visible possession. Here, the
10 Land Bank plays a critical role, and it's why the
11 Law Center, collaborating with stakeholders,
12 actively sought and supported the creation of the
13 Land Bank in 2013.

14 The Land Bank can acquire these tax
15 delinquent and long abandoned properties at
16 sheriff's sale by using its priority bid and then
17 returning the parcels to productive use.
18 Ordinarily, tax delinquent parcels are sold at
19 sheriff's sale to the highest bidder. In lower
20 income neighborhoods, these parcels often have
21 low minimum bids and are attractive to
22 speculators who after obtaining the parcel, make
23 no investment in maintenance, fail to pay taxes,
24 and perpetuate the cycle of delinquency.

25 Bill Number 240187 ensures that the

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2 Land Bank will continue to be able to use its
3 priority bid to exercise its right under certain
4 conditions to be the sole bidder at these tax
5 sales and break this cycle.

6 As you're aware, the city recently made
7 a substantial financial investment to ensure that
8 90 garden parcels in primarily Black and Brown
9 neighborhoods will be protected from sheriff's
10 sale by clearing liens held by US Bank. Now we
11 need to ensure that the Land Bank, the
12 administration, and city council can finish the
13 job by foreclosing on these properties.

14 Having the Land Bank exercise its
15 priority bid clearing title and ultimately
16 transferring these parcels to their longtime
17 stewards for nominal disposition fees. Ensuring
18 that the Land Bank can continue to use its
19 priority bid is one important step, but just last
20 Friday, the Philadelphia Housing Development
21 Corporation released its 2023 annual report.

22 PHD reports that since 2021, the Land
23 Bank has moved forward with only 12 garden
24 dispositions. Currently, there are 59 active
25 applications for community gardens that have not

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2 gone to settlement. Like affordable housing,
3 gardens, and green space keep neighborhoods
4 intact, equitable, and sustainable.

5 Going forward, the city must include
6 the disposition of land for gardens and green
7 space in its land use priorities, consistent with
8 the spirit and letter of the Philadelphia Land
9 Bank law we all worked so hard to enact. Thank
10 you for giving the Law Center the opportunity to
11 testify today in support of Bill 240187 and in
12 support of Philadelphia's community gardens and
13 green space.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
15 your testimony.

16 MR. O'DWYER: Good morning, Chairperson
17 Lozada, Vice Chair Squilla, and members of city
18 council's committee on Public Property and Public
19 Works. My name is Garrett O'Dwyer and I am the
20 associate policy director at the Philadelphia
21 Association of Community Development
22 Corporations, or PACDC.

23 Thank you for the opportunity to
24 testify this morning to support Bill Number
25 240187, which seeks to align the tax delinquent

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2 property acquisition powers and responsibilities
3 of the Philadelphia Land Bank with Commonwealth
4 judicial decisions.

5 Since 1992, PACDC has been working
6 alongside our CDC members to address the pressing
7 problems facing Philadelphia's neighborhoods. In
8 that time, few issues have been as intractable as
9 the vacant property crisis facing our
10 communities, particularly low-income communities
11 of color. These parcels are a blight that lower
12 surrounding property values, promote crime, harm
13 health, and tear at the fabric of our
14 neighborhoods.

15 Moreover, each of these vacant
16 properties represents a lost opportunity in
17 addition to the harms caused. These properties
18 could be generating much needed tax revenue for
19 our schools and city services while providing a
20 home for families in need.

21 They could be a small business
22 supporting neighborhood jobs in the local
23 economy, or they could be a community garden
24 providing healthy foods and an opportunity for
25 neighbors to grow together or any other myriad

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2 forms of productive reuse.

3 This is why, over a decade ago, PACDC
4 played a lead role in organizing the Philadelphia
5 Land Bank Alliance to push for the creation of
6 the Philadelphia Land Bank to correct the
7 failures of the existing vacant property
8 management system, advocates demanded a
9 predictable, efficient, transparent, accountable,
10 and equitable process.

11 To date, the results have been uneven
12 and much remains to be done to secure the Land
13 Bank that we envisioned. That is why we joined
14 with six members of city council, including many
15 members of this committee, in releasing an early
16 April statement calling for a review of Land Bank
17 policies and procedures.

18 Bill Number 240187 represents an
19 important step in addressing a major problem, the
20 inability of the Land Bank to use its powers to
21 acquire tax delinquent properties. It is our
22 hope that this will allow for acquisitions to
23 begin as soon as the sheriff's office resumes tax
24 foreclosure sales.

25 However, now is also an opportunity for

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2 the city to be bold and develop a thoughtful,
3 forward looking acquisition policy.
4 Transformative neighborhood development, like
5 affordable housing, requires large parcels of
6 land to build upon.

7 However, given the still fragmented
8 ownership of much of the city's vacant property,
9 a thorough analysis must be conducted to
10 determine where these opportunities are, to
11 strategically acquire properties, to assemble
12 larger sites, and to ensure that these sites
13 aren't mistakenly sold off piecemeal.

14 We look forward to working with city
15 council and the administration to ensure the
16 implementation of today's legislation yields the
17 best results for Philadelphia. Again, we're
18 excited to support Bill Number 240187, and thank
19 you for the opportunity to testify.

20 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you so
21 much for your testimony. Before I open up for
22 questions, I just want to say that I am a product
23 of being in a family of community gardens. My
24 grandma took care of eight gardens. She raised
25 14 children through those gardens, over a dozen

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2 grandchildren and great-grandchildren through
3 those gardens. I watched her bring community
4 residents together through those gardens.

5 I saw her work with her community,
6 bring her community together, to be able to put
7 fresh food on our dinner table through community
8 gardens.

9 And I say that, to say that I
10 understand the frustration, I understand the
11 importance, and I am grateful for all of the work
12 that people like Iglesias Gardens and
13 Councilmember Brooks and her team have done, the
14 work that they have done in order to bring
15 attention to community gardens and the importance
16 of them in neighborhoods, in poor neighborhoods
17 especially. So just wanted to say thank you.

18 Are there any questions from the
19 committee members? The chair recognizes
20 Councilmember Squilla.

21 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: This is a
22 question for the Land Bank, I guess, Angel.
23 During the disposition policy, sometimes there
24 were some challenges on how land is disposed.

25 Is there something that we could change

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2 in our land disposition policy that would then
3 make it easier to be able to either get a garden
4 out to sale or out to use or to be able to swap a
5 parcel that is private property, is in the middle
6 of a currently used garden so that we could then
7 swap a parcel out so that we can make the garden
8 whole again before being able to dispose of it?

9 MR. O'DWYER: Certainly.

10 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Before you
11 respond, I'd like to recognize Councilmember
12 Jamie Gauthier, for a point of reference.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: I wanted to
14 offer a point of information, and that's part of
15 the difficulty, is that our current
16 interpretation of the disposition policy is
17 asking gardens to take on a 30-year mortgage. So
18 it's very prohibitive to being able to do these
19 dispositions in the city. So that's a big part
20 of the challenge that we've been trying to work
21 around.

22 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: That's why we
23 asked the question.

24 MR. O'DWYER: So the first, I'll take
25 your last point first. Land swaps aren't in the

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2 disposition policy. So if land swaps were in the
3 disposition policy, it would allow us to actually
4 have a codified process. How do we determine
5 what properties are to be swapped and then do
6 that. But currently, land swaps aren't an
7 option.

8 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: So would that
9 be up to us?

10 MR. O'DWYER: Yeah. That's a
11 legislative change. So let me just state that to
12 the point that Councilperson Gauthier was
13 mentioning. Prior to January 1st, 2020, when the
14 disposition policy was changed. Prior to that,
15 garden dispositions were a nominal transaction
16 from 2017 to 2019, December 31st, garden
17 disposition, as long as you were a nonprofit, it
18 was considered, you triggered the discount piece.
19 So it was a nominal transaction.

20 Nonprofit was just supposed to pay for
21 the closing costs. And that's why you saw a big
22 spike early on up until 2019, and then a drop
23 off, because the disposition policy changed,
24 asking for a mortgage to be placed in
25 reinvestment policies. That's in the disposition

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2 policy currently.

3 And then there's also an interpretation
4 from the last administration when they issued an
5 executive order, also layering other issues that
6 the commissioner of public property have to
7 address. And that also got expanded to the
8 redevelopment authority and the Land Bank. So
9 those are issues in terms of transfers.

10 I only bring that up because currently
11 the city of Philadelphia is still the largest
12 landholder of all the agencies.

13 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: And the reason
14 is, obviously, as we've been going through this
15 for years, we were able to dispose of them
16 earlier. Now, that recommendation and land
17 disposition policy that we have, was that done to
18 put protections in place? What was the whole
19 point of that? Because it did make it more
20 difficult for us to move these properties.

21 MR. O'DWYER: Back in 2018 and other
22 times with city properties, there were certain
23 stories of people flipping side yards and
24 gardens. I'm not saying that this group, but the
25 legislation was reactive.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: Protect us from
3 ourselves. Is that what you're saying?

4 MR. O'DWYER: No. I wouldn't say that.
5 I think you also have to understand that from
6 2015 till now, vacant land has appreciated
7 exponentially. So it used to be a side yard.
8 The initial in 2015, if you looked at the side
9 yard disposition policy properties were assessed
10 at \$35,000. In which case the intrinsic value of
11 the vacant land wasn't high. It did cost the
12 city more money to maintain it through PHS clip
13 and all that.

14 So the side yard program and garden
15 programs were there to defray the cost to the
16 city to maintain vacant land, which is a
17 liability. What happened during that time period
18 is that the appreciable value of a lot of this
19 vacant land in certain districts has tripled.
20 Right now, I'd have to tell you it's like 100,000
21 to 150,000 for a vacant lot. The properties have
22 gotten a lot more valuable.

