

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON RULES

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, November 13, 2012
10:15 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

BILLS 120617, 120618, 120720, 120724, 120727,
120728, and 120755

- - -

1

2

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good

3

morning, everyone. This is the Committee

4

on Rules.

5

Can I have everybody's

6

attention, please. Thank you.

7

This is the Committee on Rules.

8

For the record, we have a quorum with

9

Councilman Kenney, the Vice-Chair of the

10

Committee; Councilman Goode; Councilman

11

Henon; Councilman O'Brien; and myself,

12

Bill Greenlee as the Chair.

13

Ms. Marconi, will you please

14

read the first two bills before us today.

15

THE CLERK: Bill No. 120617, an

16

ordinance adopting an amendment to the

17

Articles of Incorporation of the Manayunk

18

Special Services District of Philadelphia

19

to extend the term of that Authority; all

20

under certain terms and conditions.

21

Bill No. 120618, an ordinance

22

approving a new plan, estimated costs and

23

proposed method of assessment of the

24

Manayunk Special Services District for

25

and concerning business improvements and

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 administrative services to the Manayunk
3 business district of the City of
4 Philadelphia.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
6 you.

7 Could you call our first
8 witness for these bills.

9 THE CLERK: Denis Murphy.
10 (Witness approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
13 morning. Identify yourself for the
14 record and proceed, please.

15 MR. MURPHY: Good morning,
16 Mr. Chairman and members of City Council.
17 My name is Denis Murphy and I am Manager
18 of Business Improvement Programs for the
19 City of Philadelphia Commerce Department.
20 I'm here to testify in support of Bills
21 120617 and 120618. Bill 120617 extends
22 the term of the Manayunk Special Services
23 District as a Municipal Authority through
24 2022. Bill 120618 approves a new
25 ten-year plan for services and

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 improvements, including estimated costs
3 and the method of assessing property
4 owners within the MSSD.

5 Creating business improvement
6 districts is consistent with the City's
7 strategic plan, especially with the goals
8 of making Philadelphia one of the safest
9 cities in America and a place of choice.

10 Fifteen years ago, property
11 owners and business people in Manayunk
12 came together to plan and pay for
13 supplemental services and improvements
14 through the creation of a business
15 improvement district. The MSSD uses
16 assessment funds to provide services such
17 as sidewalk litter removal and to
18 maintain capital improvements and
19 beautify the district. The MSSD works
20 closely with their partner, the Manayunk
21 Development Corporation, who market the
22 area and organize special events. Over
23 the last 15 years, the MSSD and MDC have
24 played a critical role in maintaining and
25 building partnerships with the City and

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 with others to help Manayunk adapt to
3 changing shopping patterns and economic
4 trends. The proposed plan continues
5 these activities that are critical to
6 maintain Manayunk's status as a shopping
7 and dining destination for the entire
8 region found within the City's limits.

9 BIDs are one of the best
10 examples of collaboration between the
11 City and our neighborhood commercial
12 areas. In these difficult economic
13 times, the efforts of the MSSD and their
14 partners, the Manayunk Development
15 Corporation and others, to keep Manayunk
16 competitive and successful are more
17 important than ever. This worthwhile
18 effort deserves the support of the City.

19 Thank you for your
20 consideration. I will be happy to answer
21 any questions you may have.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
23 you, Mr. Murphy.

24 Any questions?

25 (No response.)

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
3 none, thank you very much for your
4 testimony.

5 Ms. Marconi, will you please
6 call the next three witnesses, please.

7 THE CLERK: Dan Neducsin, Bruce
8 Cooper, Jane Lipton.

9 (Witnesses approached witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
12 morning. Again, whoever would like to go
13 first, please identify yourself and
14 proceed.

15 MR. COOPER: My name is Bruce
16 Cooper. Good morning, Chairman and
17 members of the Rules Committee. I'm the
18 President of Manayunk Development
19 Corporation, MDC. MDC acts as Manayunk's
20 local chamber of commerce, business
21 association, and branding engine for the
22 Manayunk business corridor. With 105
23 members, we represent more than 95
24 percent of the businesses present in
25 Manayunk today.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 For the last 15 years, MDC and
3 MSSD have been partners in the district
4 in performing tasks that include
5 implementation of district-wide cleaning,
6 capital improvements, marketing, event
7 planning. As business owners and
8 property owners, we recognize the need
9 for coordination, collaboration, and a
10 sense of community fostered by our
11 partnership. The two groups with similar
12 goals and many of the same constituents,
13 we appreciate the advantages borne by
14 cooperation.

15 MDC and MSSD need each other,
16 and the Manayunk business corridor needs
17 the competitive edge our partnership
18 provides in what has become a region
19 filled with neighborhood commercial
20 districts.

21 I am here today to urge your
22 support for Bill No. 120617, extending
23 the life of the MSSD for ten years, and
24 Bill 120618, approving the new plan for
25 the Manayunk Special Services District.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Let me introduce Dan Neducsin,
3 the President of Manayunk Special
4 Services.

5 MR. NEDUCSIN: Thank you.
6 Thank you for giving us this valuable
7 time. Good morning, Chairman Greenlee
8 and the other members of the Rules
9 Committee. My name is Dan Neducsin. I'm
10 the President of the Manayunk Special
11 Service District. I am also a developer
12 in Manayunk, and, as you know, Manayunk
13 has seen its ups and downs, but I would
14 have to say that this Special Service
15 District has been the catalyst for us to
16 continue our growth, and the future looks
17 brighter in Manayunk now than ever.

18 As President, I'm here today
19 proudly in support of Bill No. 120617,
20 extending the life of the MSSD for ten
21 years, and Bill No. 120618, approving a
22 new plan that focuses on the three C's -
23 cleaning, capital projects, and
24 communications.

25 After several months of working

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 with consultants and the MDC staff,
3 meeting with property owners, convening
4 steering committee meetings, and holding
5 several public meetings, we have
6 developed a plan that will help to keep
7 Manayunk ahead of the curve and maintain
8 property values without placing an
9 overwhelming financial burden on the
10 property owners.

11 Some key differences between
12 the current plan and the new plan that
13 were important to property owners were
14 transparency, clarity of purpose, and
15 affordability in the current economy.

16 At this time, I would like to
17 introduce our Executive Director, Jane
18 Lipton, to go into these topics with a
19 little more detail. Thank you for your
20 consideration.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
22 you.

23 MS. LIPTON: Good morning,
24 Chairman Greenlee and the members of the
25 Rules Committee. My name is Jane Lipton.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 I'm the Executive Director of the
3 Manayunk Special Services District and
4 the Manayunk Development Corporation. I
5 too am here today to urge the support of
6 Bill No. 120617, extending the life of
7 the Manayunk Special Services District
8 for ten years, and Bill No. 120618,
9 approving the new plan for the Manayunk
10 Special Services District.

11 I would like to begin by taking
12 a few minutes to thank the people that
13 helped bring us to this point:

14 City Council and Council staff
15 for helping us through this very intense
16 process;

17 Councilman Curtis Jones and his
18 staff for their guidance and support of
19 our efforts;

20 Our friends at the Commerce
21 Department, Denis Murphy back there and
22 others, who work to support not only our
23 business improvement district but BIDs
24 and NIDs and CDCs throughout the City of
25 Philadelphia;

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Larry Houston and Dan Hoffman,
3 who served as our consultants and
4 facilitators during this process. Larry
5 couldn't be here, but Dan is right there;

6 Daniel Neducsin, who you've
7 already heard from, our MSSD President,
8 and Bruce Cooper, who serves as the MSSD
9 Vice-President as well as the President
10 of the MDC, our sister organization;

11 Our steering committee, which
12 is made up of assessees, who spent
13 countless hours in meetings reviewing
14 survey data, reviewing best practices,
15 talking to other property owners, editing
16 multiple drafts of the plan, all to build
17 the consensus that we have today. These
18 members deserve to be recognized by name
19 are Dan Neducsin, Robert Swarbrick, Allen
20 Newman, David Richards, Bruce Cooper,
21 Mary Dougherty, Frank Giovanonne, William
22 O'Brien, and Norma Mann.

23 I'd also like to thank Howard
24 Moseley, who is part of my staff at MDC,
25 who served as the lead staff person on

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 this project, and we could not have moved
3 this project along as quickly and as
4 smoothly without him.

5 They are not here today, but I
6 have to mention Torrey Haines and Roy
7 Harris. They're the core of our
8 maintenance staff. They keep our
9 district free of litter, graffiti, and
10 other blight, and they are out on the
11 street today, even in the weather the way
12 it is, and they deserve our thanks and
13 gratitude.

14 And, of course, I want to thank
15 all the property owners who make MSSD
16 possible by paying into the assessment
17 and who have supported its renewal.

18 Now to highlight the areas that
19 Mr. Neducsin mentioned.

20 Transparency: Aside from
21 simply following the state-imposed
22 sunshine laws and just developing a
23 budget for the new plan, our steering
24 team developed a set of bylaw amendments
25 that are geared towards engaging property

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 owners through a wide variety of
3 communication tools. Property owners
4 will be recruited for leadership on the
5 Board, as well as giving them the
6 opportunity to vote on Board membership.
7 The previous bylaws did not require this.

8 Clarity of purpose: Due to the
9 close nature of our partnership between
10 MDC and MSSD, for years the Board
11 membership of MDC and MSSD were
12 identical. Although this arrangement was
13 very good for the purpose of getting
14 things implemented efficiently, it was
15 confusing to MSSD assessment payers, who
16 are all property owners, and MDC members,
17 who are all business owners. In the
18 past, when the interests of business
19 owners and property owners were not quite
20 aligned, discord would ensue among the
21 assessment payers and the MDC members,
22 resulting in a loss of confidence in both
23 organizations. Since differentiating the
24 Boards, the decision-making process for
25 each organization has been more thorough

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 and focused. It's also been easier to
3 differentiate the two groups in the minds
4 of the members and the assessment payers.
5 The budget categories in the plan are now
6 focused on the three C's - cleaning,
7 capital improvements, and communication.
8 This allows the MSSD to really hone in on
9 the interests of the property owners and
10 increase the value of the district, while
11 MDC can stay focused on promoting the
12 district as a regional destination to
13 live, shop, dine, and play.

14 Lastly, affordability: During
15 these trying economic times, many small
16 businesses in Manayunk struggle to
17 survive. Leaders from both the MSSD and
18 MDC, the gentlemen next to me, have
19 developed cost-effective ways to continue
20 servicing the district in ways that match
21 the core principles mentioned earlier.
22 By strengthening the partnership with MDC
23 and truly focusing the program on the
24 three C's, we will be able to hold the
25 annual rate of increase in the budget to

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 3 percent from a previous growth rate of
3 5 percent. And really good news is that
4 we did it with no planned reduction in
5 service. In addition, if necessary, the
6 new plan gives the Board the flexibility
7 to collect a lowered assessment if it be
8 deemed necessary by the interest of the
9 district.

10 We look forward to the next ten
11 years of partnership and progress in the
12 district.

13 Thank you all for giving us
14 your time. If you have any questions.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
16 you.

17 Any questions?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
20 none, thank you all very much. See, that
21 shows you're doing a good job, because
22 there's no questions.

23 That's all I have on my list
24 for these two bills. Is there anyone
25 else here to testify on the Manayunk

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Special Service District issue?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
5 none, first let me please for the record
6 reflect that Councilwoman Bass and
7 Councilwoman Tasco, members of the
8 Committee, are also present.

9 And, Ms. Marconi, will you
10 please read the title of the next bill.

11 THE CLERK: Bill No. 120720, an
12 ordinance approving the fifteenth
13 amendment of the redevelopment proposal
14 for the Mantua Urban Renewal Area, being
15 the area beginning at the intersection of
16 Fortieth Street and Spring Garden Street,
17 including the twelfth amendment to the
18 urban renewal plan and the relocation
19 plan, as amended, which provides, inter
20 alia, for the additional land acquisition
21 of approximately seventeen properties for
22 commercial and related uses; the
23 provision of certain relocation services,
24 as required by law and declaring that
25 condemnation is not imminent with respect

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 to this Project.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And will
4 you please name the first two witnesses,
5 please.

6 THE CLERK: Ed Covington and
7 Richard Redding.

8 (Witnesses already seated at
9 witness table.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And there
11 they are.

12 Please identify yourself for
13 the record and proceed.

14 MR. COVINGTON: Good morning,
15 Chairman Greenlee. My name is Ed
16 Covington. I'm the Executive Director of
17 the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority.

18 Chairman Greenlee and members
19 of the Committee, I'm here to speak in
20 support of Bill No. 120720, which will
21 enable the Philadelphia Redevelopment
22 Authority to acquire 17 properties for
23 the development of a supermarket that the
24 residents of Mantua have long desired.

25 These 17 properties, which are

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 identified on an attached list and which
3 will be acquired using Neighborhood
4 Transformation Initiative funds, will be
5 combined with 65 properties previously
6 authorized for acquisition to assemble a
7 site for development of a supermarket and
8 residential related uses.

9 For many years, when the
10 residents of Mantua have been asked what
11 they would like to see in their
12 neighborhood, a full service supermarket
13 has been near the top of the list.
14 Acquisition of these parcels is the final
15 step in assembling the land necessary to
16 make the dream of this community and of
17 Councilwoman Blackwell a reality. A
18 potential developer has acquired
19 approximately \$2.7 million in RCAP funds
20 to support this development effort.

21 Chairman Greenlee and members
22 of the Committee, I respectfully request
23 favorable consideration of Bill No.
24 120720 and would also ask the suspension
25 of Council rules to allow first reading

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 on November 15th, 2012.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
4 you.

5 Mr. Redding.

6 MR. REDDING: Good morning,
7 Mr. Chairman and members of the
8 Committee. My name is Richard Redding.
9 I'm Director of Community Planning at the
10 Philadelphia City Planning Commission.
11 I'm here today to testify in support of
12 Bill No. 120720.

13 The bill approves the fifteenth
14 amendment of the redevelopment proposal
15 for the Mantua Urban Renewal Area. It
16 authorizes acquisition of 17 properties
17 in the blocks bounded by 36th, Haverford,
18 37th, and Wallace Streets. The 17
19 acquisitions include nine occupied
20 properties where relocation assistance
21 will be provided. Land is being
22 assembled for future development of a
23 food market.