23 And again, when you put out a policy,
24 it's much more. You're trying to address
25 everybody who would try to utilize that use, and

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2 it was determined that the city needed to protect
3 the asset so that you didn't see properties being
4 flipped.

5 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: But is this an
6 interpretation thing or is it --

7 MR. O'DWYER: There's an executive
8 order from the previous administration, plus
9 there's conditional language in the current
10 disposition policy, says either or. So that
11 makes it conditional. When you couple that with
12 the executive order, it no longer becomes
13 conditional. And we ask for a legal opinion that
14 executive order survives the previous
15 administration. So that's where we're at with
16 this situation.

17 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: So would there
18 be recommendations to Council on possible
19 language change or legislation that would make it
20 more clear, so it's not an interpretation or?

21 MR. O'DWYER: Certainly.

22 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: And I think
23 maybe, I know with a lot of our colleagues, I
24 think that would be something.

25 MR. O'DWYER: Yes. Trust me, we live

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2 with these policies every day. We have
3 recommendations. One thing I will say, too, is
4 in 2020, the disposition policy was attached to
5 the ordinance. So now you have it as a rule of
6 law, whereas the recommendation was not to put
7 the disposition policy in the ordinance,
8 therefore allowing flexibility for practical use
9 and implementation of the policy. So those are
10 fundamental issues that have to be addressed in
11 the legislation.

12 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: And it's
13 something that the Land Bank be willing to work -
14 -

15 MR. O'DWYER: Certainly.

16 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: -- with us to
17 make sure that we do that? And therefore,
18 because it does become a big boondoggle as trying
19 to move some of these.

20 MR. O'DWYER: It certainly is.

21 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: The Land Bank
22 was supposed to be to expedite the process.

23 MR. O'DWYER: I agree. I think the
24 other issue, which other members of the group
25 that have testified, one other issue is the

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2 transfer of title from different agencies. It
3 does take quite a bit, and I know the council
4 members here have seen our resolutions come in on
5 a monthly basis, transferring properties from one
6 agency to the next just to do disposition, and
7 that impacts all dispositions. Affordable
8 housing plus open space.

9 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: Well, thank
10 you. I'm looking forward to continue working
11 with you on that and hopefully having legislation
12 that will then streamline this process to make it
13 easier. Thank you.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The chair
15 recognizes Councilmember Gauthier.

16 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: I just want to
17 be on record expressing my frustration about this
18 issue. We've been working around this, to my
19 knowledge, for over a year now. I think that
20 when you prioritize something and when you want
21 to get to yes, you find a way to do that. And
22 that's not what I've seen on this garden issue.

23 There are a lot of big players in this
24 city that we allow to get incentives and benefits
25 without the same amount of rigor that we want to

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2 put on neighborhood folks like Councilmember
3 Gauthier's grandmom or, other people in our
4 community that are just trying to operate a
5 community space. We approve KOZs. We approve
6 all kinds of benefits with noble causes for the
7 economic growth of our city.

8 But if we value what gardeners are
9 doing, then we would place the same emphasis on
10 getting to yes. So I just don't buy the
11 explanation. And I think that if we care about
12 this issue as much as we have professed, that
13 we'll find a way to make it work.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I have a
15 question about these restrictions that we're
16 putting on the applicants. Are we taking into
17 consideration the amount of sweat equity that
18 they have invested, right? Yes.

19 This land over time has increased in
20 value, but have we respected the amount, the
21 financial burden that they have taken on in order
22 to clean up these spaces, to protect these
23 spaces, to revitalize them so that their
24 neighborhood is not blighted? Are we taking that
25 into consideration when we're putting these

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2 policies and all of these other restrictions in
3 place for residents? Are we doing that?

4 MR. O'DWYER: No. Sweat equity isn't
5 factored into the valuation of the property
6 because all of them are nominal transactions.
7 The issue here is what is the value of the
8 property and what will be the mortgage amount.
9 It's still a nominal transaction, so we convey it
10 out for a dollar. And it's not that the use
11 isn't allowable use. The issue now is whether
12 it's being a mortgage is being attached to it.

13 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Yeah. I think
14 that's a little disrespectful to residents,
15 right? They have taken on the responsibility of
16 ensuring that these spaces are clean and they're
17 safe and that they prevent from crime from
18 happening in their neighborhood, right? And so
19 again, I speak from experience. No one, over the
20 course of 25, 30 years that my family, my grandma
21 took care of a lot. No one came to say to her,
22 here's a reimbursement.

23 Now, she passed away without ever
24 getting disposition of those lots. Many people
25 ate off of those lots. The city didn't have to

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2 invest or do anything to maintain those lots.
3 But the fact that residents are not even, that
4 their investment is not even being considered or
5 respected is, we should really consider that when
6 we're creating policy, right? When we're
7 creating these processes in order to continue to
8 encourage residents to take ownership of spaces
9 like that in their community. And so I look
10 forward to continuing the conversation and
11 figuring out how we encourage residents to
12 participate in this type of work, but also that
13 we incentivize them and that we reimburse them
14 for the investment that they've made.

15 Are there any other questions? Chair
16 recognizes Councilmember Brooks.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank you so
18 much. So PHDC reported that since 2021, the Land
19 Bank has moved forward with only 12 garden
20 disposition. And there are 59 active applicants
21 from community gardeners that have not gone to
22 settlement. NGT, who you'll hear from later, has
23 similar difficult experiences. I know that there
24 are a lot of factors that lead to this problem,
25 and some of them that my colleagues have also

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2 brought up.

3 Can you tell us what do you think the
4 city council should do or the city should do to
5 break down these roadblocks from getting this
6 property into the hands of the gardeners?

7 MR. O'DWYER: I think delay on some of
8 these dispositions was the negotiation on the
9 consistent terms on the mortgage in the note. So
10 the first issue was, should there be a mortgage
11 in the note that required input from multiple
12 departments? When that was determined, what's
13 the form of the mortgage in the note? Just this
14 past month, we had agreed to that.

15 I know that the Land Bank is moving
16 forward now that we have new language to get
17 those projects to closing. So again, what I'll
18 bring up is that the disposition policy prior to
19 2019 did not have a mortgage in the ordinance or
20 the policy. It was a nominal transaction. Since
21 then, and we're required to follow the ordinance.
22 It requires a mortgage in a note.

23 And the previous administration did
24 issue another layer of compliance that we have to
25 follow. So this body should choose to revert

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2 back to the 2019. Our job is to follow that
3 ordinance.

4 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So after this
5 legislation passes, what is the timeline that we
6 can tell the gardeners and our constituents who
7 reach out to us? What is the estimate for the
8 titles of the bank lien properties, to be clear?
9 And what is your estimate for when the gardens
10 will be complete of this disposition process?

11 MR. O'DWYER: So you mean getting them
12 to settlement?

13 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Yeah. Like the
14 time for the titles to be cleared from this
15 property and then. Yeah. When can they expect
16 to?

17 MR. O'DWYER: I would have to sit down
18 with my legal team to get affirm number of dates,
19 and I'd be more than happy to follow up with you
20 as to what that timeline would be.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Yeah, it would
22 be helpful because we have been working on this.
23 Councilwoman Gauthier said a year, I think we
24 might be three or so years in the making, and it
25 would be nice to offer a timeline so we can firm

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2 up or let the gardeners know what's next. So my
3 team will be reaching out to see if we can get a
4 timeline on record to be able to have for them.
5 I have questions for other people so far. Mike,
6 I have questions for you. Yes.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Come back up to
8 the mic. Yes.

9 MR. MORAN: Hi.

10 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Good morning.

11 MR. MORAN: Good morning.

12 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So I want you to
13 talk about what has it been the impact in your
14 community around your particular garden that
15 you're working at?

16 MR. MORAN: Well, it's from all angles.
17 It's multifaceted. So I can speak to the, in a
18 sense, the peace and serenity that comes to the
19 neighborhood by having the garden as a central
20 point, but then just the effort that it takes to
21 produce or protect that piece that we're
22 creating, in terms of energy that we have to
23 divert to, in a sense, one burning fire to the
24 other, if you will, just to protect again that
25 peace and serenity. I think yeah.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So can you tell
3 me how has the lack of land security impacted
4 your garden and the work that you're able to
5 accomplish?

6 MR. MORAN: That peace of mind.
7 Nothing that we grow or build there has any real
8 permanence until we own the land. If we can grow
9 the most food or build the biggest shed or
10 whatever. But if that land is taken up from
11 under us, then what have we done other than make
12 a few memories, if you will?

13 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Councilmember
14 Lozada talk if she talked about investment. She
15 talked about the sweat equity, and I thought
16 about how many hours and time do you actually put
17 in a garden? And do you have an estimate of a
18 financial investment that gardeners have done,
19 particularly at your garden?

20 MR. MORAN: And so the number in terms
21 of what it's taking us to secure the land that we
22 have?

23 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: When you're
24 working right now --

25 MR. MORAN: Yeah.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: -- to continue
3 to take care of the garden, how much time do you
4 put in and the financial investment?

5 MR. MORAN: So I'll speak on my behalf.
6 But let that serve as a slice of a gardener's
7 life, if you will. I haven't earned a dollar
8 doing any of this, and I've been in it for, if
9 some of y'all have heard in the sense, my life
10 story. So, essentially personally I've been
11 dealing with 30 years of land insecurity. But
12 now just focusing on the garden, this has been a
13 10-year journey, if you will. And I'm going to
14 continue doing it.

15 Because we're here and we're making
16 progress. So that for me is the payment that I'm
17 going to in a sense, embrace or be thankful for.
18 But overall, though, it is. I'm in real estate
19 myself, and it's a lot of work. It's a lot.
20 It's an investment and it's one of these things
21 where, I can sit here and say from my and this is
22 my small business or my involvement in real
23 estate, I can expect that return because that's
24 in a sense of a business format.

25 Why can't I expect a return from a

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2 community format, where I invest into the
3 community where we grow these gardens and create
4 these spaces for people? We should all be
5 enriched through that in terms of community wise
6 and spiritually and mentally, etc. There's also,
7 again, the peace of mind aspect.

8 These neighborhoods, they have a rough
9 background and some of the reasons that we have
10 vacant lots there now are because of those tough
11 times, if you will. And now I have a son. He's
12 a nine-year-old. And one of my concerns with him
13 is just, or my main concern is just look both
14 ways when you cross the street because of that
15 garden. He'll come out and he'll ask me, "Hey,
16 dad, can I go to the garden?" "Go on, buddy.
17 "

18 At nine years old, I feel that much at
19 peace because of the amount of in a sense of
20 sweat equity. Not only that I, but all my
21 community members. All of my neighbors have
22 contributed to the space. So I know that that
23 safety, it's exponential in the sense that it
24 crosses the street and keeps expanding in that
25 kind of way.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank you so
3 much for your testimony, Mike.

4 MR. MORAN: I appreciate. Thank you.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Next, Jenny
6 Greenberg. Thank you for coming out. You
7 mentioned that between 2015 and 2019, the NGT
8 acquired 44 parcels at 13 gardens from the city
9 landholding agencies. But since 2020, we haven't
10 been able to acquire a single lot.

11 What is the impact of gardens not being
12 able to acquire lots? And what does the city
13 stand to lose if we do not quickly address this
14 broken process?

15 MS. GREENBERG: Sure. Once we're able
16 to secure title for a garden, we're able to
17 insure it and to raise money to invest in the
18 physical infrastructure, which really helps. We
19 were just talking about the sweat equity. The
20 gardeners are always going to be doing that hard
21 work on the ground. But there are things we can
22 do to enhance the infrastructure once we know the
23 garden is preserved.

24 Things like installing a dedicated
25 water line, fencing, a tool shed, raised beds.

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2 We've been doing more and more work with, like,
3 double high, beds for aging gardeners, ADA
4 accessible pathways, making sure the sidewalks
5 are safe.

6 I would say on average, once a garden
7 is preserved, we'll often leverage \$30,000 to
8 \$40,000 to invest to really just amplify the
9 benefits that the garden can provide long-term.
10 The amount of crops they're growing, of having a
11 sitting area. So people, after they weed their
12 garden, they stay and hang around and talk to
13 their neighbors at the garden. All of these
14 investments shape how people are able to benefit
15 from the spaces.

16 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank you so
17 much. One other question for Mimi McKenzie. Our
18 community garden is able to navigate the process
19 of protecting their gardens without legal advice
20 or representation. And is this a process that is
21 accessible to normal Philadelphians who have
22 other jobs and need to spend time working in
23 their community gardens?

24 MS. McKenzie: The Law Center would
25 like nothing more than to have this process for

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2 community gardens be so user friendly that we
3 could shut down that part of our operation. But
4 we're definitely not there at the moment. Just
5 to give you a few examples, the application for a
6 community garden to apply for a parcel. It's an
7 application that's designed for developers.

8 We get lots of questions from gardeners
9 about, "Well, what does this mean? Do I have to
10 answer this? Do I have to do this?" There's no
11 application for leases. Like, not every garden,
12 especially maybe a brand-new garden, is ready to
13 take on ownership, but a lease would make a big
14 difference. But there's not an application for
15 that easily accessible.

16 And then, of course, if and when you
17 actually go through the process and you get to
18 settlement, the documentation is overwhelming, I
19 think, for a lot of community members. And so we
20 answer lots of questions about this 30-year
21 mortgage, the note, what does it mean? What's
22 the liability? What are the risks? How do we
23 navigate making sure we're not in violation of
24 the mortgage terms and risk losing the land?

25 So at the moment, there are lots of

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2 ways that the Law Center supports community
3 gardeners and gardens, but I do think there's a
4 lot more that could be done to make the process
5 more accessible. The Law Center can always be
6 there as a backstop, but it would be wonderful
7 not to have to spend that kind of time when
8 there's a way to make it more accessible.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Thank you so
10 much for your testimony.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Are there any
12 other questions? There being none, will the
13 clerk please call the first panel? We have to
14 testify for Bill Number 240383.

15 THE CLERK: For Bill Number 240383, we
16 have Melissa Scott, Eric Fitzgerald Reed, Gretjen
17 Clausing, Ramses Montes, Zarina Lomax, and
18 Shelley Wolfe.

19 (Witnesses approached witness table.)

20 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Good morning.
21 Thank you for being with us today. Please state
22 your name for the record and begin your
23 testimony.

24 MS. SCOTT: Melissa Scott, CIO for the
25 city's innovation and technology department.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Begin your
3 testimony.

4 MR. REED: Eric Fitzgerald Reed,
5 Verizon, State Government Affairs. Did you hear
6 that? Is that better? Eric Fitzgerald Reed,
7 Verizon, State Government Affairs for
8 Pennsylvania.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
10 being with us. Begin your testimony.

11 MS. SCOTT: Thank you. Good afternoon.
12 Chair Member Lozada, Vice Chair Squilla, and
13 members of the public Property & Public Works
14 Committee. I am Melissa Scott, chief information
15 officer for the Office of Innovation and
16 Technology. I am joined today by Steve Robinson,
17 OIT's chief of staff and members of the city's
18 law department, Rachel Rosser, Senior Attorney,
19 and John Gibson, Assistant City Solicitor. I am
20 pleased to provide testimony on Bill 240383.

21 The City of Philadelphia's Verizon's
22 franchise agreement renewal. For background the
23 proposed Verizon franchise agreement is a renewal
24 of a 2009 agreement that expired February 26,
25 2024, and has been extended to August 25, 2024.

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2 The legislation before you, has a new
3 renewal agreement of five years which will ensure
4 that Verizon will continue to provide cable video
5 service to Philadelphia subscribers while
6 continuing to pay the city the maximum franchise
7 fees permitted by federal law of five percent of
8 gross revenues. I will go into more detail about
9 the agreement itself.

10 However, I did want to share one of the
11 key highlights of this agreement, which is we
12 will have the opportunity to purchase up to one
13 Gigabyte fiber broadband service for at least 183
14 recreation centers and other Philadelphia Parks
15 and rec locations, with all of these sites to be
16 connected within 24 months. So how do we get to
17 this agreement that is before you today for
18 consideration?

19 In accordance with federal law,
20 traditional cable TV operations must negotiate
21 franchise agreements with local governments, also
22 known as Local Franchising Authorities, or LFA,
23 for access to government-controlled rights of way
24 for the installation and maintenance of the cable
25 operator's system and infrastructure.

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2 In exchange for access to the right-of-
3 ways, cable operators may pay franchise fees to
4 the LFA and must meet conditions negotiated by
5 the franchise agreement. After extensive
6 negotiations spanning over the last three years,
7 the city and Verizon have agreed on several major
8 terms for renewal of the franchise agreement.

9 The agreement is structured in three parts,
10 consisting of three separate agreements.

11 The first part is the cable franchise
12 agreement, which includes franchise fees and the
13 public education government support, also known
14 as PEG. Two separate agreements covering two
15 institutional networks, also known as INET. The
16 city is seeking to obtain from Verizon lit and
17 dark fiber.

18 Institutional networks generally means
19 a system of dedicated fibers, coaxial cables or
20 wires constructed and maintained by an incumbent
21 cable provider, in this case Verizon, which is
22 reserved and dedicated for city noncommercial
23 purposes. The franchise agreement consists of
24 the following. The term, the proposed renewal
25 franchise agreement is for a five-year term.

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2 The franchise fees, the renewed
3 franchise fees provides the maximum allowable
4 franchise fees under federal law of five percent
5 of total gross cable revenues. Historically,
6 based on the last five years, Verizon franchise
7 fees are anticipated to bring an average of 6.7
8 million into the general fund annually. There's
9 also a 500K grant for OIT to fund technology
10 initiatives associated with the use of dark
11 fiber.

12 Then we have the PEG support where
13 Verizon will provide the city with a total of
14 eight million in grants for PEG financial support
15 to be paid in an annual installment over five
16 years of 1.6 million per year. The city will
17 determine, based on need, how to distribute the
18 PEG payment among PhillyCAM public access, school
19 district educational access, and PHL 64
20 governmental access. The additional benefits are
21 as follows. There's a managed service INET
22 agreement.

23 The city has negotiated terms and the
24 proposed franchise agreement for two distinct
25 INET agreements, a lit broadband and a dark fiber

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2 INET. The lit services provide the city the
3 opportunity to purchase up to one Gigabyte fiber
4 broadband service for at least 183 recreation
5 centers and other Philadelphia parks and rec
6 locations. All sites to be connected within 24
7 months.

8 Lit services provide the opportunity
9 for access for community employment searches,
10 access to online government services, continuing
11 adult education, and support student academic
12 enrichment. The dark fiber INET agreement means
13 fiber optic infrastructure that is not yet lit or
14 in current use by Verizon.

15 The city, rather than Verizon, will
16 purchase, maintain, and operate the equipment
17 required to light the fiber for use by the city
18 in city related network access and
19 communications. Verizon will continue to own and
20 maintain the fiber. Dark fiber provides the
21 opportunity for potentially up to 2000 video
22 cameras citywide installing the cameras in high
23 crime, frequent gun violence, and illegal short
24 dumping areas.