24 The City Planning Commission's
25 approval of this proposal was accompanied

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 by a land use change in the Mantua
3 Redevelopment Area Plan. The plan had
4 proposed institutional, commercial, and
5 residential uses for sections of this
6 site. The proposed land use was changed
7 to commercial in August of this year.
8 Therefore, this action is in accord with
9 the Mantua Redevelopment Area Plan
10 adopted by the City Planning Commission
11 in November of 1968, as amended.

12 The City Planning Commission
13 approved this amended redevelopment
14 proposal at its meeting of August 22nd,
15 2012.

16 I'd be happy to answer any
17 questions.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
19 both.

20 Any questions?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
23 none, I just want to go on record as
24 saying I live near a community that's
25 been trying to get a supermarket for a

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 long time, and on Thursday we're having a
3 groundbreaking at 31st and Girard. So I
4 know how important supermarkets are to
5 communities. I know it's very important
6 here. So thank you.

7 I'm sorry. Councilwoman
8 Blackwell. I didn't even see you there.
9 Councilwoman Blackwell.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you, Mr. Chairman and members of the
12 Committee. This has been a long time
13 coming. We have fought long, and we
14 wanted a whole extra block for the
15 supermarket. But we fought long and
16 hard, and even the people involved in the
17 condemnation are saying when's it going
18 to happen? When's it going to happen?

19 So certainly we're grateful for
20 all the work the City has done, and we're
21 certainly hopeful that the Committee will
22 approve this, and we thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
24 you, Councilwoman.

25 No other questions. I think

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 you have -- do you have another name?

3 THE CLERK: Chester Skaziak.

4 (Witness approached witness
5 table.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
7 identify yourself for the record.

8 MR. SKAZIAK: Good morning,
9 everyone. My name is Chester Skaziak and
10 I'm a Philadelphia resident and taxpayer.

11 Mr. Greenlee, I mentioned that
12 there was a number of bills that I wanted
13 to speak on, and perhaps I can speak on
14 them all at one time, with your
15 permission.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Well, I
17 need you to speak on the bills that are
18 dealing -- you have to speak on the issue
19 of the bills itself. You have to speak
20 on Mantua. Do you have something to say
21 about Mantua?

22 MR. SKAZIAK: Yes, I do. But I
23 did give the history as to the behavior
24 of the PIDC, PAID, PRA, and the
25 Department of Commerce.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir, we
3 have a long day today, so I need you to
4 speak on this bill, on the acquisition
5 for properties for a supermarket in
6 Mantua. Do you have anything to say
7 about that?

8 MR. SKAZIAK: Yes. I support
9 the fabric of the legislation. What I
10 disagree with is the number of properties
11 that are in violation of not paying
12 taxes. They're delinquent taxpayers.

13 Now, on 2/21 of 2002, the City
14 gave to Genesis -- Montessori Genesis II
15 14 properties for the cost of \$1. Now
16 we're buying them back, and according to
17 my records, Mantua, there's nearly
18 \$17,000 -- I know, it's pretty funny.
19 It's not funny, because I'm a taxpayer,
20 sir.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir, I'm
22 not laughing. I'm talking about --

23 MR. SKAZIAK: There's
24 \$17,000 --

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Do you

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 have something to say about Mantua?
3 Please continue.

4 MR. SKAZIAK: Yes. I agree
5 with the fabric of the legislation, as I
6 said. What I disagree with is how the
7 City is operating when they purchase
8 these properties. We already owned that
9 property. We sold it for a dollar. Now
10 how many millions of dollars are you
11 going to buy it back for? That's the
12 simple question. And not only is it this
13 particular property, it's being done at
14 1525 North American Street, a property
15 that was purchased for \$27,000, who
16 hasn't paid their taxes for 15 years.
17 The Department of Commerce is going to
18 buy it back for \$1,900,000.

19 Now, Mr. Greenlee, I will tell
20 you this, that meeting is today at 4:05
21 at 1234 Market Street and the PRA is
22 going to hold hearings on that. Now,
23 what do I have to do as a taxpayer? Go
24 to their meetings? Right now I go to
25 Pension Board meetings, PICA Board

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 meetings, and City Council meetings.

3 What does a taxpayer have to do to have

4 this issue addressed?

5 It seems to me that Linebarger,

6 the people who are supposed to collect

7 these taxes, aren't doing their job.

8 Goehring Rutter, they're not doing their

9 job, and obviously the City Council is

10 not addressing the issue.

11 Now, I don't know how I can

12 make myself more clear. I sent you and I

13 sent the Mayor and every member of

14 Council an e-mail regarding these issues,

15 and it's obvious to me that it's being

16 ignored. I don't know how I can get

17 attention of the taxpayers, sir, and each

18 and every one of you.

19 Now, I sit in that chair every

20 Thursday and I listen to this. Not only

21 do I listen to it, but I watch the body

22 language. Now, you can put these bills

23 out every Thursday. I've read every

24 piece of legislation that comes out of

25 this room. My computer is full of

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 garbage. It's a virus, and the taxpayers
3 need to know.

4 You are going to have an AVI
5 hearing. Now, that will be a tax issue.
6 I will bring every issue --

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir, then
8 at the AVI hearing, you should raise
9 that.

10 MR. SKAZIAK: Sir, let me
11 finish. I will bring that issue to the
12 taxpayers each and every time, and that
13 way, you will have to accept my comments.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
15 Thank you.

16 MR. SKAZIAK: Now, I thank you
17 very much for allowing me to speak here
18 today. I took the time away from my
19 grandchildren yesterday, a beautiful day,
20 to be here, and it's still a beautiful
21 day. Why? Because it's better on this
22 side of the dirt than the other side of
23 the dirt.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
25 you.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 MR. SKAZIAK: And that's the
3 facts.

4 Thank you very much.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is there
6 anyone else here to testify on this bill?

7 (Applause.)

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
10 none --

11 MR. SKAZIAK: And I will speak
12 on 727 and I will speak on 755.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir, that
14 is it. Okay? Thank you.

15 Ms. Marconi, will you please
16 read the title of the next bill.

17 (Applause.)

18 THE CLERK: Bill No. 120724, an
19 ordinance to amend the Philadelphia
20 Zoning Maps by changing the zoning
21 designations of certain areas of land
22 located within an area bounded by Fifth
23 Street, Clearfield Street, Sixth Street
24 and Allegheny Avenue.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 you.

3 THE CLERK: Marty Gregorski.
4 (Witness approached witness
5 table.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
7 identify yourself and proceed.

8 MR. GREGORSKI: Good morning,
9 Councilman Greenlee, members of the Rules
10 Committee. I'm Marty Gregorski, a zoning
11 planner with the Philadelphia City
12 Planning Commission. I'm here to testify
13 on Bill No. 120724, which was introduced
14 into City Council on September 20th of
15 this year.

16 Bill No. 120724 will rezone the
17 site located at 3100 to 3124 North Fifth
18 Street from its current "I-2" Medium
19 Industrial zoning to a new designation of
20 "CMX-3" Community Commercial Mixed-Use.
21 This change will permit the development
22 of this site as the La Plaza flea market.
23 The market will reuse shipping containers
24 for kiosks, with retail sales including
25 food and beverages, a stage for

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 entertainment, and a seating area.

3 While the City Planning
4 Commission is supportive of the zoning
5 change to permit the use proposed, the
6 "CMX-3" district is a higher density
7 commercial district than what is existing
8 in this area. The "ICMX," Industrial
9 Commercial Mixed-Use district, will
10 permit the same uses as proposed, but
11 would have less unintended consequences,
12 as the district is more in character with
13 the surrounding industrial and commercial
14 uses. Thus, we recommend that the bill
15 be amended to change the property to
16 "ICMX" rather than "CMX-3" zoning.

17 The City Planning Commission at
18 its meeting of September 16th, 2012
19 recommended that Bill No. 120724 be
20 approved, as amended.

21 I'll be happy to answer any
22 questions at this time.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
24 you. And as I understand from
25 Councilwoman Sanchez's office, that they

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 agree with this amendment.

3 MR. GREGORSKI: That's correct.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
5 you.

6 Any questions of Mr. Gregorski?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
9 none, that's the only person here that I
10 have on my record. Is there anyone else
11 here to testify on this bill?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
14 none, Ms. Marconi, will you please read
15 the title of the next bill.

16 THE CLERK: Bill No. 120727, an
17 ordinance approving the eighteenth
18 amendment of the redevelopment proposal
19 for the South Central Urban Renewal Area,
20 being the area beginning at the
21 intersection of the southerly side of
22 Washington Avenue projected and the
23 easterly side of Delaware Avenue,
24 including the eighteenth amendment to the
25 urban renewal plan and the twelfth

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 amendment to the relocation plan, which
3 provides, inter alia, for the additional
4 land acquisition of five properties for
5 recreational and related reuses; the
6 provision of certain relocation services,
7 as required by law and declaring that
8 condemnation is not imminent with respect
9 to the Project.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
11 you.

12 THE CLERK: Ed Covington and
13 Richard Redding.

14 (Witnesses approached witness
15 table.)

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
17 proceed.

18 MR. COVINGTON: Good morning.
19 I am Ed Covington, the Executive Director
20 of the Philadelphia Redevelopment
21 Authority. Chairman Greenlee and members
22 of the Committee, I'm here to speak in
23 support of Bill No. 120727, which is the
24 eighteenth amendment to the redevelopment
25 proposal and eighteenth amendment to the

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 urban renewal plan for the South Central
3 Urban Renewal Area.

4 The proposal and plan provide
5 for the acquisition of five lots, which
6 are identified in the attached list.
7 These lots have been maintained as a
8 community garden by a group of neighbors
9 for approximately eight years out of
10 concern for the lack of green space in
11 this neighborhood. Three of the parcels
12 are contiguous with frontage on South
13 Fairhill Street. One parcel is adjacent
14 to a Fairhill parcel with frontage on
15 South 6th, and one sits alone with
16 frontage on both 6th and Fairhill.

17 Councilman Squilla has
18 requested that these parcels be acquired
19 to allow for the preservation of these
20 properties as a community garden. After
21 acquisition, the Authority intends to
22 either lease or convey the parcels to the
23 Neighborhood Garden Association, thereby
24 ensuring the continued use and
25 maintenance of the community garden.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 The above parcels will be
3 acquired utilizing funds from the NTI.

4 Chairperson and members of the
5 Committee, I respectfully request
6 favorable consideration of Bill No.
7 120727 and would also ask the suspension
8 of Council rules to allow first reading
9 on November 15th, 2012.

10 I'll be happy to answer any
11 questions.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
13 you.

14 Mr. Redding.

15 MR. REDDING: Good morning, Mr.
16 Chairman, members of the Committee. I'm
17 Richard Redding, Director of Community
18 Planning at the Philadelphia City
19 Planning Commission, testifying today in
20 support of Bill No. 120727.

21 This bill approves the
22 eighteenth amendment of the redevelopment
23 proposal for the South Central Urban
24 Renewal Area. The bill authorizes
25 acquisition of five undeveloped lots near

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 6th and League Streets to be conveyed to
3 Neighborhood Gardens Association for
4 continued use as a community garden.

5 This action is in accord with
6 the South Central Redevelopment Area Plan
7 adopted by the City Planning Commission
8 in November 1968, as amended. The
9 Planning Commission staff approved this
10 redevelopment proposal on April 18th,
11 2012.

12 I will be happy to answer any
13 questions.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
15 both.

16 Councilman Goode.

17 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chairman. I'll be brief.

19 Mr. Covington, before
20 Mr. Skaziak comes back to the table, what
21 is RDA's policy for buying back property
22 that was sold for a dollar?

23 MR. COVINGTON: I'm sorry?

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: What is
25 RDA's policy for buying back property

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 that sold for \$1?

3 MR. COVINGTON: That was
4 originally sold for \$1? There's no
5 specific policy on how the property was
6 acquired.

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The question
8 is, is there a legal requirement in terms
9 of fair market value if it was sold for
10 \$1?

11 MR. COVINGTON: In terms of the
12 original transaction for the current
13 private owner?

14 COUNCILMAN GOODE: In terms of
15 the transaction to buy it back.

16 MR. COVINGTON: To buy it back,
17 we will buy it back at fair market value,
18 unless it's being acquired from a City
19 agency, in which case we would require it
20 at nominal value.

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm talking
22 about property that was sold for \$1. Is
23 there a legal requirement to buy it back
24 at fair market value?

25 MR. COVINGTON: Yes, with

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 respect to the condemnation law.

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So that's a
4 legal requirement?

5 MR. COVINGTON: That is
6 correct.

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you
8 for the clarification.

9 MR. COVINGTON: I'm sorry.
10 Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: What is the
12 policy for buying back property that's
13 tax delinquent -- or buying property
14 that's tax delinquent?

15 MR. COVINGTON: Again, there's
16 no policy around that, but what we do do,
17 once we are acquiring the property, the
18 outstanding taxes are taken care of to
19 the extent of the acquisition costs.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Is there a
21 legal requirement to buy that
22 tax-delinquent property at fair market
23 value?

24 MR. COVINGTON: There's a legal
25 requirement to acquire it at fair market

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 value and to apply the proceeds to
3 address any delinquencies.

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And then
5 subtract the taxes?

6 MR. COVINGTON: Correct.

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
10 you.

11 Councilman Kenney.

12 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: How long
13 have the lots in this particular
14 situation been involved in gardening; do
15 you know?

16 MR. COVINGTON: I'm sorry?

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you know
18 how old the garden is?

19 MR. COVINGTON: How long it's
20 been as a garden? Eight years.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: In the
22 eight years in that particular
23 neighborhood, there's been a real kind of
24 diverse change going on in that community
25 relative to people that have lived there

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 for a long time and people who are going
3 in and fixing up houses and they're kind
4 of working together to make the
5 neighborhood safer and a much better
6 place to live. Do you think that the
7 garden enhances that opportunity to bring
8 people together and to also enhance the
9 environment?

10 MR. COVINGTON: We're
11 supportive of the availability of that
12 kind of green space in a growing and
13 emerging neighborhood, yes.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So you
15 think that there's a higher purpose to
16 the acquisition of the lots, not just
17 acquiring lots and turning them over to
18 someone, but the activity that goes on
19 them is community stabilizing and
20 community enriching?

21 MR. COVINGTON: We certainly
22 endorse the notion of good green space as
23 part of a community. We believe that
24 enhances the sustainability of
25 communities.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And to
3 reiterate what Councilman Goode's
4 question was is that if there's back
5 taxes, as fair market goes, it's
6 subtracted from the back taxes.