25 Expanding the city's network, avoid the

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2 use of temporary makeshift wiring, stringing
3 fiber cables on trees and poles along the parkway
4 in Fairmount Park during various events. So
5 ultimately, this agreement is advantageous for
6 all citizens of Philadelphia and it addresses the
7 growing importance of broadband connectivity and
8 narrowing the disparity between individuals who
9 have online access to information and resources
10 and those who do not.

11 The digital gap pertains to the
12 inequity in technology and internet access, which
13 can impede individuals and communities from fully
14 engaging in contemporary economy and society.
15 Broadband service is an influential instrument
16 for bridging the digital gap and promoting
17 development in major urban areas such as
18 Philadelphia.

19 By ensuring universal access to high-
20 speed internet, we can foster a more equitable
21 society and access to economic opportunity for
22 all individuals. That concludes my testimony.
23 We are available to answer any questions you may
24 have. Thank you.

25 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for

1 5/22/24 - PUBLIC - BILL 240187, ETC.

2 your testimony.

3 MR. REED: Good morning. Councilmember
4 Lozada, acting as chair, obviously Vice Chair
5 Squilla, and members of the council of the Public
6 Property & Public Works Committee. My name is
7 Eric Fitzgerald Reed and I lead Verizon's public
8 policy and state government affairs here in
9 Pennsylvania.

10 I'm also joined by Marie Lasota, who is
11 Verizon counsel, and also Paul Trane, who is
12 Verizon's external counsel as well. Today I'm
13 providing this testimony to express support for
14 the renewal of Verizon's cable franchise in the
15 city of Philadelphia, and this is in reference to
16 Bill Number 240383. This particular cable
17 franchise is a five-year agreement that begins
18 upon the execution into the agreement by the
19 parties this year and will run through 2029.

20 This renewal allows Verizon to continue
21 to provide cable television service throughout
22 the entire city to all residential dwelling units
23 with the opportunity to provide cable service to
24 businesses as well. One important facet of the
25 overarching franchise renewal agreement is the

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2 opportunity to enhance broadband access and
3 promote digital inclusion to communities
4 throughout the city.

5 Verizon will provide broadband Internet
6 access to 183 city owned recreation centers
7 within two years of the franchise effective date,
8 and up to 261 additional city owned properties at
9 the city's discretion through an INET,
10 institutional network agreement. The renewal
11 franchise clearly makes the INET a material term
12 of the renewal franchise and as such, the INET is
13 subject to all remedies of enforcement.

14 These enforcement tools were required
15 by the city to ensure Verizon's compliance in
16 providing the INET services. The remedies in
17 this franchise include a \$3 million performance
18 bond, liquidated damages of \$1,000 a day, and up
19 to revocation of this particular franchise.

20 To put the speed and capabilities of
21 these broadband connections at recreation centers
22 into perspective, consider the use cases of these
23 enhanced connections that will support an online
24 experience for multiple users and devices
25 connected to the network at the same time. This

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2 means that numerous students can access
3 educational tools, easily stream videos, and
4 download and upload assignments.

5 Residents will be able to conduct
6 telehealth consultations with their physicians or
7 participate in remote job interviews.

8 Additionally, robust connectivity from dark fiber
9 optics provided by Verizon at the recreation
10 centers can be used to support other city
11 technology initiatives such as cameras and LED
12 smart lighting for resident safety around city
13 owned corridors.

14 Collectively, this partnership
15 represents a unique opportunity to leverage
16 broadband and technology assets to promote better
17 outcomes in communities across the city.

18 Broadband internet access at the recreation
19 centers will cover all 10 city council districts
20 and the build out period for the INET will be two
21 years.

22 The connectivity at the recreation
23 centers will be available to residents on a
24 rolling basis as they are completed, and at least
25 100 recreation centers will be completed within

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2 the first 12 months of this franchise. In
3 addition to the benefits of the INET, there is
4 also a \$8 million in support from Verizon to fund
5 PEG, public education and government access
6 channels.

7 There is also a \$500,000 technology
8 grant to help fund city technology focused
9 initiatives including public safety, digital
10 equity, and Smart City efforts. Under the terms
11 of the cable franchise agreement, the city
12 determines and has complete discretion over how
13 these 8.5 million in funds will be used, not
14 Verizon. Finally, Verizon is required to pay
15 five percent of its gross video revenue to the
16 city as part of the franchise renewal.

17 These franchise fees will produce and
18 provide millions of dollars in revenue to the
19 city and each year of the franchise. I want to
20 thank this committee and your colleagues on the
21 council for your consideration of this franchise
22 renewal. Verizon looks forward to partnering
23 with the city on this unique effort to connect
24 and enhance the digital lives of residents and
25 communities throughout Philadelphia. Thank you

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2 and we'll be available for questions as well.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
4 your testimony. And just like we did the other
5 panel, I'll ask you guys to sit back and then
6 bring the rest of those who are testifying, and
7 we'll ask questions at the end. Gretjen.

8 (Witnesses approached witness table.)

9 THE CLERK: Gretjen Clausing and Ramses
10 Montes.

11 MS. CLAUSING: Good morning. My name
12 is Gretjen Clausing. I'm the executive director
13 of PhillyCAM, the nonprofit that has proudly run
14 Philadelphia's public access television station
15 since we began cablecasting in 2009.

16 Supporters of public access have a long
17 and storied history of coming to this body to
18 testify on the importance of public access and
19 the vital role community media centers play in
20 connecting us to one another through media making
21 and sharing stories. I'm going off script a
22 little bit just because it was so nice to be here
23 this morning while you're talking about community
24 gardens, because that public access is similar to
25 how we operate to community space.

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2 And when we were fighting for public
3 access, we talked about it as an electronic park.
4 So it just feels really fitting that we were here
5 this morning along with community gardeners.
6 Since we opened our doors, PhillyCAM has trained
7 over 4,000 people in media making and who have
8 gone on to produce over 20,000 hours of local
9 television and radio programming.

10 The broadcast content produced by our
11 members is a powerful demonstration of how with
12 equitable access to educational opportunities,
13 media making tools, and distribution platforms,
14 communities are able to tell important stories,
15 and share vital information to promote
16 sustainable and healthy communities, celebrate
17 arts and culture, and support organizations
18 working for economic and social justice.

19 PhillyCAM and our colleagues operating
20 Philadelphia's government and educational access
21 channels work hard every day to ensure that these
22 platforms contribute important information and
23 bring unheard perspectives on critical issues
24 into conversations that impact our city. But
25 none of this would be possible without cable

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2 franchise agreements that include strong
3 commitments to public, local, government, and
4 educational, the PEG channels.

5 These agreements ensure that we have
6 the critical funding necessary to support our
7 services and guarantee that these companies serve
8 the public interest by providing cable channels
9 on their systems infrastructure the same as any
10 commercial channel. It is for this reason that
11 I'm here to testify to support the Verizon
12 franchise agreement outlined in Bill 240383.

13 Franchise agreements dictate the terms
14 in which telecom companies like Verizon and
15 Comcast are able to use the public right-of-way
16 to operate their business. In return, they
17 commit to providing access to cable channels and
18 funding for PEG channels such as PhillyCAM,
19 Phillygov TV, and the School District of
20 Philadelphia's educational channel, PSTV.

21 In this newly negotiated agreement,
22 Verizon commits to pay eight million over the
23 term of this five-year agreement. The franchise
24 also includes the addition of five dedicated high
25 -definition PEG channels for the PEG operators,

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2 and Verizon will pay \$500,000 to a technology
3 fund for digital equity efforts, Smart City
4 programs and public safety initiatives and other
5 uses determined by the commissioner.

6 We proudly support this agreement and
7 thank Councilmember Lozada and Councilmember
8 Squilla and all of you on the public property
9 committee, Mayor Cheryl Parker, OIT chief of
10 staff, and all the others in OIT, the law
11 department, and City Solicitor Rachel Rosser for
12 completing these negotiations on a positive note.
13 It is a clear demonstration that the city of
14 Philadelphia supports civic engagement and the
15 role that public access media plays in
16 strengthening our community.

17 PhillyCAM members are the lifeblood of
18 our city's unique story. Our programs preserve
19 and celebrate local culture, traditions, and
20 history, providing a platform for your
21 constituents to share and document their lives
22 and foster a sense of identity and pride. More
23 than ever, inclusive, participatory media is
24 important as it enriches public discourse and
25 strengthens democracy.

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2 Without the support of city council and
3 the city administration, our members, many of
4 them here, including PhillyCAM's staff at board,
5 joining me today, would not be able to support
6 the production and stories they love. And our
7 city is a better place because PhillyCAM members
8 are part of it. So thank you for your time and
9 consideration.

10 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
11 your testimony.

12 MR. MONTES: Hey, how's it going,
13 everybody? My name is Ramses Montes. I'm a
14 PhillyCAM member and youth instructor. I'm about
15 24 years old. So for almost a decade, so for a
16 third of my life, my membership at PhillyCAM has
17 been a promise that I'll always have not just a
18 place, but a community where I can create and
19 feel safe. As a teenager, PhillyCAM not only
20 provided me with skills and opportunities that I
21 apply today, I could go there and discuss ideas
22 with adults that actually cared and took me
23 seriously.

24 And it was a place that I knew that I
25 wouldn't face the same degree of judgment and

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2 scrutiny that I may face, like wearing these same
3 clothes, walking down the street as a queer
4 individual especially as a teenager, I was hard
5 to just find anywhere where it was like, all
6 these different things try to tell me what I am,
7 what I should be doing, and things like that.

8 Moving forward in life, PhillyCAM
9 continued to provide me with experiences to help
10 me find employment and just support myself
11 psychologically as well as financially. I
12 dropped out of college, and I was like, "I'm
13 never going to amount to anything in life. I'm
14 never going to do anything." And just last year,
15 I had my first real journalism job. I'm actually
16 getting a degree now, and I'm doing all these
17 wonderful and amazing things.