7 MR. COVINGTON: That's correct.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So it's
9 like at a settlement --

10 MR. COVINGTON: At settlement
11 we basically acquire the property at fair
12 market value, apply any proceeds to take
13 care of any sort of tax delinquency.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay.
15 Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
17 you.

18 Any further questions?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
21 none, anyone else here to testify?

22 Thank you both.

23 THE CLERK: Chester Skaziak.

24 (Witness approached witness
25 table.)

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
3 identify yourself again and proceed.

4 MR. SKAZIAK: My name is
5 Chester Skaziak. I'm a Philadelphia
6 resident and I'm a taxpayer. I'd like to
7 thank Councilman Kenney for asking those
8 questions or Councilman Goode. And I
9 understand these properties may be used
10 as a community garden. The fact still
11 remains that these taxes haven't been
12 paid for 15 years.

13 Now, if the community has been
14 using these properties, what is the fair
15 market value? Are these people alive?
16 Some of these records go back to 1925,
17 1943. Who is stepping forward? Did they
18 step forward when those taxes were due?
19 No.

20 Sir, again, we have \$10,000 of
21 unpaid taxes. Do I have to go and visit
22 every property in the City?

23 And I thank you very much,
24 Mr. Greenlee, for allowing me to speak
25 today.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: If I can.

3 If the owner of the property, as you
4 said, is on the other side of the dirt,
5 where do we get the money from? If the
6 guy is dead --

7 MR. SKAZIAK: I agree with you.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: -- or if
9 his family is spread out through the
10 country and the estate is worth nothing
11 and the property is a small row house in
12 a neighborhood that's struggling, what is
13 the value of the property?

14 MR. SKAZIAK: You just said
15 that. What is the value of the property?

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: My point
17 is, how do we get -- in order for us to
18 track this down, more likely it will cost
19 us more in legal fees and tracking it
20 down than it will in what we recover. So
21 if we have a wash with what the fair
22 market value is, subtract it from the tax
23 debt, that seems -- and turn it over to a
24 productive use, that seems like it works.

25 MR. SKAZIAK: I agree with you,

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 but it seems to me from -- it's just not
3 these three bills that I'm here with
4 today.

5 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I got you.

6 MR. SKAZIAK: I'm not going to
7 go into it, sir, but I do agree with you,
8 that the property should be put to good
9 use. I just cannot accept the tax dollar
10 delinquent issue. And I know I've spoken
11 to many of you on one occasion or another
12 and I brought this to your attention, and
13 it's not -- I'm not here to cause a
14 problem. I'm trying to find a solution.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Part of the
16 problem that you get frustrated with, I
17 get frustrated with is because unlike a
18 banking institution, after a while you
19 write off bad debt. The City for some
20 reason or another kept piling bad debt on
21 top of bad debt and putting interest and
22 penalties on top of interest and
23 penalties. So when the average taxpayer
24 looks at \$400 million in delinquent real
25 estate taxes, it's really not there,

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 because the bank would have written that
3 off 20 years ago or sooner. That's the
4 problem. It's the big number that makes
5 everybody angry, but the big number isn't
6 real.

7 MR. SKAZIAK: But, sir, that
8 debt that is owed to the City is also
9 used -- if I'm wrong, Mr. Covington can
10 tell me. Every debt that is owed to the
11 City is a liability, but it also helps us
12 to borrow money, because we use that
13 figure to borrow money because it's an
14 asset. Now, that's where I'm getting
15 this banking problem that you brought up
16 today.

17 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: The big
18 number that you see in owed real estate
19 taxes is not a real number. It's a
20 number we should have written off every
21 ten years or so, and we never did it.
22 That's the situation we're in.

23 MR. SKAZIAK: I'm not going to
24 revisit Mantua. I have too many other
25 issues with Mantua, because there's more

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 properties there and I don't understand
3 why it isn't in the -- I'll ask
4 Mr. Covington this afternoon -- why all
5 those properties weren't lumped together.
6 There's one left in there.

7 As far as this issue goes, I do
8 agree with members of Council as far as
9 the properties in Ms. Blackwell.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I
11 appreciate the give and take. Thank you.

12 MR. SKAZIAK: I'm going to
13 speak on one more bill, and I'm going to
14 try to make it shorter next time. Thank
15 you again.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is there
17 anyone else here to testify on this bill?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
20 none, Ms. Marconi, please read the next
21 bill.

22 And for all of you in Point
23 Breeze, after this one, it's your bill.

24 THE CLERK: Bill No. 120728, an
25 ordinance approving the sixth amendment

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 of the redevelopment proposal for the
3 Independence Mall Urban Renewal Area,
4 Unit No. 4, being the area beginning at
5 the intersection of the southerly side of
6 Arch Street and the westerly side of
7 Ninth Street, including the sixth
8 amendment to the urban renewal plan and
9 relocation plan, which provides, inter
10 alia, for the additional land acquisition
11 of certain parcels located within or
12 adjacent to the bed of the ground
13 formerly known as Ridge Avenue and
14 generally situated between the northwest
15 intersection of North Eighth Street and
16 Race Street and the southeast
17 intersection of North Ninth Street and
18 Vine Street for mixed-use reuses; the
19 provision of certain relocation services,
20 as required by law; and declaring that
21 condemnation is not imminent with respect
22 to this Project.

23 Ed Covington and Richard
24 Redding.

25 (Witnesses approached witness

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 table.)

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
4 proceed.

5 MR. COVINGTON: Good morning.
6 Ed Covington, Executive Director of the
7 Redevelopment Authority. Chairman
8 Greenlee and members of the Committee, I
9 am here to speak in support of Bill No.
10 120728, which is the sixth amendment to
11 the redevelopment proposal and sixth
12 amendment to the urban renewal plan for
13 the Independence Mall Urban Renewal Area,
14 No. 4.

15 The Redevelopment Authority
16 substantively owns the parcels bounded by
17 8th, 9th, Race, and Vine Streets.
18 However, research of the previous
19 condemnations revealed gaps in ownerships
20 and identified remnant parcels that must
21 be acquired in order to have a complete
22 and uninterrupted ownership of this
23 parcel area.

24 The proposal and plan provide
25 for the acquisition of 21 remnant parcels

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 located within the above boundaries and
3 along the bed of a portion of ground
4 formerly known as Ridge Avenue. This
5 acquisition will enable the Authority to
6 assemble these remnants with the adjacent
7 parcels that were acquired between 1966
8 and 2006. The consolidation of the
9 parcels will allow the Authority to
10 facilitate the sale of this land as one
11 disposition parcel upon the expiration of
12 the lease currently held by occupant E-Z
13 Park.

14 Honorable Chairperson and
15 members of the Committee, I respectfully
16 request favorable consideration of Bill
17 No. 120728 and would ask the suspension
18 of Council rules to allow first reading
19 on November 15th, 2012.

20 I'd be happy to answer any
21 questions.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
23 you.

24 Mr. Redding.

25 MR. REDDING: Good morning, Mr.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 Chairman and members. I'm Richard
3 Redding, Director of Community Planning
4 at the Philadelphia City Planning
5 Commission, testifying on support of Bill
6 No. 120728. This bill approves the sixth
7 amendment of the redevelopment proposal
8 for the Independence Mall Urban Renewal
9 Area, Unit No. 4. The bill authorizes
10 acquisition of approximately 21
11 properties to be combined with other
12 Redevelopment Authority-owned land in the
13 same block. The larger four-acre site is
14 being assembled for future development.

15 This action is in accord with
16 the Center City Redevelopment Area Plan
17 adopted by the City Planning Commission
18 in May of 1976, as amended. The Planning
19 Commission staff approved this
20 redevelopment proposal on August 22nd,
21 2012.

22 I'll be happy to answer any
23 questions.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
25 you.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Any questions for either

3 Mr. Covington or Mr. Redding?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing

6 none, thank you both very much.

7 Is there anyone else here to

8 testify on this bill?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing

11 none, Ms. Marconi, will you please read

12 the next bill before us.

13 THE CLERK: Bill No. 120755, an

14 ordinance approving the seventh amendment

15 of the redevelopment proposal for the

16 Point Breeze East Urban Renewal Area,

17 being the area generally bounded by the

18 southerly side of Washington Avenue on

19 the north, the westerly side of Broad

20 Street on the east, the northerly side of

21 Moore Street on the south and the

22 easterly side of Twenty-Fifth Street on

23 the west, including the seventh amendment

24 to the urban renewal plan and the second

25 amendment to the relocation plan, which

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 provides, inter alia, for the additional
3 land acquisition of forty-three
4 properties for residential, recreational
5 and related reuses; the provision of
6 certain relocation services, as required
7 by law and declaring that condemnation is
8 not imminent we respect to this Project.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
10 you.

11 THE CLERK: Ed Covington,
12 Deborah McColloch, and Richard Redding.
13 (Witnesses approached witness
14 table.)

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Mr.
16 Covington.

17 MR. COVINGTON: Good morning.
18 My name is Ed Covington. I'm the
19 Executive Director of the Redevelopment
20 Authority. Chairman Greenlee and members
21 of the Committee, I am here to speak in
22 support of Bill No. 120755, which will
23 enable the Philadelphia Redevelopment
24 Authority to acquire 28 properties that
25 will be used for the development of

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 affordable housing. Through this
3 development, the City will help to
4 preserve affordability in a community of
5 appreciating housing prices.

6 You will note that the bill
7 actually identifies 43 properties for
8 potential acquisition. After recent site
9 visits and outreach to property owners,
10 Councilman Johnson has requested that the
11 Redevelopment Authority not acquire 15 of
12 the properties in this bill. The owners
13 of these properties have projects that
14 are currently under construction, have
15 applied for permits or zoning, or are
16 using properties as side yards to their
17 adjacent residences. For that reason,
18 the Authority will only acquire 28 of the
19 43 properties in Bill No. 120755 and will
20 support the continued private-sector
21 redevelopment or residential use of the
22 other 15 parcels.

23 At its meeting later today, the
24 Redevelopment Authority Board will
25 consider a resolution outlining its

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 intention to amend the urban renewal plan
3 to remove these 15 properties, and I
4 expect that resolution to pass. The
5 remaining 28 properties, which are
6 identified on the attached list, will be
7 acquired with funds from the Neighborhood
8 Transformation Initiative.

9 As you may know, home prices in
10 the eastern portion of Point Breeze where
11 the properties in this bill are located
12 are rapidly appreciating. Acquiring
13 these properties and developing
14 affordable housing on them will help
15 maintain a neighborhood with homes
16 available to households at diverse income
17 levels. My colleague Deborah McColloch
18 is here with me and she can outline the
19 housing development process.

20 Chairman Greenlee and members
21 of the Committee, I respectfully request
22 favorable consideration of Bill No.
23 120755 and would ask the suspension of
24 Council rules to allow for first reading
25 on November 15th, 2012.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 I'll be happy to answer any
3 questions.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
5 you.

6 Ms. McColloch.

7 MS. MCCOLLOCH: Good morning.

8 My name is Deborah McColloch. I'm the
9 Director of Housing. Good morning,
10 Chairman Greenlee and members of the
11 Committee. As Mr. Covington has
12 outlined, the properties to be acquired
13 through this bill will be developed into
14 affordable housing so as to preserve
15 affordable options in a neighborhood of
16 rapidly appreciating prices.

17 The process for developing the
18 affordable housing will be consistent
19 with the process the City has used to
20 develop more than 7,000 affordable homes
21 over the past 12 years.

22 In early 2013, the City will
23 issue a request for proposals for
24 affordable housing development in Point
25 Breeze. An interagency team will review

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 the proposals and select the best
3 proposal or proposals for funding. The
4 City has identified \$2 million in
5 Neighborhood Stabilization Program funds
6 to support this development.

7 We do not expect that the
8 responses to this RFP will utilize all of
9 the available properties, and a future
10 RFP will be issued to seek additional
11 development. Funding for this future
12 development will be identified through
13 the Office of Housing and Community
14 Development's standard budgeting process,
15 which will begin in spring 2013 for the
16 fiscal year that begins July 1st, 2013.

17 Through this process, the
18 development of the affordable homes will
19 be phased in. However, it is important
20 to acquire the parcels now before they
21 too appreciate and become unaffordable.

22 I join Mr. Covington in urging
23 the Committee to act favorably on Bill
24 No. 120755.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 you.

3 Mr. Redding, and then we'll
4 have any questions.

5 MR. REDDING: Good morning,
6 Mr. Chairman and members. I'm Richard
7 Redding, Director of Community Planning
8 at the Philadelphia City Planning
9 Commission, testifying in support of Bill
10 120755.

11 This bill approves the seventh
12 amendment of the redevelopment proposal
13 for the Point Breeze East Urban Renewal
14 Area. The bill authorizes acquisition of
15 43 vacant properties, but I understand
16 that only 28 of the properties will be
17 acquired.

18 This action is in accord with
19 the Point Breeze East Redevelopment Area
20 Plan adopted by the City Planning
21 Commission in March of 1998. The
22 Planning Commission staff approved this
23 amended redevelopment proposal on July 19
24 of this year.

25 I'm here to help answer any

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 questions. Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
4 all very much.

5 I just had one, and I know
6 Councilman Kenney has a question. To the
7 best of your knowledge -- I don't know
8 who would want to answer this -- the 28
9 properties that are remaining, my
10 understanding is that they are all
11 basically blighted properties, have not
12 really had much attention paid to them in
13 at least the foreseeable past. Would
14 that be a correct statement?

15 MR. COVINGTON: I think that
16 would be substantially accurate. There
17 are some that -- there's one or two that
18 I've seen is fenced in, but where's there
19 no activity and no plans for
20 redevelopment of the parcels.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No
22 permits, no plans that you have seen --

23 MR. COVINGTON: No permits, no
24 plans whatsoever.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: -- for

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 those 28.

3 MR. COVINGTON: I actually have
4 pictures here of the properties. Half of
5 the properties of the 28 are owned by
6 other City agencies.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

8 MR. COVINGTON: And then the
9 other half would be privately held, and
10 substantially those are all fairly
11 blighted, some with seriously overgrown
12 lots.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And
14 basically probably just given the way the
15 economy is and the desirability of
16 properties down there, if it wasn't for
17 these properties, probably lower to
18 moderate-income people would have trouble
19 getting any property down there. Would
20 that be a fair statement?

21 MR. COVINGTON: Yeah. The
22 whole decision and strategy behind this
23 effort is to ensure that an area that is
24 actually growing and coming back in a
25 very positive way maintains affordability

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 to go alongside of the nice private
3 development that's already occurring.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And I
5 know in the Francisville area, which is
6 near me, we're going through that same
7 sort of dynamic, if you will, and we're
8 trying very hard to keep at least a
9 certain amount of those properties
10 affordable for the people who have sort
11 of put up with the bad times and are now
12 hoping to be able to --

13 MR. COVINGTON: To be part of
14 the good times.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
16 right. Thank you.

17 Any other questions for this
18 panel?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
21 none, thank you all very much.

22 Ms. Marconi, you want to call
23 the next set of witnesses.

24 THE CLERK: Claudia Sherrod,
25 Otis Bullock, Peter Moore.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 (Witnesses approached witness
3 table.)

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:

5 Ms. Sherrod, nice to see you again.

6 MS. SHERROD: Good morning.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: How are
8 you?

9 MS. SHERROD: Fine. Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
11 speak in the microphone, identify
12 yourself for the record and proceed.

13 MS. SHERROD: My name is
14 Claudia Smith Sherrod. I'm the Executive
15 Director of South Philadelphia H.O.M.E.S.
16 and also the President of the Point
17 Breeze Community Development Coalition.
18 And I'd like to make a little clarity.
19 We're only talking about development in
20 part of Point Breeze. Point Breeze does
21 go to Passyunk Avenue.

22 Are you ready for my testimony?

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Oh,
24 please, proceed.

25 MS. SHERROD: For well over 30

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 years, South Philadelphia H.O.M.E.S has
3 worked toward affordable housing in Point
4 Breeze. Our mission and goal is to build
5 as many affordable properties as we can
6 to help stabilize our badly rundown
7 community, provide social services and
8 education. Likewise, we are building up
9 people to live in their homes. Most
10 recently, we have met the challenge
11 building 19 new homes with our partners,
12 Community Ventures, and six with
13 Northstar. This is thanks to the federal
14 government working with the City
15 government to meet the needs of the low-
16 to moderate-income people using the NSP,
17 Neighborhood Stabilization Program. With
18 this program, people that are 80 percent
19 to 100 percent eligible are recipients.
20 In the '80s, there was no such thing.
21 You had to be in the low end completely.

22 The challenge we're facing now
23 is politics as usual. Now it appears
24 that the capitalistic developers want to
25 minimize the work we are doing by cutting

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 short some of the abandoned
3 properties/lots that are being taken by
4 our Councilman Johnson to help ensure
5 affordable homes will be available for
6 the community. Bill No. 120755 is a
7 beginning to what we need. As affordable
8 houses are built, market rate houses are
9 going up daily. Most of the residents
10 cannot afford to build affordable, let
11 alone market rate.

12 If ever we needed help in
13 determining what is best for our
14 community, it is now. There is nothing
15 wrong with market rate housing if they
16 are in balance with the affordable
17 housing that is being built. We must
18 equalize the system to respect a
19 community of residents that are in much
20 need, where some can afford an affordable
21 versus simply putting market rate houses.
22 We do not want to be trapped with
23 developers dictating who is in our
24 community, naming our community, and
25 shortcutting it with overpriced homes to

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 fill their pockets.

3 The people of Point Breeze
4 welcome change. However, not to the
5 extent that it will rob the community of
6 the natural balance that comes when our
7 elected officials are not allowed to help
8 keep the balance. We must blend in
9 affordable which is a need to be built
10 within the community. Without
11 consideration for the existing residents,
12 they will be pushed out and cause harm.
13 Likewise, with the many small blocks that
14 exist here in the Breeze, we must be
15 cautious to the type of houses that are
16 built and what they are built for. We
17 must limit the rentals as well as market
18 rate to help the community stay healthy.
19 We cannot create car space for cars, so
20 we must maximize the efforts of the
21 challenge to build fewer homes, creating
22 parking, and eliminating apartments with
23 no place for the residents to park.

24 We urge you, City Council, to
25 let the people speak for the best

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 interest of the little guy. We need
3 decent, affordable homes all over the
4 Breeze.

5 Yours truly.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
7 you, Ms. Sherrod.

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I
10 appreciate all the -- I know all the work
11 you've done down there over the many
12 years. So you should be congratulated
13 for that, and also the people in the
14 community all those years.

15 MS. SHERROD: Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Are there
17 any questions?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
20 none, thank you, Ms. Sherrod. Thank you
21 very much.

22 MS. SHERROD: You're welcome.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: The Chair
24 will note the presence of Councilman
25 Johnson, the sponsor of this bill, is

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 also here.

3 And, Ms. Marconi, will you
4 please call the next set of witnesses.

5 THE CLERK: Raheem Islam, David
6 LaFontaine, and Jon Musselman.

7 (Witnesses approached witness
8 table.)

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
10 morning, sir.

11 MR. ISLAM: Good morning.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Everyone.
13 Please identify yourself for the record
14 and proceed.

15 MR. ISLAM: Good morning. My
16 name is Raheem Islam. I'm President and
17 CEO of Universal Companies. We're
18 located 800 South 15th Street,
19 Philadelphia, PA 19146, and we're here
20 supporting Bill No. 120755.

21 Again, good morning, Chair
22 Greenlee and also the other members of
23 the Committee. Just as a background,
24 Universal Companies has been working in
25 the South Philadelphia area for around 20

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 years, and we've developed in the City
3 and a little bit outside of the City but
4 about 1,000 affordable housing units. I
5 think we've been a catalyst for the
6 redevelopment of South Central, Hawthorne
7 with the redevelopment of Martin Luther
8 King, and also in Point Breeze also we
9 actually took down 16th and Federal,
10 which was one of the open drug traffic
11 areas ten years ago under the leadership
12 of then Council President Verna.

13 But Universal supports this
14 action. We are fundamentally -- we're
15 pro development, but we're also pro
16 affordable housing. We're clearly
17 supportive of this action and the
18 Redevelopment's actions to consolidate
19 property, especially underutilized
20 interior lots and buildings to help
21 rebuild this community, with the focus on
22 restoring affordability and equitable
23 development.

24 As you know, Point Breeze
25 continues to evolve and undergo

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 tremendous changes in the South

3 Philadelphia marketplace, particularly

4 over the past several years. Many of

5 those changes have attracted much-needed

6 public and private capital and

7 investments, benefiting the community and

8 the City as a whole by attracting new

9 generations of homeowners and renters and

10 mixed incomes and on some, but not all

11 cases, directly serving the needs of

12 longtime low-income residents, owners,

13 and renters who have lived through the

14 hard times of community disinvestment and

15 deterioration. And that must be really

16 stated, really pointed out with a lot of

17 emphasis. There have been a lot of

18 people living in substandard conditions

19 for a long period of time and they've

20 struggled, and one of the things we work

21 very hard to do is to ensure that when

22 there's going to be benefit in the

23 community, that everyone gets a chance to

24 benefit.

25 But in many cases because of

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 the physical displacement, low-income
3 residents who can no longer afford the
4 cost of living there are replaced, and
5 that's just unfortunate, and we want to
6 work to stop that as best as possible,
7 and this bill helps support that.

8 We're also -- Universal is in
9 the mid-stage of facilitating a
10 comprehensive resident-led neighborhood
11 planning process in Point Breeze and
12 Grays Ferry, funded by a local
13 foundation, and one component of this
14 plan it will surely address is affordable
15 housing and the issues often impede and
16 those that we believe can help advance
17 it. Among the recommendations of actions
18 that the final plans expect to champion,
19 among other important ones, include
20 crafting special strategies to counteract
21 the negative effects of rapid
22 appreciation -- this is a mixed
23 blessing -- often has on housing
24 affordability for low-incomes households
25 living there, be they homeowners or

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 tenants, proposing specific programs or
3 policy initiatives that can help build
4 and protect the assets of low-income,
5 low-wealth residents of appreciating
6 neighborhoods like Point Breeze so that
7 this class of residents may fully
8 participate and enjoy the benefits of a
9 healthy, vibrant neighborhood, what we
10 define as equitable development.

11 In closing, taking into
12 consideration everything that's been said
13 by the Redevelopment Authority, the
14 Housing Authority -- excuse me; the
15 Office of Housing and also others, this
16 bill is really about equitable
17 development and also ensuring that,
18 again, that the people in the
19 neighborhood who have struggled in this
20 neighborhood have an opportunity to be a
21 part of a neighborhood that's on the
22 rise.

23 In closing, we believe that
24 taken together, this affordable housing
25 development is poised to make it happen,

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 and the ongoing neighborhood strategic
3 planning process with the Point Breeze
4 and Grays Ferry neighborhood are
5 presently engaged in presents an enormous
6 opportunity to introduce and advance
7 equitable development in South
8 Philadelphia.

9 I just want to just also as a
10 proviso as just -- Universal has and will
11 respond to any public notice to develop
12 housing in that area, and like this
13 project here, we will also respond. But
14 that does not in any way take shape,
15 fashion or form, take away from our
16 commitment to the affordability and the
17 mission of affordability for housing,
18 quality and affordable housing for the
19 residents of Philadelphia, many who
20 without this opportunity, public action
21 taken, would never have a chance to in
22 these appreciating neighborhoods to be a
23 part of it.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 you, sir.

3 Sir, please.

4 MR. LaFONTAINE: Hi. I'm David
5 LaFontaine. Thank you very much for
6 hearing me. I am the Program Director
7 for Community Ventures. We are a
8 non-profit housing developer working in
9 several different Philadelphia
10 neighborhoods. We've been working for
11 over 25 years, including in Francisville
12 and more recently in Point Breeze.

13 We support the Bill No. 120755
14 authorizing the Redevelopment Authority
15 to acquire 43 lots in the neighborhood.
16 We do not think, contrary to statements
17 that have been made, that this is in any
18 way an extreme proposal. We understand
19 that lots and we've heard already this
20 morning that lots for which credible
21 development proposals have been submitted
22 have been removed from the list, and also
23 we understand that many of the lots are
24 in close proximity to other publicly
25 owned lots so that they're strategically

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 placed, and we think it's a smart list.

3 With only 43 lots out of over
4 6,000 lots in Point Breeze, this is not
5 going to transform Point Breeze. It's
6 also not going to slow the revival of
7 Point Breeze. It will preserve a small
8 number of affordable units, and we think
9 that's extremely important.

10 We don't think that the ongoing
11 redevelopment of Point Breeze is going to
12 be slowing or stopping any time soon.
13 Values are routinely up to the \$275 level
14 for single-family houses, up into the mid
15 300's in some cases. Developers have
16 what they need to continue building and
17 renovating, and we applaud their work.

18 Economically integrated
19 neighborhoods are typically better places
20 to raise children, have better schools,
21 more active commercial districts, and
22 less crime and more jobs. So we think
23 that's basically a good thing. However,
24 there is a negative side to this or
25 negative lining to this silver cloud,

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 and, that is, the loss of affordability,
3 and that's particularly true for
4 private-sector rental tenants in
5 neighborhoods. Point Breeze is almost
6 half renters, and these people are
7 extremely vulnerable to changes in the
8 market, and displacement is occurring as
9 we sit here.

10 We are -- Community Ventures is
11 now building in Point Breeze in
12 partnership with South Philadelphia
13 H.O.M.E.S., as has been mentioned, and so
14 I spend a lot of time walking around on
15 the streets, and I see not only the
16 amazing changes from 15 years ago when we
17 first worked in Point Breeze, but also
18 the remaining blight and vacancy which
19 persists. This proposal will help to
20 clear away some of that blight, actually
21 to improve prospects for further
22 revitalization, but it will also preserve
23 a small measure of affordability, and we
24 think that's really important in the
25 context of a gentrifying neighborhood.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Thank you very much.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir,
4 please.

5 Thank you.

6 Please identify yourself for
7 the record and proceed, and then we'll
8 have some questions.

9 MR. MUSSELMAN: Good morning.
10 My name is Jon Musselman. I'm the
11 Director of Project Planning for Habitat
12 for Humanity in Philadelphia.
13 Mr. Chairman and Committee members,
14 first, on behalf of Habitat, I would like
15 to thank you for your sustained,
16 generous, and thoughtful efforts to
17 provide meaningful and dignified housing
18 opportunities for citizens of our city
19 who struggle to keep a roof over their
20 heads. Neighborhoods all across the City
21 have benefitted from your commitment to
22 bring together the public sector with
23 non-profit builders like Habitat and
24 Community Ventures, community development
25 corporations, and the private development

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 community to development transformative
3 projects benefiting residents from all
4 walks of life.

5 With respect to Bill No.
6 120755, Habitat supports the effort to
7 acquire a limited number of vacant,
8 tax-delinquent, and blighting properties
9 that can be packaged effectively to
10 produce affordable homeownership housing.
11 This approach is essential to make
12 lasting targeted impacts on specific
13 blocks and make the most of the severely
14 limited funds available for investment in
15 affordable housing.

16 Over the last eight years,
17 Habitat has partnered with the City and
18 with local organizations in Point Breeze,
19 including South Philadelphia H.O.M.E.S.
20 and the Point Breeze Community
21 Development Coalition, to provide new and
22 rehabilitated homes to very low income,
23 hard-working families. Our target income
24 levels are under 50 percent of AMI. We
25 recently completed four new homes on the

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 2200 block of Latona Street. These four
3 twin homes were only made possible
4 through the acquisition of vacant lots
5 through the NTI program and a very
6 limited subsidy through OHCD. This was,
7 by no means, a large project, but the
8 City's ability to assemble contiguous
9 lots into this type of development led to
10 significant cost savings, shortened the
11 overall timeline for construction, and
12 gave four families the opportunity to
13 start together on this new road of being
14 homeowners on the same block. We've also
15 rehabbed and built other homes in Point
16 Breeze without either City-supported
17 acquisition or public funding, relying
18 fully on the generosity of private-sector
19 donors.

20 This bill is limited in scope.
21 It clearly does not have in view a goal
22 of shutting down the private market rate
23 developments that are bringing new
24 people, businesses, and a range of
25 incomes into Point Breeze. What it does

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 is provide an opportunity to leverage
3 scarce public dollars such as the NSP
4 funds to invest in housing that benefits
5 lower income families and individuals who
6 want to see this community thrive again
7 just as much as new residents do.