18 Because people at PhillyCAM were like,
19 "I don't believe that about you. I don't believe
20 that you don't have anything to give. I don't
21 believe that it's done, that you're over. You're
22 only 19." And now that I'm older, now that I
23 have to take life more seriously, I'm about to be
24 25. I'm about to be 30. PhillyCAM provides me,
25 like I said, I was an instructor. So a couple

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2 months back, it just ended in March, I was
3 teaching a radio show called Hear Us Out.

4 And it was a bunch of teenagers just
5 like me when I was that age, when I was 18, 19,
6 and I was teaching them. And that's really why I
7 went back to college, because I was like life
8 isn't over. Maybe the climate is going to
9 explode, but I can still do something. You know
10 what I'm saying?

11 And it's like, just even me being 24,
12 being exposed to these kids, it was amazing. And
13 I get to teach classes from time to time in
14 Kensington and the library, McVeigh library --
15 McPherson. I'm drawing McPherson Library. Yeah,
16 stuff like that. And it's just amazing. Not
17 just because it's something to put on a resume,
18 but it really actually improves my life. And it
19 makes me feel I live in Philly physically. Yeah.

20 All I have to say is I just hope that
21 PhillyCAM can continue being this sanctuary where
22 Philadelphians from all walks of life can come
23 together and make something beautiful happen.

24 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
25 your testimony. Zahara and Shelley.

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2 MS. CLAUSING: Serena wasn't able to
3 come, so it's just going to be Shelley.

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Okay.

5 MS. WOLFE: Good morning.

6 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Good morning.
7 Please state your name for the record and begin
8 your testimony.

9 MS. WOLFE: Good morning,
10 councilmembers. My name is Shelley Wolfe. As a
11 dedicated Philadelphia resident, I am grateful
12 for the efforts of negotiating the renewal of the
13 Verizon franchise agreement. Your commitment to
14 this community and is truly very commendable in
15 moving this forward.

16 I currently serve as the executive
17 director for PSTV, the educational channel for
18 the School District of Philadelphia, and as the
19 vice president of the board for PhillyCAM. For
20 the last 26 years, I have witnessed the profound
21 effects of PEG access, community access centers
22 across the country.

23 These platforms are not just important,
24 but they are critical to fostering democracy,
25 transparency, and workforce development and

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2 community engagement, inspiring us all to do more
3 in our community. PhillyCAM, PSTV, and the other
4 E&G lineups are more than just channels. They
5 are lifelines to our community. They provide low
6 cost-free access to equipment enrichment
7 training, youth programs, internships, workforce
8 development opportunities, and a platform for
9 local voices.

10 For an example, a recent PhillyCAM
11 video project on sexual abuse in the restaurant
12 industry, produced by Spanish speakers, won a
13 national award highlighting the importance of
14 accessible media for marginalized communities.
15 At PSTV, we too equip our youth with the digital
16 industry experience and skills needed to shape
17 our future leaders.

18 One of our students recently had
19 received the Gates Scholarship and through that
20 they went on to pursue a career in education at
21 NYU and is now taking on a doctorate at UPenn and
22 provides credit to PSTV for her success while
23 continuing to provide training to our young
24 people.

25 I have another student who was with us

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2 from the time he was in 9th grade, who I recently
3 hired in the last year and a half to now go out
4 and teach the students as he once was, in our
5 Philadelphia School District and giving back to
6 the students in the classroom. PSTV also ensures
7 transparency by covering our local school board
8 meetings and working with over 1,000 students
9 annually in the schools as well as outside at rec
10 centers and other locations.

11 So introducing them to these media
12 careers and pathways with our partnerships with
13 local educational institutions and industry
14 partners, these enhanced opportunities and career
15 pathways, changing lives every day. Your support
16 for the Verizon franchise renewal and agreement
17 is an investment in our community. It sustains
18 critical resources like PhillyCAM and PSTV, along
19 with the other E&G channels.

20 Helping us to bridge the technological
21 divide and building a more equitable economy.
22 Again, I want to thank you all for your time,
23 your dedication and unwavering support. We
24 appreciate the work that you are doing to ensure
25 that our students and our community members can

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2 come together and have their voices heard in a
3 way that creates positive impact not just for our
4 community, but for our students. Thank you very
5 much, commissioners.

6 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
7 your testimony. I just have one question for
8 Verizon that I want to put on the record. I'm
9 really happy or excited about all of our rec
10 centers being connected or having the opportunity
11 to have connectivity because I think that it's no
12 secret that when folks have the capacity to be
13 able to connect, they are able to receive the
14 necessary resources and connect with programs
15 that would impact them and their quality of life.

16 And so I'm really excited about all of
17 that. Melissa, in your testimony you mentioned
18 that the 183 recreation centers would be able to
19 have access over the course of 24 months and that
20 there will be an additional 440 sites. But I
21 think that there's some -- Councilmember, was it
22 you who said that there were maybe 200
23 additional. I just want to make sure that we're
24 clear is it --

25 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: 261.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The 200 plus or
3 is it 400 plus additional sites that will be able
4 to provide connectivity to.

5 MS. SCOTT: So the total altogether is
6 400 sites altogether.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: 200.

8 MS. SCOTT: Yeah, additional 200.

9 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: It's 261.

10 MR. REED: It's 261 additional centers.
11 So 261 plus 183, 444.

12 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: And then my only
13 other question is, how will those set, for the
14 record, and I know that we had this conversation,
15 before I ask the question, let me just say thank
16 you to everyone who has been involved in making
17 sure that this agreement has gotten to where it
18 is today. I know that I've only been here for
19 about 16 months, and since I walked in the door,
20 this agreement has been a topic of conversation.

21 And so there's been a lot of
22 conversations happening, a lot of negotiations
23 happening. And I know that all of this decision
24 that have been made in the best interest of
25 community residents, of programming, of workers,

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2 and for the city of Philadelphia. So thank you
3 to everybody that has done their part in making
4 sure that we are where we are today. How will
5 those sites be selected and prioritized? Will
6 council have a say in those sites?

7 Is it a decision that the
8 administration will make? Have these decisions
9 already been made? Can either of you speak to
10 that?

11 MR. REED: Sure, I can speak to that.
12 So basically, it's going to be two phases, and
13 this is being driven by the engineering. So
14 there's going to be some recreation centers that
15 just need a light touch in terms of being ready
16 for service, and there's others that will need,
17 I'll say, a more intense focus or may need more
18 love so to speak. So that's how we made those
19 determinations, purely based on the engineering.

20 As I said, we're going to do this on a
21 rolling basis. We'll have 100 of them in phase 1
22 community centers that are going to be lit with
23 broadband service. Like I said, based on the
24 engineering, but it's across all 10 council
25 districts.

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2 So we really wanted to be intentional
3 about being careful about digital equity, making
4 sure that every council district has at least
5 some form of service at the centers that
6 residents can use throughout the entire city.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you. And
8 as part of the agreement, as the work is being
9 done, as the lines, the fiber optics are being
10 laid, how will community residents be impacted in
11 their neighborhoods? Residents are saying
12 there's an agreement that's being discussed. If
13 and when they come into our neighborhoods, will
14 we be impacted as the work is being done?

15 MS. SCOTT: Well, it really helps with
16 the digital divide. A lot of residents actually
17 don't have access to high broadband service. So
18 this allows them the opportunity to go to rec
19 centers to complete educational activities. It
20 provides the opportunity for seniors to go and be
21 able to maybe something as simple as pay their
22 bill online rather than coming all the way down
23 into center city. So it really extends the
24 opportunity for programming, educational
25 resources for our youth within the communities,

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2 which they currently do not have access to.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you. The
4 chair recognizes Councilmember Driscoll.

5 COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair. I don't have a question. I just
7 have a comment. I just want to congratulate
8 Melissa and the OIT, your team, city's council,
9 city's outside council. Eric, you know your team
10 and all that you've done. I know there's been a
11 long process. I know we've had a lot of asks,
12 but that's our job, right? And I think this is a
13 model for public private partnership. And I
14 guess my final thought is, let's get this thing
15 done.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Chair recognizes
17 Councilmember Harrity.

18 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: I, too, want to
19 commend you guys on putting this together. For
20 me, it's about the kids and them having access to
21 be able to do their homework in line with just
22 like every other kid's doing.

23 We tend to take things for granted,
24 those of us who have internet access and not
25 realizing that some people in our city, mostly in

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2 neighborhoods like mine, are not able to afford
3 it. Now that we will be giving it to them, I
4 think that it will bring the whole neighborhood
5 up. It's amazing. I worked for Senator Street
6 and traveled the state. It's amazing that there
7 are places in the state of Pennsylvania where
8 there is no broadband whatsoever.

9 And that just shocked me when I found
10 it out. So I'm glad to see that we're going
11 through. I'm a big eGames person, even though I
12 don't play them, but my kids do and other kids
13 do. And they're able to get scholarships for
14 Division I school now and actually make money
15 playing video games. And I think we need more of
16 that in the rec centers.

17 And by doing this, we're going to be
18 able to put more of that in our rec centers,
19 because the bottom line is, not every kid's into
20 sports nowadays. I got a 300-pound 14-year-old
21 at home. I'd love him to play football, but he
22 wants nothing to do with it. But you give him a
23 computer and he can do whatever you want. So we
24 have to meet these kids where they're at, and
25 this is part of that. So thank you, guys. And

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2 thank you to the legal for working this out.

3 And we appreciate you and look forward
4 to moving this forward. But my one question is,
5 when you're putting in the systems, will there be
6 disruptions to the park areas?

7 MR. REED: Could you just provide some
8 clarity?

9 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Putting lines.
10 Do you have to run lines and stuff through the
11 fields or anything like that?