8 We have tremendous respect for
9 those in the Point Breeze community who
10 have worked for years to bring vibrancy
11 back to the blocks and corners of Point
12 Breeze, after years of losing population
13 and seeing hundreds of properties
14 deteriorate and become abandoned. We
15 look forward to building on these
16 partnerships. Now that there is a
17 significant level of new investment
18 coming into the neighborhoods bringing a
19 diversity of new residents and energy,
20 there's a great opportunity to
21 cooperatively create a revived community
22 with a place for everybody, with
23 diversity of backgrounds, income, retail,
24 recreation and more.

25 We also encourage the City and

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 Redevelopment Authority to continue its
3 very positive momentum in moving vacant
4 property from the City's inventory into
5 the marketplace, further eliminating
6 blight and beginning to rebuild the tax
7 base within the neighborhood. And now
8 that the way is finally open for the City
9 to develop a land bank, we encourage the
10 City to move forward with developing and
11 implementing the strategic tool,
12 providing a predictable, efficient, and
13 transparent system to greatly reduce
14 blight within the City over the next
15 several years.

16 Thank you very much for this
17 opportunity to appear before you this
18 morning.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
20 very much.

21 Councilwoman Tasco.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Stay
24 there, sir. We have questions.

25 Before that, Councilman Kenney.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: When this
3 bill first was introduced by Councilman
4 Johnson, there were some -- I had some
5 concerns in my mind as to where it was
6 going and what effect it was going to
7 have, and I want to thank him for the
8 work that he did with the RDA in pulling
9 off properties that had plans,
10 development plans, that were ready to go.
11 And all of the gentrification issues that
12 I've seen over my career either in this
13 body or in another job comes down to the
14 push and pull of what's changing and
15 what's been there and people's fear. I
16 often think that sometimes things like
17 this make the development easier and less
18 fearful because there's a guarantee that
19 the quality of folks in the neighborhood
20 that are going to stay there -- because I
21 watched Queen Village, and Queen Village
22 is a fabulous place, but there was a
23 whole group of folks who got pushed out
24 of Queen Village who were all --

25 (Applause.)

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: And it
3 wasn't just African Americans. It was
4 old Polish people and old Russian people
5 and people who were immigrants to this
6 country.

7 So I think considering the fact
8 that this is a small group of properties,
9 with the consideration that the
10 Councilman gave to the properties that
11 could be developed quicker, to me it
12 makes everyone calmer and makes the
13 neighborhood develop better and more
14 diverse and more calm as opposed to the
15 anger.

16 So as I listen to this, I'm
17 moving in that direction, because I
18 think, Councilman, you've done a really
19 good job in balancing this.

20 (Applause.)

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just my
22 commentary after all these years of
23 watching these dynamics in neighborhoods.
24 So thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 you, Councilman.

3 And I guess one thing Point
4 Breeze has is, they can learn the lessons
5 of some of the other neighborhoods that
6 had this problem years ago, and as you
7 say, at least this gives some people the
8 chance to stay in their neighborhoods,
9 the neighborhoods that they grew up in.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Are there
12 any more questions for this panel?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
15 none, thank you all very much.

16 Before we call the next set of
17 witnesses, Councilwoman Tasco had a
18 question for Mr. Covington. Please,
19 could you come back up.

20 (Witness approached witness
21 table.)

22 Councilwoman Tasco.

23 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
24 very much. I kind of missed the
25 questions as I listened to the testimony,

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 and I read through the testimony. I have
3 some questions about the future and
4 process.

5 What guarantees are there that
6 these properties will remain affordable?
7 You know, if a --

8 (Applause.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: If you
10 provide these affordable properties now,
11 someone stays in and then they decide
12 they want to sell, do they sell at market
13 value or do they sell in the same dollar
14 amount to allow for continuous
15 affordability?

16 MR. COVINGTON: Absolutely. As
17 with any property that the City is
18 providing subsidy to to create the
19 affordability, there's always a
20 restriction as to the resale, and
21 typically that will go for about 15
22 years. And so for at least 15 years,
23 that home must remain affordable or
24 maintained by that existing resident.
25 And so they cannot sell it. If they

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 choose to sell it, then they have to pay
3 back the subsidy.

4 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Well,
5 that's the reason I asked the question,
6 because I notice and I've watched those
7 properties that have been built in
8 Philadelphia as well as particularly
9 Atlantic City, I watched one building
10 that was built to be affordable and after
11 the 15 years, the landlord just put
12 everybody out and then it became a
13 million dollar high rise.

14 So 15 years is not really a
15 long time, and at the end of 15 years,
16 you know, here we go, we're back. So the
17 neighborhood only remains stable in terms
18 of diversity in the housing for 15 years.
19 Is there some way we can change that?

20 MR. COVINGTON: You know, I
21 think I completely sympathize with your
22 concern, although on the other hand, it
23 presumes that the outcome in 15 years is
24 going to be one that is unfavorable for
25 the residents, and I'm not sure we can

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 necessarily predict that. The best we
3 can do is offer the protections that we
4 do relative to the subsidy that's
5 provided. If it's multi-family, you have
6 a different opportunity, because what you
7 alluded to is a multi-family situation.
8 You have a better opportunity to preserve
9 that housing. If it's single-family
10 homeownership, it's a different process.

11 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: It's a
12 multi-family because it's owned by one
13 developer and it's multi-family. At the
14 end of the 15 years, this is what
15 happened. He can say, Okay, your time is
16 up, you have to leave, and then he
17 provides that property at going value.

18 MR. COVINGTON: In many of the
19 cases, though, the developer has to be
20 able to pay off all of that debt in order
21 to do that. In many cases, that is an
22 unattractive equation. So in
23 Philadelphia right now, I'd say a lot of
24 the multi-family properties that are
25 converting, many of the developer

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2 property owners have been turning those
3 back to non-profits in order to preserve
4 affordability, who have been re-offering
5 them for tax credit financing. So that
6 has been actually more normative.

7 And the other thing that has
8 gone on is that the difference between
9 market rate rents and affordable rents
10 has not been material. So in terms of
11 any sort of real loss or any sort of
12 conversion, there has not been a
13 significant drag in the communities, at
14 least to date, because, again, the
15 affordable rents and the market rate
16 rents are fairly close to each other
17 today.

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Would
19 these properties be for sale? I guess it
20 depends on the developer, right?

21 MR. COVINGTON: I'm sorry?

22 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Would the
23 properties be for sale or for rent, the
24 properties we're talking about, the
25 affordable properties?

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 MR. COVINGTON: I would defer
3 to Deborah McColloch about what the
4 details of the strategy, which I don't
5 think are fully formed yet in terms of
6 what we're going to do to provide the
7 affordability in Point Breeze. I know
8 there's been some conversation about some
9 portion of it at least being
10 homeownership. So that would be --

11 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: So if it's
12 homeownership and you have -- would the
13 15-year limit apply to the homeownership?

14 MR. COVINGTON: Oh, absolutely.

15 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Now, could
16 you -- so most people buying a house
17 usually have a 25-year mortgage.

18 MR. COVINGTON: Right.

19 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: How would
20 that play into it?

21 MR. COVINGTON: Two separate
22 issues. I mean, the mortgage -- if
23 someone chooses to sell their home at any
24 time regardless of the length of the
25 mortgage, they can sell their home. The

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 condition that's placed upon these homes
3 if they're affordable and provided
4 subsidy from the City is that they have
5 to satisfy that subsidy before they can
6 do it. In most cases, particularly in
7 the early parts of that tenure, that's
8 not going to be an economically feasible
9 option to not only sell the house, retire
10 the mortgage, and retire the subsidy that
11 we provided. They'd be underwater.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Okay.
13 Well, I just raise these issues because
14 it's a temporary hold, 15 years, gone.

15 Thank you.

16 (Applause.)

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:
18 Mr. Covington, I know Councilwoman Bass
19 has a question, but the 15 years, was
20 that just a policy of Redevelopment?

21 MR. COVINGTON: It's a policy
22 that has been tied to many of the
23 federally funded programs. It's also
24 fairly common throughout communities like
25 Philadelphia around the country. It's a

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 fairly typically standpoint.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Fifteen

4 is --

5 MR. COVINGTON: Fifteen is

6 pretty much conventional and also that

7 which is required by HUD.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Ma'am,

9 you got to wait.

10 Councilwoman Bass.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Hi, Ed.

12 How are you?

13 MR. COVINGTON: Good morning.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

15 morning. Question for you. I just

16 wanted to go back over something you said

17 a moment ago about the rent market and

18 the cost of affordable rent versus the

19 market rate in this economy. Can you

20 give some kind of example as to what

21 affordable rents comparable to market

22 rents in this neighborhood will be. I'm

23 just curious.

24 MR. COVINGTON: I don't have

25 the specific data points for Point Breeze

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 specifically, but generally we have found
3 that, particularly when we've looked at
4 tax credit projects, that there's not a
5 huge difference in general between the
6 market rate rents where people can charge
7 in various neighborhoods. Obviously it's
8 going to change a little bit depending on
9 whether it's the Rittenhouse market
10 versus another market obviously, but in
11 many of the neighborhoods, the affordable
12 rents and the market rents are fairly
13 close to each other.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. I
15 don't know if it will be possible to get
16 those sort of details, but I'm just
17 curious. I would like to have some
18 information in terms of what the
19 affordable market is in that area and
20 also what the regular market rate,
21 because it's very close to an area where
22 it's much more affluent. And so my
23 thoughts would be that there was the
24 potential for there to be much higher
25 rents in the near neighborhood.

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2 MR. COVINGTON: No. I think
3 that's one of the concerns we had about
4 pursuing this strategy, was we wanted to
5 protect affordability, but I think part
6 of the question is what kind of housing
7 will get built with the properties that
8 we're acquiring. I think at this
9 juncture, we have not determined -- there
10 has not been a determination by the
11 Office of Housing that this will be
12 rental housing versus homeownership
13 housing. So that debate is really a
14 function of what kind of housing is going
15 to get built.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
17 the other question I have for you, just
18 to follow up on something Councilwoman
19 Tasco mentioned was, just in terms of a
20 statement that you made in terms of
21 retiring the mortgage and the subsidy you
22 thought would put a homeowner underwater
23 on their mortgage.

24 MR. COVINGTON: Yes. So let's
25 say you have a home that is worth

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 \$300,000 in the City and the individual
3 was able to pay \$150,000 for it. So that
4 individual would go get a mortgage for 80
5 percent of the value of 150, right? And
6 the subsidy would be the 150. So they
7 would have to not only pay off the
8 mortgage, which would be the 80 percent
9 of the 150, they'd have to also retire
10 the subsidy, permanent subsidy, portion,
11 and that would be extremely difficult.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So you
13 think that that's the way the math would
14 work out on that?

15 MR. COVINGTON: Mm-hmm.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.
17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
19 you.

20 Any other questions?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
23 none, thank you, Mr. Covington, for
24 coming back.

25 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Thank you.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Our next
3 witness I'm going to call is Jeffrey
4 Allegretti. Is he here? He was here.
5 There he is.

6 Mr. Allegretti, as you're
7 approaching, we have your written
8 testimony. It's kind of lengthy. I
9 would appreciate you not just reading it.
10 If you could just summarize your
11 statements, I'd appreciate it.

12 (Witness approached witness
13 table.)

14 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Okay.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
16 you. Because we still have a number of
17 people who would like to speak.

18 MR. ALLEGRETTI: I understand.
19 I should have highlighted it, then.

20 Let me say a couple of things.
21 One is that I moved our business -- our
22 business is affordable housing
23 development. We work for large-scale
24 affordable housing developers as project
25 managers. We've been at 16th and Tasker

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 Street.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Just
4 identify yourself for the record.

5 MR. ALLEGRETTI: I'm sorry.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That's
7 all right.

8 MR. ALLEGRETTI: Jeffrey
9 Allegretti. I'm President of Innova
10 Services Corporation.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
12 you.

13 MR. ALLEGRETTI: We moved our
14 business to 16th and Tasker in 1995, 15
15 employees. Most of our business was not
16 in the City. In fact, most of it wasn't
17 even in the region. We worked throughout
18 the eastern United States, and it wasn't
19 until about six, seven years ago that we
20 were walking to lunch one day and saw the
21 activity that was happening in Point
22 Breeze and thought this might be an
23 opportunity for us to get involved in
24 affordable housing development in Point
25 Breeze. So we did our first five houses

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 just as the market collapsed, and we did
3 it through the Homeowner Rehabilitation
4 Program, HRP, sold those houses and then
5 signed on to be a redeveloper through the
6 Redevelopment Authority's Neighborhood
7 Stabilization Program, where we have
8 since done 23 homes, many of those in
9 Point Breeze and many of those in
10 partnership with Diversified Community
11 Services in the neighborhood.

12 I have -- as you can see in the
13 testimony, we have a map of the
14 large-scale delinquencies in the
15 neighborhood. There are over 300 in the
16 neighborhood south of Washington, north
17 of Moore, between Broad and 22nd. So
18 while we hear an awful lot about the
19 redevelopment activity, the private
20 redevelopment activity that's going on,
21 this is also a neighborhood with some
22 embedded blighting influences, and this
23 is really where it's kind of the genius
24 of this legislation, which is to use
25 government in a way to stimulate the

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 market, but also to preserve
3 affordability.

4 So we see two sides of that.
5 Where we've worked on blocks where we
6 were the first ones on the block, those
7 blocks have been -- many cases have been
8 redeveloped. I can give you examples of
9 blocks where nothing was going on, and
10 had it not been for the acquisition of
11 the vacant destabilizing parcels on the
12 block and the renovation of those
13 parcels, the private market would not
14 have entered those blocks. On the other
15 hand, the private market is primed to do
16 this work. So Point Breeze is kind of a
17 perfect neighborhood to use this
18 government stimulus approach. No amount
19 of government subsidy, had the market not
20 been primed, would have brought that
21 private development to the neighborhood.

22 The hardest part of doing
23 affordable housing development, indeed
24 any development in Point Breeze, is to
25 figure out a way to get these

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 destabilizing parcels, these
3 tax-delinquent parcels, and the City
4 parcels, by the way, to acquire them
5 clean title so that they can be made
6 available for reuse, and this idea of
7 public taking is the -- I would loath to
8 say the simplest way, but certainly the
9 most assured way to clean title and make
10 these properties available for reuse.

11 So in short, we only work in
12 affordable housing. That's all that we
13 do. We do it nationally. We do it in
14 Point Breeze. And we are proponents of
15 bills like this, and we think this is
16 really the only way that you are going to
17 stake an anchor and maintain
18 affordability in a neighborhood that is
19 of such great interest to private
20 developers at this point.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
22 you, Mr. Allegretti.

23 Any questions?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 none, thank you very much. Thank you for
3 your time.

4 Our next witnesses I think are
5 going to be community residents.
6 Ms. Marconi, could you call the names,
7 please.

8 THE CLERK: Pat Cormier,
9 Rolanda King, Theresa McCormick.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Any of
11 those individuals here?

12 Say the names again, Noelle,
13 please.

14 THE CLERK: Pat Cormier,
15 Rolanda King, Theresa McCormick.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: If you
17 could approach and please identity
18 yourself for the record and proceed.

19 (Witnesses approached witness
20 table.)

21 MS. CORMIER: Good afternoon,
22 everyone.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
24 afternoon.

25 MS. CORMIER: My name is Pat

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 Cormier, and I decided to speak today
3 because I have to speak from my heart.
4 Really what we need to look at is, first
5 of all, we should have diversity in the
6 neighborhoods.

7 Secondly, we have people that
8 are living in the neighborhood that have
9 been there for 40, 50, maybe 60 years.
10 We have a lot of people come along, the
11 contractors, with a lot of money and they
12 all of the sudden have to make all the
13 decisions, and the people that have
14 worked hard -- I'm one of them -- in the
15 area and trying to keep their property up
16 and does not have as much maybe monetary
17 things as others, it seems as though
18 someone -- they just want to come in and
19 kick us to the side, and when you do
20 that, that's not uprooting and it's not
21 good for the City. Because we all live
22 here. We been living here. And I think
23 this affordable home is very good
24 because, yes, we all -- some of us do
25 work, most of us do, and I don't like to

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 be categorized, and it appears that the
3 thinking of the opposition is that all of
4 us or some of us don't work and don't
5 care, and that's not true. We work. We
6 care. We raised our children.

7 I've been a widow since I was
8 27 years old. I worked two jobs for
9 about five or six years. I helped put my
10 son through college.

11 I live in the area of Point
12 Breeze. I plan to stay in Point Breeze,
13 and all I want to do is be a part of
14 helping Point Breeze to grow. And when I
15 say "grow," that means with all of us,
16 not people just coming in from the
17 outside five or six years you've been
18 here and you're making all the decisions.
19 That's not fair, and it won't happen,
20 because we will stick together
21 collectively to make sure that it doesn't
22 happen.

23 I'm glad that Mr. Kenyatta
24 Johnson came up with the idea of these
25 affordable homes, because no one should

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 be kicked to the curb. Everybody
3 deserves a chance. And, yes, we all do
4 work and we prosper, and we're going to
5 stick together.

6 Thank you so much for your
7 time.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
9 you, ma'am.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
12 identify yourself for the record.

13 MS. KING: Good morning, City
14 Council members, and thank you for
15 lending your ears to what we have to say
16 in the Point Breeze area. But I would
17 like to first --

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Could you
19 identify yourself, please.

20 MS. KING: Oh, I'm so sorry.
21 My name is Rolanda King. I'm a community
22 advocate.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Proceed.
24 Thank you.

25 MS. KING: Worked five jobs.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 I would just like to say that
3 people are working hard to take away our
4 legacy and history, particularly of the
5 African American community, not only in
6 the Point Breeze area, but throughout the
7 City. And I would just like to go back
8 on, I think it was, Councilman Kenney or
9 Greenlee who mentioned about Queen
10 Village, where there is a black cemetery
11 who is -- I guess we have some people
12 that spoken against to suppress that
13 cemetery so that they can get a
14 playground going on, but this is
15 indigenous throughout the City,
16 particularly with the African American
17 legacy and history, and I'm really tired
18 of seeing the gentrification of our
19 communities.

20 Also, I have seen that we have
21 an enemy emerging amongst us, and I would
22 like to say that enemy comes from the
23 City Planning Commission, who are working
24 with people who are transient to our
25 community who want to make decisions, who

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 do not and refuse to make the residents
3 who live in that community inclusive of
4 those decisions.

5 I would just like to state that
6 I'm definitely open for redevelopment,
7 bringing up the communities. I think
8 it's quintessential for any community,
9 but we need to understand the history of
10 Philadelphia politics. I grew up in a
11 place where I was kept out of a
12 playground, and they worked hard. We
13 have people who have started careers and
14 retired to keep me and my children from
15 out of playground. So I know that if
16 it's anything that we want to maintain
17 the continuity and integrity of a
18 community, we know the City do what it
19 has to do, and particularly to suppress
20 African Americans.

21 Also, I would like to make fact
22 that along with a lot of the residents,
23 we have folks that refuse to really make
24 us part of this decisions in terms of the
25 redevelopment of a community, and I think

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 that's very unfair. It is always
3 suggested, as Ms. Pat mentioned, that we
4 are a bunch of welfare-getting drug
5 addicts, don't-want-nothing, do-nothing
6 folks, and that is not true. That is
7 truly not true. We have a few folks who
8 do not want to be part of the system, and
9 it makes it bad for the collective bodies
10 who are out here doing the work. I mean,
11 we can't even get a police officer when
12 we seeing things that shouldn't be
13 happening in the community. We can't
14 even get the trash men to pick up the
15 trash without -- after I clean the block,
16 the trash is worse off than it was before
17 the trash men came in here. I have
18 nobody that has accountability to some of
19 the services that we should be getting.
20 That seems to suggest that once again we
21 are trifling, we don't-want-nothing,
22 do-nothing community. That is not true.

23 But I would like for the
24 Councilpeople to support Brother --
25 excuse me; Councilman Johnson in his

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 endeavors to make this land and to
3 develop affordable housing. But that
4 being said, we need to be very careful of
5 what we ask for. And I'm going to say
6 this once, and I'm just hoping that I can
7 get the City to support us. When there
8 are things going on in our community and
9 we call you about, please investigate it.
10 Let's nip it in the bud. Because I'mma
11 tell you something, I don't want to live
12 by somebody who don't want to come out
13 and sweep up their steps. I refuse to
14 live like that. I just refuse to live
15 like that, and the fact is, if we're
16 going to have affordable housing, let's
17 make sure that we have the mentality
18 that's going to maintain that. Because
19 I'm out here working a full job. I'm not
20 coming out here and seeing the same
21 people sitting on the steps when I come
22 home from work.

23 So it's nothing wrong with
24 affordable housing, but let's be mindful
25 and very careful of what we ask for.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 That being said, I would like
3 to say thank you so very much.

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
5 you.

6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I think
8 we have one more member of the community
9 that wanted to speak.

10 Ms. Marconi, could you read the
11 name, please.

12 THE CLERK: Rita Wheelings.
13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.)

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
16 identify yourself for the record and
17 proceed.

18 MS. WHEELINGS: Rita Wheelings.
19 Good morning.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
21 morning.

22 MS. WHEELINGS: Thank you for
23 hearing me. Again, I would like to thank
24 Kenyatta Johnson for the initiative and
25 the planning of affordable housing in the

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Point Breeze area. We need it. We
3 appreciate all that he has done.

4 The only question I have is,
5 what do we deem affordable as far as
6 renting and as far as ownership? What is
7 affordable? Our area is changing
8 tremendously. I've lived on Ellsworth
9 Street for 50 years, 50 years. My taxes
10 have gone from 300 to -- I don't even
11 want to tell you. There are people that
12 live in this neighborhood that cannot
13 afford even the rent. They have moved
14 out, but they can't come back because
15 they can't even afford the rent there.
16 The rent is 12 minimum, 1,200, to rent
17 somewhere in South Philly now in that
18 area, \$1,200, \$1,500. A lot of people
19 cannot afford it. A lot of people cannot
20 afford a home for \$150,000 or 250 or
21 \$350,000. They cannot afford it, and
22 people are being misplaced, displaced,
23 and replaced in an area that they've
24 known all their lives, where generations
25 have lived.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 So I'm just curious, what is
3 affordable housing and how affordable
4 will it be?

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Let me
6 see if I can get an answer.

7 Is there anyone either in
8 Redevelopment, anybody that can give a
9 range? Ms. McColloch. I don't want to
10 put anybody on the spot here, but that
11 is -- affordable is kind of a general
12 term, I guess, right? It depends on who
13 it's affordable to.

14 MS. WHEELINGS: Yes, depending
15 on who can afford it.

16 (Witness approached witness
17 table.)

18 MS. MCCOLLOCH: Good morning.
19 I'm Deborah McColloch, the Director of
20 Housing.

21 Affordable housing is a term,
22 as you say, that can have a broad range.
23 For the programs that we're talking about
24 putting out the request for proposals,
25 the affordability means no one above 80

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 percent of the median income would be
3 able to purchase a property. It goes by
4 the income level of the person that's
5 purchasing the property. Even with that,
6 depending on what other debt and so forth
7 an individual has in trying to get a
8 mortgage, sometimes what you can afford
9 can be more or less, depending on what
10 your other resources are.

11 That said -- that's a long
12 explanation. That said, within our
13 general experience, I would say,
14 affordable is up to about \$150,000 for a
15 property, and that the subsidy that we're
16 putting in is because it costs a lot more
17 than that to build the house.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
19 right. Thank you.

20 Okay? Thank you. Thank you
21 both very much.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
23 also want to --

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:
25 Councilman Johnson.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman.

4 And also take in
5 consideration -- and I was having this
6 conversation with my staff, and we're
7 working on another affordable housing
8 project in Grays Ferry as well. It will
9 also depend on the type of housing that
10 you're actually going to build. We can
11 even talk about between 60,000 and 80,000
12 for a two-story home income base for a
13 single family.

14 And so it depends on the type
15 of housing that you build as well.
16 Obviously if you have a non-profit
17 organization develop a three-story home
18 with a deck that's affordable, the price
19 is going to go up.

20 So you also have to take in
21 consideration, after the bid process
22 takes place in January, the type of
23 proposals that are put forth and the
24 actual type of housing. So that's
25 something I definitely wanted to note,

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 because that will determine the range and
3 the type of housing that will actually be
4 built.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Got you.
6 Thank you, Councilman.

7 Ms. Marconi, I think we just
8 have two other people who had asked to
9 testify. Could you --

10 THE CLERK: Ori Feibush and
11 Chester Skaziak.

12 (Witnesses approached witness
13 table.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:
15 Mr. Skaziak, you got there first, so why
16 don't you just --

17 MR. SKAZIAK: Oh.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No. Go
19 ahead, please. Identify yourself and
20 proceed, please.

21 MR. SKAZIAK: Thanks. My name
22 is Chester Skaziak. I'm a Philadelphia
23 resident and a Philadelphia taxpayer.

24 I'm just going to talk on all
25 three bills at one time, and I'm kind of

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 taken aback, but I want to -- let me
3 preface to say that I applaud Councilman
4 Johnson for everything he's done in his
5 community. And I've listened to these
6 people back here, and I agree with many
7 of the things that have been said here.

8 Mr. Covington is here, and my
9 first -- when I originally came here, I
10 was going to complain about the \$51,000
11 in back taxes that are owed and two
12 particular properties owe \$10,000.
13 Mr. Covington wrote and sent a letter to
14 the members of the Board. I'd like to
15 read that letter, because it -- if you
16 would. Mr. Covington on November the 7th
17 sent this memorandum to the members of
18 the Board.

19 On July the 10th, 2012, the
20 Board approved the seventh amendment
21 redevelopment proposal and seventh
22 amended urban renewal plan for the Point
23 Breeze development area, Point Breeze
24 Urban Renewal Area (the seventh
25 amendment). The seventh amendment would

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 allow the Authority to acquire 43
3 properties within Point Breeze. The
4 seventh amendment has been introduced
5 into Philadelphia City Council and is
6 awaiting Council approval.

7 The Board is now requested to
8 authorize a resolution approving the
9 eighth amendment development proposal and
10 the eighth amendment urban renewal plan
11 for the Point Breeze redevelopment area,
12 Point Breeze Urban Renewal Area (the
13 eighth amendment), which Board approval
14 shall be expressly contingent upon
15 approval by the City Council, the seventh
16 amendment. The sole purpose of the
17 eighth amendment is to delete the
18 following 15 properties that were
19 approved for acquisition in the seventh
20 amendment.

21 And Mr. Covington alluded to
22 that today, and he made us all aware of
23 that. I have a list of those other 28
24 properties, and my reason for being here
25 is to find out how much money these 28

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 properties are going to cost the
3 taxpayers. What's interesting about it
4 is, and Mr. Covington didn't mention it
5 today, but ten of those properties are
6 owned by the City. Are we going to buy
7 them back? How do you do that? Do we
8 move it from PRA to PIDC to PAID?

9 This is why I'm here today. My
10 concern is not the people who can't pay
11 their taxes. One woman here, Evelyn
12 Gomillion, bought that property
13 5/26/1947. Now, I'm not after people who
14 can't pay their taxes. I was on that
15 side when I was a child. I sympathize
16 with them people. It's very difficult.
17 I'm on a fixed income. When something
18 breaks in my house, I fix it. No one
19 else.

20 The delinquent tax issue is
21 both certainly hurting the City
22 financially, to a point where the Mayor
23 has sold only two contracts with the City
24 employees - a police contract, which
25 lasted two years and has expired, and one

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 other contract settlement was last March,
3 all the while cutting back on services.
4 I place some of the blame and
5 responsibility on the operation of the
6 parties I've named here today.

7 Now, certainly the total is not
8 a significant amount, but this is the
9 opportunity for the City to collect back
10 taxes. If this Committee believes that
11 this sum is not worth collecting, reduce
12 my taxes accordingly.

13 I have nothing more to say to
14 you people.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
16 you.

17 MR. SKAZIAK: And I thank you
18 for allowing me the opportunity to speak
19 here today.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
21 you.

22 Mr. Feibush, we have your
23 written testimony, so maybe if you could
24 just summarize, we'd appreciate it. Your
25 written testimony will be made part of

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 the record.

3 Please identify yourself and
4 proceed.

5 MR. FEIBUSH: Ori Feibush.
6 Before I begin, I want to state on the
7 record that I support affordable housing
8 and, more specifically, I support the
9 development of affordable housing in
10 Point Breeze. The reason for my
11 testimony here today is that I believe
12 the dollars that are being spent to
13 acquire these parcels should be used to
14 build more affordable housing and not to
15 acquire more parcels.