12 MR. REED: We don't think there's going
13 to be much disruption in terms of getting the
14 infrastructure to the centers. I know that we're
15 going to be working hand-in-hand to make sure we
16 get the proper permits with the various
17 permitting agencies. But at this time, we don't
18 anticipate any disruptions to the rec center that
19 may have other programming going on during this
20 period.

21 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: And when's it
22 going to start? When is this?

23 MR. REED: Upon effective date of when
24 the agreement is actually --

25 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Got it.

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2 MR. REED: -- executed.

3 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Chair recognizes
5 Councilmember Jamie.

6 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Thank you,
7 Madam Chair. Similar comments. I just wanted to
8 commend the admin and everyone involved, Verizon,
9 PhillyCAM on reaching an agreement that's so
10 beneficial for our community. I'm grateful for
11 the level of PEG grants. We love PhillyCAM. We
12 want to make sure that they continue to be
13 supported. We also know that this funding
14 supports Channel 64, so that means my dad can
15 continue watching me on here. Hi, Dad.

16 And it's really beneficial in terms of
17 access for our community. And I love the rec
18 center piece because rec centers should be places
19 of recreation, but moreover, should be places of
20 opportunity, and that helps us to get there for
21 our young people and beyond. So congratulations
22 to everyone who worked on this. Thank you.

23 MR. REED: Thank you.

24 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Chair recognizes
25 Councilmember Young.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you, Madam
3 Chair. Good morning. Just a couple quick
4 questions. Can you describe what opportunities
5 are out there and what the PEG grants go toward
6 so folks know what type of things that are being
7 funded?

8 MS. SCOTT: So the PEG grant is divided
9 into three areas. 800k goes to PhillyCAM, 400 to
10 the school districts television network, and then
11 the other 400 goes to PHL 64.

12 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.

13 MS. SCOTT: You're welcome.

14 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: For the 500k
15 grant associated with dark fiber use. Can you
16 describe to us what the city has in mind for that
17 500k?

18 MS. SCOTT: So the 500k can go to
19 anything regarding dark fiber. So a great
20 example of that would be 2026 events. And I
21 mentioned in my testimony as hanging wires and
22 trees and just having really not a great
23 presentation to our city when we have guests come
24 in. But it will be a great opportunity for us to
25 actually connect to dark fiber and have more of

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2 sustainable infrastructure in order to have
3 connectivity during these various events.

4 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you. I
5 want to echo the sentiments of my colleagues
6 about how thrilled we are that our rec centers
7 will have access to broadband. But I do have a
8 question about the capacity. I do recall that
9 it's 1G per rec center.

10 Could you tell us, or can you quantify
11 what that looks like? How many users at one
12 time? The type of activities they can do at that
13 particular rec center with that 1G?

14 MS. SCOTT: Sure. So currently, the
15 rec centers actually have internet service, but
16 their Internet service is similar to, I give the
17 example of a garden hose. This particular
18 franchise agreement will robust into high-speed
19 broadband service, which will be equivalent to a
20 fire hydrant.

21 So if you think about the pressure and
22 water that is coming out of a water hose versus a
23 fire hydrant, now you can have more individuals
24 accessing the internet at higher speeds and
25 higher rates. So you'll have less of those

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2 scenarios where they go in to use computer and
3 they can't access. Maybe it's something where
4 it's a lot of students accessing a particular
5 network.

6 It will provide them the opportunity
7 where all of them will be able to access it at
8 one time. So we can always increase one
9 Gigabytes. According to the contract, right now,
10 they're going to install one Gigabyte. But if
11 there's any chance that we need to increase more,
12 we do have the opportunity to do that as well.

13 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you, Madam
14 Chair.

15 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Are there any
16 other questions? Thank you so much for your
17 testimony.

18 MS. SCOTT: Thank you.

19 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Will the clerk
20 please read the names of the first panel to
21 testify this morning on Bill Number 240435?

22 THE CLERK: The next panelist is
23 Patrick Livingston, testifying on 240435.

24 (Witness approached witness table.)

25 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: For the record,

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2 I'd also like to note that for Bill Number
3 240383, there was an amendment that was
4 circulated in a simple clerical era amendment
5 just noting that a page was out of order. So I
6 just want to make sure that there was a simple
7 amendment made to that bill. Thank you for being
8 with us this morning. Please state your name for
9 the record and begin your testimony.

10 MR. LIVINGSTON: Patrick Livingston.
11 Good morning, Chairperson Lozada and members of
12 the committee of Public Property & Public Works.
13 My name is Patrick Livingston. I'm the real
14 estate operations administrator of the Department
15 of Public Property, and I'm here to testify in
16 favor of Bill Number 240435.

17 Authorizing the Department of Public
18 Property on behalf of the City of Philadelphia to
19 acquire fee simple title or a lesser real estate
20 interest to all or a portion of the land located
21 at the property known as 121 to 25 East Cheltenham
22 Avenue. On behalf of the Philadelphia Department
23 of Public Health, DPP is requesting to purchase
24 121 to 25 East Cheltenham Ave, for the expansion of
25 Healthcare Center 9.

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2 The expansion would consist of
3 installing an elevator on the side of the
4 building for patient convenience and
5 accessibility purposes. Our health centers
6 provide primary care services directly when the
7 private sector is unable or unwilling to do so,
8 and it is important that we improve these
9 facilities whenever possible.

10 Deemed surplus and vacant, our partners
11 received board approval last month to convey
12 these three parcels to the city. After a handful
13 of years of pursuing these specific parcels, we
14 are thrilled to have the opportunity to acquire
15 121 to 25 East Cheltenham Ave on behalf of PDPH to
16 install a much-needed elevator. Pursuant to
17 Section 16-202 of the Home Rule Charter, I filed
18 with the chief clerk of council an independent
19 appraisal of the value of such real estate. The
20 Department of Public Property supports this
21 measure and accordingly, I respectfully ask that
22 the city council approve Bill Number 240435. I'm
23 requesting a suspension of all rules so as to
24 allow for the first reading at the next session
25 of Council. Thank you, and I'm happy to answer

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2 any questions you may have.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
4 your testimony. Are there any questions for this
5 witness? Thank you for being with us today.

6 Will the Clerk please read the bill or
7 please call the panel for Bill Number 240303.

8 THE CLERK: Next speaker for Bill
9 Number 240303 is Noelle Marconi.

10 (Witness approached witness table.)

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Good morning.

12 MS. MARCONI: Good morning, Chairperson
13 Lozada and members of the Public Property
14 Committee. My name is Noella Marconi and I'm the
15 director of legislative affairs for the
16 Department of Streets. With me today is Tom
17 Morrow, city plans officer for the City Plans
18 Engineer. I am here to offer testimony on Bill
19 Number 240303 introduced by Chairperson Lozada.

20 This bill authorizes acceptance of the
21 grant to the city of two certain areas located on
22 either side of Hunting Park Avenue and extending
23 from a point approximately 345 feet east of
24 Whitaker Avenue to a point approximately 186
25 further eastward therefrom as sloped easements.

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2 These slope easements are required to facilitate
3 a streets department project to remove an
4 existing bridge which carries Hunting Park Avenue
5 over a former railroad line.

6 The space underneath the bridge will be
7 filled in and the roadway reconstructed with
8 additional fills sloping up on either side to
9 support and protect the roadway. This is an
10 administration ordinance submitted by the
11 Department of Streets. Department of Street
12 supports this proposed ordinance and recommends
13 it to the committee for favorable action.

14 Thank you for the opportunity to
15 testify today. I'd be pleased to answer any
16 questions you may have.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
18 your testimony. Are there any questions from any
19 members of the committee? The chair recognizes
20 Councilmember Young.

21 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you, Madam
22 Chair. Who currently owns the land?

23 MR. MORROW: The land on either side of
24 Hunting Park Avenue is currently owned by PECO,
25 Philadelphia Electric Company.

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2 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And is there a
3 fee the city will be paying for this easement.

4 MR. MORROW: That's still being worked
5 out by the law department. My understanding is
6 no, we're not going to pay anything for this.

7 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you, Madam
8 Chair.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you. Are
10 there any questions from the other members of
11 this committee? Thank you so much for your
12 testimony.

13 Will the clerk please read the panel we
14 have to testify today on Bill Number 240307.

15 THE CLERK: The next speaker is --

16 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: 240370. And I'd
17 like for the record to mention that we have
18 received two letters in support of the renaming
19 of West Oak Lane Library to Dwight Evans Library
20 of West Oak Lane. One letter is from Congressman
21 Brendan Boyle and another letter is from
22 Councilwoman Madeleine Dean.

23 THE CLERK: The next speakers for
24 204370 are Kelly Richards and Kim Lloyd.

25 (Witnesses approached witness table.)

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2 MR. RICHARDS: Very good.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
4 joining us this morning. Please state your name
5 for the record and begin your testimony.

6 MR. RICHARDS: Kelly Richards, Free
7 Library President and Director. Good morning,
8 Chairperson Lozada and members of the committee
9 on Public Property & Public Works. My name is
10 Kelly Richards, and I'm the president and
11 director of the Free Library of Philadelphia.
12 I'm here today to testify in support of Bill
13 Number 240370, introduced by Councilman Phillips
14 that would rename West Oak Lane Library to Dwight
15 Evans Library of West Oak Lane.

16 As you know, West Oak Lane sits in the
17 northwest region of Philadelphia. Today it is
18 one of our city's predominantly Black, middle-
19 class communities with a rich history and a story
20 of rebirth, diversity, and resilience.

21 At the heart of its story is
22 Congressman Dwight Evans, a native of North
23 Philadelphia, a well-known champion of urban
24 renewal, and a longtime community activist who
25 worked hard to revitalize neighborhoods like West

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2 Oak Lane that have been disinvested for decades.