16 As I mentioned, my name is Ori
17 Feibush. I'm the President of OCF
18 Realty, a South Philadelphia-based real
19 estate company with significant business
20 operations throughout the City of
21 Philadelphia. OCF Realty, the parent
22 company of OCF Cafe and OCF Holdings,
23 employs 40 individuals directly and many
24 others through businesses our office
25 generates. Every one of our team members

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 lives in the great city as well.

3 I represent a significant
4 percentage of properties currently on the
5 condemned list. These are not derelict
6 properties abandoned long ago. These are
7 properties purchased in the last 12
8 months, some as recently as just this
9 last week. The City of Philadelphia's
10 records are behind, and it will only
11 become evident in the months ahead how
12 many of the lots on the condemnation list
13 have recently changed hands. Although
14 many of the lots are represented by my
15 office, the owners of some have
16 absolutely no idea that the properties
17 they have just purchased are scheduled to
18 be taken away from them. These owners
19 need your help to protect their rights.

20 Bill 120755 before you today
21 will cost the City of Philadelphia jobs.
22 It will cost the City of Philadelphia
23 badly needed tax dollars. And it will
24 destroy a fragile neighborhood
25 desperately grasping for a better

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 tomorrow.

3 I believe Councilman Johnson to
4 be a good person, looking out for the
5 best interests of his constituents. He
6 is, however, completely misinformed about
7 the real estate market in Point Breeze
8 and the impact his condemnation effort
9 will have on the community.

10 It has been stated time and
11 time again that Point Breeze is a rapidly
12 appreciating neighborhood desperately
13 needing non-market forces to keep its
14 home prices in check. Yes, home prices
15 have gone up with the rest of the
16 Philadelphia market, but the Point Breeze
17 neighborhood remains exceptionally
18 affordable.

19 There are currently 165 homes
20 listed for sale in Point Breeze. Of
21 those, 133 are listed under 225,000 and
22 just 32 above. Similarly, in the past 12
23 months, 96 homes have sold in Point
24 Breeze under 225,000, with just 28 above.
25 I use the \$225,000 number not because I

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 believe that represents affordability in
3 that neighborhood, but because that's the
4 price for the last batch of affordable
5 housing developed in that community. In
6 fact, the average price of a recently
7 rehabbed or new construction market rate
8 home in Point Breeze is actually less
9 than the average price of the affordable
10 housing units currently selling in Point
11 Breeze.

12 If Point Breeze has a healthy
13 inventory of affordable homes being built
14 by market rate developers, I ask why
15 would there be a need for subsidized
16 affordable housing developments at
17 taxpayer expense? We've been scratching
18 our head on that question for a while now
19 and simply don't have an answer, but
20 let's give the Councilman the benefit of
21 the doubt to assume there is a need for
22 subsidized development here. Taking
23 those claims at face value, I still can't
24 figure out why the City cannot build on
25 the hundreds of lots it currently owns in

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 Point Breeze before it tries to condemn
3 privately owned lots for affordable
4 housing developments.

5 The City of Philadelphia owns
6 311 vacant, derelict lots in Point
7 Breeze. Why not build those before
8 attempting to increase an already bloated
9 inventory?

10 When asked that very same
11 question, Councilman Johnson stated
12 publicly that, number one, there is not
13 enough affordable housing in the
14 appreciating area of Point Breeze; and,
15 number two, City-owned land is not
16 located in this appreciating area.

17 So let's do some data analysis.
18 The first question in analyzing the data
19 is to understand that what the
20 appreciating zone of Point Breeze
21 consists of that Councilman Johnson talks
22 about. A large swath of Point Breeze is
23 appreciating, but he seems to be
24 referring to a smaller area. My office
25 found the answer to these boundaries in

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 his Inquirer letter, and I quote:
3 "Opposition to the bill has been fueled
4 by misinformation disseminated over the
5 Internet by a handful of people who
6 believe that all available land in Point
7 Breeze should be sold to the highest
8 bidder and used to build houses that sell
9 for in excess of \$250,000."

10 Using the Councilman's own
11 information, I settled on his
12 appreciating area consisting of houses
13 that have sold this year for greater than
14 \$250,000. Using Trulia's sold properties
15 map, I mapped out properties that have
16 sold for greater than \$250,000 this year.

17 From this list, I mapped out an
18 appreciation zone that I believe lines up
19 with the Councilman's idea of a desert of
20 affordable housing and City-owned land,
21 home only to those with \$250,000 homes.
22 I did not extend the area further down
23 south, even though there were houses over
24 \$200,000 there, as that area does not
25 seem to be in line with Councilman's

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 vision right now.

3 To find if Councilman Johnson's
4 two premises are right, that there is not
5 enough affordable housing in this area
6 and that the City-owned land is not in
7 that area, I did a little research. The
8 results, while not surprising, are
9 astounding. A hundred and sixty-three
10 properties in this area can directly be
11 attributed to City-owned land or
12 affordable housing. Sixty-eight are
13 City-owned vacant lots. There are
14 probably even more, but our research may
15 have missed them.

16 So let me just restate what the
17 Councilman stated. People have asked why
18 the City can't develop on the land that
19 it already owns. Most of the 311
20 City-owned properties lie outside the
21 section of Point Breeze that is
22 appreciating in value, so affordability
23 is not an issue. Councilman Johnson
24 appears to have forgotten about these
25 City-owned vacant lots in the

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 appreciating area: 1514 Ellsworth --

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir, we
4 have the whole list. You don't have to
5 read the whole list. We got it.

6 MR. FEIBUSH: You would agree
7 that it's extensive.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It will
9 be made part of the record.

10 MR. FEIBUSH: You would agree
11 that it's extensive.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
13 proceed, yes. We'll make it part of the
14 record. Go ahead.

15 MR. FEIBUSH: Councilman
16 Johnson also stated that 19 privately
17 owned properties being sought by the City
18 represents only a fraction of the
19 thousands of lots owned by private
20 citizens.

21 If this were true, the
22 Councilman would be right in stating that
23 the condemnation of 19 privately owned
24 properties will not adversely impact the
25 real estate market in Point Breeze.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Unfortunately, it's simply not true. In
3 the appreciating zone, there are 68
4 City-owned vacant lots and 82 owned by
5 private developers, not thousands, 82.
6 By condemning 19 privately owned
7 properties, the City of Philadelphia
8 would become the dominant vacant land
9 owner in the most, if not the only,
10 developable part of Point Breeze. The
11 change in ownership will undoubtedly
12 increase home prices in Point Breeze, not
13 decrease.

14 Why? Because real estate
15 prices are not set by developers. They
16 are set by the basic economics of supply
17 and demand. By limiting the supply of
18 available real estate, the City of
19 Philadelphia is increasing the cost of
20 land for everyone and ultimately homes
21 built on that land in Point Breeze. In
22 other words, while this bill may be
23 designed to keep home values in check, by
24 artificially reducing the inventory of
25 available vacant land, the remaining

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 available parcels will become more
3 expensive, not less.

4 This bill was not only called
5 the worst idea ever by both Keystone
6 Politics and the Greater Association of
7 Philadelphia Realtors, who put out a
8 position piece this morning, but there is
9 a petition against it with more than 900
10 signatures and counting. The reasons are
11 simple. The bill is illegal. It creates
12 the exact opposite results which it
13 intends and it provides no plan or
14 specific funding to build any homes.

15 The condemning of real estate
16 is a sacred act which should only be used
17 in the most extreme of circumstances by a
18 municipality. It should not be used to
19 subvert private development in a
20 neighborhood that desperately needs help.
21 Our city is broke, and we should use our
22 limited resources to build affordable
23 housing on the land we already own. By
24 not paying millions for unneeded
25 privately owned lots and the hundreds of

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 thousands of dollars in legal fees and
3 damages certain to come with them, you
4 can build even more affordable housing,
5 more parks, more everything.

6 (Woman yelling "boo" in the
7 audience.)

8 MR. FEIBUSH: We should not --

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Ma'am.

10 Whoa. Excuse me. Ma'am, ma'am, ma'am,
11 everybody has a right. Everybody has the
12 right to testify. Okay? Please.
13 Please.

14 (Audience members yelling.)

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Ma'am,
16 please. We've gotten through a couple of
17 hours. We don't need -- we're almost
18 finished. Okay? I think you hear where
19 the Committee is going on this. Okay?

20 Mr. Feibush, please finish.

21 MR. FEIBUSH: We should not use
22 the little we have to acquire more land,
23 increasing our inventory with absolutely
24 no realistic plan of ever developing it.

25 I ask you again, please do not

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 take our land. Let us help you build a
3 better neighborhood and a better city.

4 None of us want to fight. We
5 want to help you. Philadelphia needs
6 more jobs. It needs more tax revenue.
7 Please let today serve as the positive
8 start for a neighborhood that we all know
9 needs all the help it can get, not as the
10 start of years of courtroom battles and
11 PR campaigns. Point Breeze deserves
12 better. Please vote no to Council Bill
13 120755.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Let me
16 ask you a quick question. You say in
17 your last paragraph, please do not take
18 our land. Of these 28 properties that
19 are going to remain in the bill, do you
20 own any of them?

21 MR. FEIBUSH: Yes.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: You do?

23 MR. FEIBUSH: Yes.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Do you
25 have active plans for them?

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 MR. FEIBUSH: Yes.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Do you
4 have permits for them?

5 MR. FEIBUSH: On some, yes.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: On some.
7 On some of these 28?

8 MR. FEIBUSH: On August 23rd,
9 the Zoning Code changed. Previous to
10 August 23rd, it was impossible to build
11 on these properties because the City
12 acquired a five foot setback for all
13 these parcels and, therefore, required
14 zoning. Because of the City-owned lots
15 next to it, it became impossible to build
16 on those until after August 23rd. After
17 that date, we actively engaged and
18 started acquiring permits on all of
19 these. Some of our lots have been
20 removed, but the vast majority still
21 remain on this parcel. We in fact broke
22 ground on almost a dozen properties in
23 the last month, which is the 15 or so
24 properties that you no longer see on that
25 list. These are not derelict properties.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 They're properties purchased in the last
3 year with active plans to develop all of
4 them.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

6 All right. We're hearing differently on
7 that, but okay.

8 Councilwoman Bass.

9 MR. FEIBUSH: I'm under oath,
10 correct?

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No,
12 you're not.

13 MR. FEIBUSH: Well, I'd be
14 happy to put myself under oath and state
15 that again.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

17 Councilwoman Bass.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
19 morning.

20 MR. FEIBUSH: Good morning.
21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I have a
23 couple questions for you.

24 So you own a number of
25 properties in the Point Breeze area?

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 MR. FEIBUSH: That's correct.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: How many do
4 you own?

5 MR. FEIBUSH: Many.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: How many?
7 Of the 28 properties, how many of those
8 do you own?

9 MR. FEIBUSH: Of the 28
10 properties --

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Ma'am,
12 please.

13 MR. FEIBUSH: Of the 28
14 properties, I directly own five. My
15 office represents an additional nine.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So you own
17 five and represent the owners?

18 MR. FEIBUSH: Of additional
19 nine.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You said in
21 your testimony that a number of the
22 owners do not know that the properties
23 are being scheduled to be taken away from
24 them. Can you identify who those -- what
25 addresses those are?

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 MR. FEIBUSH: I have no idea
3 who they are. I only know because the
4 properties sold on Multiple Listing
5 Service, but they haven't yet been on
6 public record. I wasn't part of the
7 transactions.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So you
9 don't know if --

10 MR. FEIBUSH: Well, I know for
11 a fact they have been sold, and there is
12 no way the City could have possibly
13 notified them, because the tax records
14 have not yet been updated.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Do you live
16 in the area? Do you live in Point Breeze
17 or in the area?

18 MR. FEIBUSH: I do not
19 currently live in Point Breeze.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Do you live
21 in Philadelphia?

22 MR. FEIBUSH: Yes.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: What part
24 of Philadelphia do you live?

25 MR. FEIBUSH: Center City, in

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 the 2nd District.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.
4 And one other question for you. You
5 mentioned in part of your testimony that
6 Paragraph 5, home prices have gone up in
7 the rest of Philadelphia -- in the rest
8 of the Philadelphia market, but the Point
9 Breeze neighborhood remains exceptionally
10 affordable. So my question is, if home
11 prices have gone up, shouldn't there be a
12 place that we maintain considerable
13 affordable housing?

14 MR. FEIBUSH: Absolutely.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Shouldn't
16 there be affordable housing?

17 MR. FEIBUSH: I think there
18 should be --

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Because if
20 you think that home values have gone up,
21 then that says that there's less
22 affordable housing.

23 MR. FEIBUSH: I think there
24 should be the development of a lot of
25 affordable housing in Point Breeze. I

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 think the City owns currently more lots
3 they could possibly ever build in our
4 lifetimes.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

6 MR. FEIBUSH: The question is
7 not affordable housing versus market rate
8 housing. The question is a condemnation
9 effort of privately owned parcels to add
10 to a list of hundreds of parcels the City
11 already currently owns.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
13 the one other question I had was that
14 your statement towards the end in
15 reference to this bill was called the
16 worst idea ever by Keystone Politics and
17 the Greater Association of Philadelphia
18 Realtors and that there was a petition
19 with more than 900 signatures. And I'm
20 curious as to who -- do you have a copy
21 of this petition and who the signatures
22 were?

23 (Audience member yelling out.)

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir, sir,
25 sir, sir, no, no, no.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 MR. FEIBUSH: I'm sorry. I
3 didn't hear the end of your question.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm curious
5 as to who the 900 signatures and counting
6 are. Do you have a copy of the petition?

7 MR. FEIBUSH: I faxed that to
8 your office, but I could provide a paper
9 copy shortly as well.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Do
11 they live in the area?

12 MR. FEIBUSH: Not all of them,
13 but a vast majority live in Philadelphia
14 and live in the area.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: But they
16 don't live in Point Breeze?

17 MR. FEIBUSH: Many do.
18 Hundreds do.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: How many of
20 the 900? Because that's really important
21 as we're talking about the context of --

22 MR. FEIBUSH: About a third.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: About a
24 third, you say?

25 MR. FEIBUSH: Yes, ma'am.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
3 about 300 people may have signed this
4 petition?