3 Over the last 30 years, Evans has
4 become an advocate for teachers, education,
5 helping start the West Oak Lane Charter School
6 where thousands of kids grades K through 8, have
7 been taught and inspired. He is also a voice for
8 the citizens experiencing food insecurity and was
9 instrumental in bringing nearly 100 quality
10 grocery options to underserved areas of our city.

11 Remarkably, his efforts and approach
12 were adopted by the Obama administration as a
13 model to end food deserts nationwide. Dwight
14 Evans has an impressive list of achievements
15 worth recognizing that make him the most fitting
16 candidate, the renaming of West Oak Lane Library,
17 like becoming the first African American chairman
18 of Pennsylvania's House Appropriations Committee.

19 Designating his name to West Oak Lane
20 Library, would recognize his impact on our
21 community and more importantly, serve as an
22 example and reminder of what diligence and
23 activism can achieve for generations to come.
24 For these reasons, I encourage you all to vote in
25 favor of the proposed legislation and give West

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2 Oak Lane Library a name more representative of
3 the surrounding community and its history.

4 I welcome any questions from the
5 committee, and thank you.

6 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
7 your testimony. Please state your name for the
8 record and begin your testimony.

9 MS. LLOYD: Good afternoon, Chair
10 Lozada and committee members of the Public
11 Property & Public Works. My name is Kimberly
12 Lloyd and I am president, CEO of Ogontz Avenue
13 Revitalization Corp, fondly known as OARC. I
14 echo Mr. Kelly's sentiments in regards to Dwight
15 Evans, but to add a little bit more in terms of
16 his legacy and why that this committee should
17 consider his renaming of the library to the
18 Dwight Evans Library of West Oak Lane.

19 Obviously, you know, in terms of his
20 organization, OARC, founded over 41 years ago,
21 it's not common for a CDC to still have the
22 legacy that it has. We still continue to do the
23 work in the community, and it really is his
24 vision that is allowing us to do that.

25 So again, I echo the sentiments that

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2 have already been put out there in terms of
3 leaving his legacy in his name, particularly on
4 the library in West Oak Lane, for all the work
5 that he has done over time. And we also know
6 that the Friends of the West Oak Lane Library
7 also share these sane sentiments. Thank you for
8 allowing me to testify today.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you so
10 much. I'd like to also just say that I'm
11 grateful for all of the work that Dwight Evans
12 has done, not only to his district, but in the
13 city of Philadelphia and the many opportunities
14 that he has made possible to others.

15 He is an example of a leader who always
16 has reached back and has provided guidance and
17 support and mentorship to many to be able to
18 follow a positive path, and so grateful for him
19 and excited for this recognition to him. So
20 thank you so much for the work in this. Are
21 there any questions from members of the
22 committee?

23 COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL: Just a
24 comment.

25 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The chair

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2 recognizes Councilmember Driscoll.

3 COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL: Just a quick
4 comment. I actually served in the House of
5 Representatives with Dwight Evans. And I'm a big
6 fan of what he's done for the city of
7 Philadelphia. I just said to Councilman Squilla,
8 generally, I don't like naming anything after
9 anyone that's still alive, because things can
10 still go south, as we've seen in some of the
11 buildings we've named in the city. But I'd make
12 an exception for the congressman. So thank you
13 for your support here.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The chair
15 recognizes Councilmember Young.

16 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you. Just
17 similar to Councilmember Driscoll, I just want to
18 be able to put on a record my gratitude for
19 Congressman Evans and want to be able to give him
20 his flowers while he can still smell them. So I
21 just want to be in support of this legislation.
22 So thank you.

23 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you so
24 much. Thank you for your testimony.

25 MS. LLOYD: Thank you.

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2 MR. RICHARDS: Thank you.

3 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Will the clerks
4 please read the names of the panel to testify
5 this morning on Bill Number 240423?

6 THE CLERK: The next panelist for Bill
7 Number 240423 is Sarah Clark Stuart.

8 (Witness approached witness table.)

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Good morning.
10 Thank you for being with us this morning. Please
11 state your name for the record and begin your
12 testimony.

13 MS. STUART: Thank you very much.
14 Chairperson Lozada and members of the committee
15 of the Public Property & Public Works. My name
16 is Sarah Clark Stuart, and I'm the trails and
17 transportation manager for the Department of
18 Streets. I'm here to testify in support of Bill
19 Number 240423, introduced by Councilmember Jones.

20 Bill Number 240423 allows the city of
21 Philadelphia to acquire right-of-way land for the
22 purposes of connecting and extending the
23 Schuylkill River Trail by constructing the
24 Wissahickon Gateway segment of the Schuylkill
25 River Trail. Upon completion of construction,

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2 the right-of-way will be operated and maintained
3 by the Philadelphia Streets Department.

4 The proposed right-of-way runs between
5 the Wissahickon Creek to the east, the Schuylkill
6 River to the south, the Pencoyd Bridge to the
7 west, and Ridge Avenue and Main Street to the
8 north. The proposed right-of-ways would be part
9 of the larger circuit trail system in
10 Philadelphia. This concludes my testimony, and
11 I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

12 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
13 your testimony. Are there any questions on
14 behalf of the committee? And you are also here
15 to testify on Bill Number 240425?

16 MS. STUART: Yes, ma'am. Good morning,
17 Chairperson Lozada and members of the committee.
18 Bill Number 240425 would allow the city of
19 Philadelphia to receive two parcels from the
20 Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, the
21 Philadelphia Land Bank, and the Philadelphia
22 Housing and Development Corporation for the
23 purposes of building the Cobbs Creek Trail
24 extension in the Eastwick neighborhood.

25 The two parcels are 2444 Island Avenue

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2 and 7401 Wheeler Street. Upon completion of
3 construction of the Cobbs Creek Trail extension,
4 the two parcels will be operated and maintained
5 by the Philadelphia Streets Department. The two
6 parcels will become part of the larger circuit
7 trail system in Philadelphia. And this concludes
8 my testimony, and happy to answer any questions.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
10 your testimony. Are there questions from the
11 members of the committee on this bill? The chair
12 recognizes Councilmember Young.

13 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Just a logistical
14 question. Why would these be owned or maintained
15 by the Streets Department versus the Department
16 of Parks and Rec?

17 MS. STUART: So in the most recent
18 past, the Department of Streets has decided to
19 take on the job of building the trail system out
20 and then assuming the responsibility for
21 maintenance.

22 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.

23 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: You're also here
24 to testify on Bill Number 240431?

25 MS. STUART: Yes, ma'am. Thank you.

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2 Bill Number 2401 is introduced by Councilmember
3 Driscoll. This would allow the city of
4 Philadelphia to acquire right-of-way land for the
5 purposes of connecting and extending the Delaware
6 River Trail by constructing a trail in the
7 Tacony, Holmesburg area. The proposed right-of-
8 way runs between Princeton Avenue, Pennypack
9 Path, the Delaware River, and State Road.

10 Upon completion of construction, the
11 right-of-way will be operated and maintained by
12 the Philadelphia Streets Department. The
13 proposed right-of-way will be acquired as part of
14 this larger circuit trail system in Philadelphia.
15 This concludes my testimony. Happy to take any
16 questions.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
18 your testimony. Are there any questions from
19 members of the committee?

20 There being none, will the clerk please
21 read the names of the panel that are here to
22 testify on Bill Number 240428.

23 THE CLERK: Councilwoman, there are no
24 speakers signed up for 240428, but we do have --

25 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I understand.

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2 THE CLERK: -- we do have written
3 testimony from David Wilson, Deputy Managing
4 Director for General Services.

5 (Witness approached witness table.)

6 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: David.

7 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: I'd like to make
8 a comment first, if you don't mind,
9 Councilmember.

10 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The chair
11 recognizes Councilmember Young.

12 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you.
13 Colleagues, this bill, 240248, is a bill that I
14 introduced that would prohibit the city from
15 entering into a lease or extended any leases for
16 a site at 2100 West Girard Avenue that we are,
17 particularly my office and members of the
18 Fairmount community and other communities in
19 North Philadelphia, just have some questions
20 about that specific usage.

21 But I think that, we put this bill in
22 to have a substantive conversation with the
23 administration on the property rather than
24 putting in some resolution or anything like that.
25 We wanted to be able to talk substance, and I

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2 think it is unfortunate that the administration
3 has chosen not to have someone come and testify
4 on this bill so members of the public can hear,
5 or members of the community can hear what the
6 administration's position is in their community.

7 And I am grateful that there are folks
8 here who stuck around who want to give their
9 testimony on the record. But I just think that
10 these folks are owed a conversation, a public
11 conversation, a transparent conversation. And as
12 your councilmember, that's what I try to do by
13 putting forth this legislation. So I just want
14 that community to know and all community to know
15 that we're trying our best to get information and
16 to communicate that back with you. So thank you
17 all for coming today and being willing to testify
18 on this.

19 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you.

20 THE CLERK: So we will now be opening
21 to public comment. And the next speakers are Tim
22 Butters, speaking on 240428, Teresa Hoberg
23 speaking on 240428, and Richie from PhillyCAM
24 speaking on 240383.

25 (Witnesses approached witness table.)

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2 MR. BUTTERS: Good afternoon, members
3 of council. My name is Tim Butters. I am the
4 president of the Fairmount Civic Association.
5 I'm here to support the bill introduced by
6 Councilman Young, 240428. The Fairmount Civic
7 Association is a group of volunteers, and we
8 represent the residents of Fairmount Community.
9 I agree with Councilman Young that what we want
10 is more dialogue and transparency around the
11 lease at the 2100 Girard facility.

12 Currently we're concerned about the
13 safety of the building, which has multiple
14 violations at this time, and the impact on the
15 neighboring communities, which include two direct
16 schools, Gerard College, and the city school in
17 Fairmount. And it's adjacent by a couple blocks
18 to the Beige-Martin Elementary School and Middle
19 School, as well as St. Joseph's Prep.

20 Since the facility has been expanded to
21 include increased homeless services, we've had
22 reports of increased drug use, increased drug
23 paraphernalia and trash, including needles and
24 baggies, overdoses. And these are things that we
25 were not ready to be helping people with because

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2 we didn't know that it was coming. And maybe if
3 we were more prepared, we had a dialogue with the
4 city, we would be more prepared to help our
5 community take on these challenges.

6 Thank you for letting me talk to you
7 guys.

8 MS. HOBERG: Thank you. My name is
9 Teresa Hoberg. I am a director of the Fairmount
10 Civic Association and obviously a resident of
11 Fairmount. I agree with what Jim Butters has
12 said. My concern is also that in considering
13 this lease, that it be structured -- this is our
14 only avenue for dealing with the use of the
15 property. We don't really have a legal avenue.

16 So we're counting on city council to
17 help structure the current and prospective use of
18 this property, and that would include, obviously,
19 putting in a use that has some controls on the
20 population, which it does not seem to have at
21 this point, and that it be a reputable operation.
22 And also going forward, it's important that we
23 bring in to the extent that we have illegal
24 activity happening on the streets that we involve
25 the police department because that can be

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2 something that the operators of the property
3 themselves cannot handle.

4 It falls outside their purview. So it
5 needs to be two-pronged issue. I'm hopeful that
6 we don't just consider terminating the lease at
7 the end of two years. It's only two years left,
8 because, as I understand it, the state then has
9 the opportunity to make a lease with somebody
10 else or sell it to somebody else or enter into a
11 contract with another provider that we may have
12 even less control over.

13 So I think it's in our benefit to work
14 with the state to try to negotiate the terms of a
15 lease and control the type of use and the
16 operators of that facility that works both for
17 their needs and also considers the community.

18 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
19 your testimony. Other questions from the members
20 of this committee? The chair recognizes
21 Councilmember Young.

22 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank you. And
23 these aren't questions that are for you, too,
24 specifically, but I just wanted to put them on
25 the record if, in case there was someone here

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2 from the administration who were able to testify
3 on this lease. Just a couple of questions about,
4 what are the services being offered at the site.
5 Who are the providers of these services? When
6 were these providers selected?

7 Will there be medically assisted
8 treatment here at this site? What is the census
9 of the site? How many participants are at the
10 site? How are you able to come to the site in
11 the first place? So just a few, I think, basic
12 questions that the community members have that we
13 would definitely would like to see answered as we
14 move forward this process.

15 And just for the community's
16 understanding, City Council's authority is to
17 authorize leases that are for more than a year.
18 And so in this particular case, if the mayor or
19 if anyone decided, any folks from the city
20 decided that we're going to just continue on a
21 year-to-year basis, they also have that ability
22 without coming to City Council. So I wanted to
23 put that clear on the record.

24 This legislation will only prevent the
25 city from entering to any leases that are more

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2 than a year. So, the administration does have
3 the ability, like I said, to enter to leases at a
4 smaller length of time. But I also hope that our
5 state partners use their state prerogative. They
6 like to throw that word around there because it's
7 a state-owned facility.

8 And so hopefully, they will use some of
9 their influence in trying to ensure that the
10 community that they represent as well is being
11 heard when it comes to the use of that state-
12 owned facility. And so I just want to, again,
13 thank you both for coming out to testify on this
14 matter, just to give a sense of the sentiment of
15 that community. And I know that it's something
16 that is just new or hasn't been seen in that
17 community in over 30 years. I'll say.

18 And so we want to make sure that we
19 have the ability to mitigate some of the negative
20 issues that could potentially arise and that are
21 arising in that community. Because, as I stated
22 yesterday at a hearing, people need treatment,
23 people need service. No one is questioning that.
24 No one is against that.

25 I think that when you are placing that

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2 type of service in the community and there are
3 negative quality of life, things that happen, a
4 community should just be prepared to deal with
5 those things and understanding that treatment is
6 necessary. So I just want to, again, thank you
7 for coming out, for your testimony on this bill.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you for
9 your testimony. Mr. Clerk, are there any anymore
10 panelist or anyone here to testify?

11 THE CLERK: Yes. I have Richie on
12 behalf of a PhillyCAM for 240383. Is there
13 Richie in the room?

14 (Witness approached witness table.)

15 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Good morning.
16 Please state your name for the record and begin
17 your testimony.

18 MS. SANDERSON: Sorry. My name is Zoe
19 Sanderson. I am a Fairmount resident. I'm in
20 Councilman Young's district. I just wanted to
21 echo what my neighbors and FCA board directors
22 said. I appreciate you bringing this to the
23 council's attention. And as a neighborhood, we
24 sort of felt blindsided by this.

25 And so we just want some transparency

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2 and communication about this facility,
3 understanding that it's a necessity, but also
4 hoping that we can have some discussion about
5 what that means for our community. And we want
6 to be helpful, but we also want to be informed.
7 So going forward, I'm hoping that we can have an
8 open discussion with the administration on this
9 particular issue for the sake of the community
10 and for the city.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you.
12 Thank you so much for being here --

13 MS. SANDERSON: Thank you.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: -- and sharing
15 your testimony with us. Thank you.

16 MS. SANDERSON: Thank you very much.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Are there any
18 questions from any members of the committee for
19 this? The chair recognizes Councilmember Young.

20 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I just want to
21 thank you for coming out and testify today and
22 waiting out this hearing on this legislation.
23 And I look forward to working with you and the
24 community members on trying to continue this
25 dialogue to get information so we can best work

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2 with the administration on providing that
3 service, but also making sure that the community
4 is protected as well.

5 MS. SANDERSON: Great. I appreciate
6 it. Thank you.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you.
8 There being no further questions from members of
9 the committee and no further witnesses to testify
10 on the bills before this committee today, I will
11 ask if there is anyone else present in the
12 hearing whose name we have failed to call and
13 wishes to offer testimony on the bills being
14 considered today. Hearing none, I want to thank
15 the panels and the witnesses for their
16 participation today.

17 We value your advocacy. This concludes
18 the public hearing of the committee. We will now
19 go into public meeting to consider the actions to
20 be taken on the bills before this committee
21 today. We will now convene the public meeting.

22 Mr. Cameron, will you please call the
23 roll to take attendance of members. Members that
24 are in attendance, will you please indicate that
25 you are present when you hear your name is being

1 5/22/24 - PUBLIC - BILL 240187, ETC.

2 called?

3 THE CLERK: Madam Chair.

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Present.

5 THE CLERK: Vice chair Squilla.

6 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: Present.

7 THE CLERK: Member Gauthier.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Present.

9 THE CLERK: Member Driscoll.

10 COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL: Present.

11 THE CLERK: Member Harrity.

12 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Present.

13 THE CLERK: Member Young.

14 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Present.

15 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Thank you all.

16 A quorum is present. And we will now begin the
17 public meeting. We will now move to amend Bill
18 Number 240383. The chair recognizes
19 Councilmember Squilla for a motion on the
20 amendment to Bill Number 240383.

21 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: Thank you,
22 Madam Chair. I offer an amendment to Bill Number
23 240383. A copy of the amendment has been
24 circulated to all members of the committee. I
25 move that the amendment to Bill Number 240383 be

1 5/22/24 - PUBLIC - BILL 240187, ETC.

2 approved.

3 (Duly seconded.)

4 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The chair notes
5 for the record that Councilmember Jamie Gauthier
6 seconds the motion. It has been moved and
7 property second, that the amendment to Bill
8 Number 240383 be approved. All those in favor of
9 the motion will signify by saying aye.

10 (Aye.)

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Those opposed?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The ayes have it
14 and the amendment to Bill Number 240383 has been
15 approved.

16 The chair recognizes Councilmember
17 Squilla for a single motion on Bill Numbers
18 240383 as amended, 240187, 240435, 240303,
19 240370, 240423, 240425, 240431, 240428 be
20 reported from this committee with a favorable
21 recommendation and further move that the rules of
22 council be suspended to permit first reading of
23 these bills at our next session of Council.

24 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA: Thank you,
25 Madam Chair. I move the Bill Number 240383 as

1 5/22/24 - PUBLIC - BILL 240187, ETC.
2 amended and Bill Number 240187, 240435, 240303,
3 240370, 240423, 240425, 240431, 240428 be
4 reported from this committee with a favorable
5 recommendation and further move the rules of
6 Council be suspended. I submit the first reading
7 of these bills at the next session to Council.

8 (Duly seconded.)

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The chair notes
10 for the record that Councilmember Young seconds
11 the motion. It has been moved and properly
12 second that Bill Number 240383 as amended. Bill
13 Numbers 240187, 240435, 240303, 240370, 240423,
14 240425, 240431, 240428 as reported from this
15 committee with a favorable recommendation and
16 further move that the rules of council be
17 suspended to permit first reading of these bills
18 at the next session of Council.

19 All those in favor of the motion will
20 signify by saying aye.

21 (Aye.)

22 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: Those opposed?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: The ayes
25 carries, and the motion is approved. This

1 5/22/24 - PUBLIC - BILL 240187, ETC.
2 includes the business before this committee of
3 Public Works and Public Property for today.
4 Thank you all very much for your attendance.
5 (The Committee was adjourned.)

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2 CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIPTIONIST

3

4 I, KEZIAH MWANGI, Legal Transcriptionist, do
5 hereby certify:

6 That the foregoing is a complete and true
7 transcription of the original digital audio recording
8 of the proceedings captured in the foregoing matter.

9

10 IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my
11 hand this 19th day of June, 2024.

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Keziah Mwangi

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