5 MR. FEIBUSH: Did sign that
6 live in Point Breeze.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Because I
8 haven't seen it. So I'm just --

9 MR. FEIBUSH: Forgive me. I'll
10 fax it again and I'll provide a paper
11 copy shortly.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Were they
14 longtime homeowners; do you know?

15 MR. FEIBUSH: I couldn't speak
16 to that.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
18 Any other questions?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seeing
21 none, thank you.

22 MR. FEIBUSH: Thank you for
23 your time.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That
25 completes our list for testifying.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Could we
3 bring Ed Covington back up just for a
4 second so we can kind of clarify some of
5 this information.

6 Mr. Feibush, can you come back
7 up for a second. I just want to kind of
8 clear up some of the misinformation.

9 So first and foremost, Ed, can
10 you explain to the Committee the type of
11 dollars that are going to be used for the
12 acquisition of land for this actual urban
13 renewal plan, please.

14 MR. COVINGTON: The funds for
15 this acquisition are Neighborhood
16 Transformation Initiative funds that were
17 part of the bond proceeds of 2002, 2005.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can you
19 please explain to the Committee how those
20 specific type of funds are to be used.

21 MR. COVINGTON: Those funds are
22 really designated by the Indenture that
23 gave rise to them for very specific
24 public uses, such as the acquisition of
25 land, demolition, things of that nature

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 that were all specifically purposed to
3 focus on the redevelopment of the City of
4 Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can we use
6 that funding to go towards supporting
7 recreation programs, libraries, funding
8 for teachers, our Fire Department, as the
9 petition, the online petition, suggested?

10 MR. COVINGTON: Those are not
11 currently available uses of these funds.

12 MR. FEIBUSH: Can you use them
13 to build houses?

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sir, sir,
15 he's asking Mr. Covington questions.

16 MR. FEIBUSH: Forgive me. He
17 asked me to sit. I didn't know what --

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No. He
19 asked Mr. Covington a question.

20 Please, go ahead, Councilman.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: In
22 January, in terms of the bidding process,
23 how much funding will be allocated toward
24 this actual project?

25 MR. COVINGTON: Right now the

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 discussion is around \$2 million in
3 funding from the Neighborhood
4 Stabilization Program. In addition, we
5 are in discussions with the Councilman's
6 office to use some of the additional NTI
7 funds to rehabilitate some of the
8 structures that we're acquiring in the
9 community. So where we are acquiring
10 physical properties, the NTI bond funds
11 are able to be used to rehabilitate those
12 homes. And so in addition to the \$2
13 million in Neighborhood Stabilization
14 Program funding, there's a possibility of
15 additional funds to be applied against
16 physical structures that are acquired.

17 And I also want to add a couple
18 of things relative to some comments that
19 were made. Of the 28 properties, 11 are
20 owned by the City or the Philadelphia
21 Housing Development Corporation. The
22 cost of that acquisition is \$11.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And just
24 last, give the Committee an idea of how
25 the plans were made to actually pick the

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 location of the areas and where you want
3 to actually build these affordable homes.

4 MR. COVINGTON: Yeah. This was
5 a specifically targeted acquisition plan.
6 And so, for example, there's an existing
7 lot that was part of the City's green
8 program. And so you have a fenced lot.
9 And there's about three of the properties
10 that are owned by City agencies, and then
11 there's one that's owned privately that's
12 all part of this lot that's already been
13 greened. We're going to acquire that,
14 because it obviously makes sense to
15 consolidate that parcel to have an
16 assembled lot to be able to redevelop on.
17 The other -- many of the other targeted
18 properties are near properties where we
19 have already initiated, typically through
20 the Neighborhood Stabilization Program,
21 other investments. So we're trying to
22 leverage the investment to really
23 strengthen and stabilize those blocks
24 where investment has already occurred.
25 And so there's been a pretty good

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 targeting of where these properties are
3 in order to leverage existing investment
4 and to stabilize areas that were already
5 on the rebound.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All right.
7 Thank you, Mr. Covington.

8 And just last, Mr. Feibush,
9 have you been -- how many times have you
10 reached out to my office in regards to
11 the actual properties that are in
12 question based upon either who you
13 represent and/or the individuals you said
14 were not notified that their properties
15 were up to be condemned?

16 MR. FEIBUSH: Many.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You
18 reached out to my office many times?

19 MR. FEIBUSH: Yes, sir.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Who
21 specifically have you reached out to many
22 times?

23 MR. FEIBUSH: Steven Cobb.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Steven
25 Cobb? All right. Thank you. That's it.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
3 you.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just a
5 couple of things I just wanted to clarify
6 just for the Committee. Obviously this
7 bill was introduced in 2011 prior to me
8 becoming an actual Councilman, but after
9 I was actually elected, actually after I
10 was elected, because affordable housing
11 has been something I paid attention to in
12 the capacity of being a State
13 Representative and, contrary to popular
14 belief, myself always being a native and
15 resident of the Point Breeze community,
16 I've always paid attention to make sure
17 that we have a level of mixed-income
18 housing in Point Breeze. So if we were
19 in the position of anti-development, we
20 wouldn't have started off with a process
21 of 93 properties and then bring them down
22 to 50 properties and then my staff worked
23 in conjunction and partnership with the
24 RDA to reach out, to reach out to other
25 developers who have plans for their

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 properties and took off an additional 15.

3 And so, one, I wanted to state
4 that for the record. But obviously in
5 the area which I had no idea or no parts
6 of planning where these affordable
7 housing would go at, I do think it's
8 important that we don't have a segregated
9 neighborhood of income where certain
10 properties are in one area that are
11 affordable housing and certain properties
12 are another area that's market rate.

13 That will always be my position just in
14 general, because I believe that in order
15 for us to have mixed-income housing in
16 the Point Breeze area, we have to have
17 people of all different backgrounds,
18 income backgrounds, living amongst one
19 another. And so that will always be my
20 position, rather I'm in front of this
21 Committee and anyone else as it relates
22 to me supporting affordable housing plans
23 in the Point Breeze area.

24 My primary purpose of, one,
25 being supportive of this Administration

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 bill is as we move forward, this won't be
3 the last time that we'll come in front of
4 this Committee advocating for making sure
5 that we have affordable housing in the
6 area. And also the part that people
7 don't talk about. Yeah, you may have
8 people who -- half of the properties who
9 are private that are on the list are
10 blighted properties that have been
11 blighted and abandoned for at least more
12 than five years.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Are some
14 of them tax delinquent, Councilman?

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.
16 That's on the record as well in terms of
17 tax delinquency and so forth. But no one
18 ever take in consideration the day-to-day
19 quality of life issues where if you are
20 an individual with a private property,
21 right, and your taxes are paid on them
22 and there aren't any liens and it's just
23 a piece of blight, speculating in a
24 homeowner's neighborhood, you're not
25 taking care of the land, trees are

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 growing into the side of seniors' homes,
3 we never talk about that aspect.

4 The market in Point Breeze will
5 move forward. We know that. This is a
6 part of preserving particular land,
7 rather it be public or private, to
8 provide a level of affordable housing in
9 the Point Breeze area. And I will always
10 state for the record, this is only the
11 beginning. So we will be back at this
12 table with another dialogue as we look
13 forward to making sure we provide a level
14 of affordable housing in the Point Breeze
15 community. And I always want to make
16 sure that we put out there, I've always
17 been, at least in the context of working
18 on this issue and my staff, regardless of
19 what's been circulated, rather it be
20 e-mail-wise, rather it be online-wise, we
21 will always advocate it with a level of
22 integrity and making sure that this is a
23 balanced and fair process, and that's why
24 we took the time out to make sure that
25 every member that's a part of this

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 committee and the other 17 members had
3 the actual facts.

4 There's going to be a -- we
5 will differ as it relates to the actual
6 process, because I want to believe that
7 there has to be a level of conversation
8 for affordable housing at the table, real
9 simple. And as we move forward, rather
10 individuals agree with me or not, that
11 will always be my position. But we make
12 sure that we remain a level of fairness
13 in this process, and our door is always
14 open for anyone who wants to sit down to
15 have a real -- a civil conversation about
16 development. And I'm going to say that
17 again, a civil, straight up, not
18 disrespectful, you know, online sly
19 comments about the people that live in
20 Point Breeze, but really about affordable
21 housing in the Point Breeze community
22 just in general, so it can be a viable
23 neighborhood for everyone that lives
24 there.

25 I do thank everyone who came

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 out to express their interest in support
3 of this bill, but I want to let everyone
4 know that this is just the beginning. We
5 will be moving forward with another plan
6 that we have as it relates to affordable
7 housing, so we can make sure that Point
8 Breeze remains viable for everyone
9 regardless of their income.

10 Thank you very much.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
12 you, Councilman.

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Before we
15 proceed, first of all, let me just say
16 for the record it's clear to me that you
17 and your staff did the due diligence
18 that's necessary in an issue like that.
19 So I just wanted to get that on record.

20 Councilman Kenney.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

22 Just for my own information's
23 sake, and Mr. Covington knows, of the 28
24 properties that are being asked to be
25 taken, how many are tax delinquent? And

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 can you give me the total or kind of ball
3 park total tax delinquency aggregate?

4 MR. COVINGTON: It looks like
5 about half of the 17 are tax delinquent.

6 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: I'm sorry.
7 It was 28.

8 MR. COVINGTON: Eleven of them
9 are City-owned properties.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So the
11 non-City owned, half of those?

12 MR. COVINGTON: Yeah, about
13 half of those are.

14 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do you have
15 a general ball park number?

16 MR. COVINGTON: I'm trying to
17 do it real quick.

18 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But
19 whatever that number is, that comes off
20 whatever settlement?

21 MR. COVINGTON: Oh, absolutely.
22 Actually, the bigger number is liens.
23 The City has liens on much of these. So
24 there's municipal liens that are actually
25 far superior to those, and all of these

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 will be addressed in the settlement of
3 these actions.

4 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: So that
5 will be in the --

6 MR. COVINGTON: Yeah, that
7 actually returns to the City.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Just
9 returned to the City.

10 MR. COVINGTON: So that money
11 is coming out of bond proceeds and going
12 into the --

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But the
14 overall outlay by the City will be
15 reduced by the tax delinquency?

16 MR. COVINGTON: Yeah. So I
17 think roughly our revised budget, which
18 is still being finalized, the total cost
19 of this will be about \$850,000, and then
20 you'll net against that some of the
21 proceeds that will come for these
22 repayment of taxes and liens.

23 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
25 you.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Councilwoman --

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Excuse me.

4 Mr. Kenney, just for the record, the
5 total is 32,000 in back taxes; and liens,
6 133,000.

7 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
9 you.

10 Councilwoman Tasco.

11 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chair. I'd just like to take a
13 moment of personal privilege and
14 recognize my granddaughter who is here
15 supporting her community, Charlie Tasco.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Oh, there
17 she is. Very good. Okay.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Welcome.
20 It was noticed that you're shy just like
21 your grandmother, right?

22 (Laughter.)

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. No
24 one else to testify on this bill or any
25 of the other bills, this will conclude

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 the public hearing of the Committee on
3 Rules.

4 We will now go into the public
5 meeting of the Committee, and the Chair
6 recognizes Councilman Kenney regarding
7 Bill No. 120617.

8 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
9 Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.
10 120617 be reported out of this Committee
11 favorably and a request made for rules
12 suspension to allow first reading at our
13 next Council session.

14 (Duly seconded.)

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Been
16 moved and seconded.

17 All in favor?

18 (Aye.)

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing
22 none, the motion is approved and the bill
23 will be reported out of Committee with a
24 suspension of the rules.

25 Councilman Kenney.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.
4 120618 be reported out of the Committee
5 favorably and a request for suspension of
6 rules to allow first reading at our next
7 Council session.

8 (Duly seconded.)

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been
10 moved and seconded.

11 All in favor?

12 (Aye.)

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing
16 none, the motion carries and the bill
17 will be reported out with a favorable
18 recommendation with a suspension.

19 Councilman Kenney.

20 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.
22 120720 be reported out of this Committee
23 favorably and a request made for rules
24 suspension to allow first reading at our
25 next Council session.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 (Duly seconded.)

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All in
4 favor?

5 (Aye.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing
9 none, the motion carries and the bill is
10 reported out with a suspension of the
11 rules.

12 Councilman Kenney.

13 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.
15 120724 be amended as according to the
16 testimony given at the hearing.

17 (Duly seconded.)

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been
19 moved and seconded.

20 All in favor?

21 (Aye.)

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing
25 none, the amendment is approved.

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 Councilman Kenney.

3 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman. Bill 120724 be reported
5 out of this Committee, as amended,
6 favorably with a request for rules
7 suspension to allow first reading at our
8 next Council session.

9 (Duly seconded.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Been
11 moved and seconded.

12 All in favor?

13 (Aye.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing
17 none, Bill 120724, as amended, reported
18 out of Committee favorably with a
19 suspension.

20 Councilman Kenney.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
22 Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.
23 120727 be reported out of this Committee
24 favorably and a request made for rules
25 suspension to allow first reading at our

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 next Council session.

3 (Duly seconded.)

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Moved and

5 seconded.

6 All in favor?

7 (Aye.)

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing

11 none, the motion carries and the bill is

12 reported out favorably with a rules

13 suspension.

14 Councilman Kenney.

15 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,

16 Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.

17 120728 be reported out of this Committee

18 favorably and a request made for rules

19 suspension to allow first reading at our

20 next Council session.

21 (Duly seconded.)

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been

23 moved and seconded.

24 All in favor?

25 (Aye.)

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing

5 none, the bill is reported out with a

6 favorable recommendation and a rules

7 suspension.

8 Finally, Councilman Kenney.

9 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,

10 Mr. Chairman. I move that Bill No.

11 120755 be reported out of this Committee

12 favorably and a request made for rules

13 suspension to allow first reading at our

14 next Council session.

15 (Duly seconded.)

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: It's been

17 moved and seconded.

18 All in favor?

19 (Aye.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Opposed?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hearing

23 none, Bill 120755 is reported out of this

24 Committee with a favorable recommendation

25 with a rules suspension for our next

1 11/13/12 - RULES - BILLS 120617, etc.
2 session of Council.

3 There being no further business
4 before this Committee, I thank all the
5 Committee members and all the public for
6 coming. Thank you.

7 (Applause.)

8 (Committee on Rules concluded
9 at 12:15 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter on November 17, 2012, and
that this is a true and correct transcript of
same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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