

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON RULES

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Friday, October 18, 2024
10:28 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY

BILLS: 240499, 240612, 240656,
240661

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
3 morning. This hearing is called to
4 order. Members and guests will
5 please take their seats. A quorum
6 of the Committee is present and
7 this hearing is now called to
8 order.

9 May the Clerk please call
10 the roll.

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember
12 Squilla.

13 (No response.)

14 THE CLERK: Councilmember
15 Gilmore Richardson.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
17 RICHARDSON: Present.

18 THE CLERK: Councilmember
19 Jones.

20 (No response.)

21 THE CLERK: Councilmember
22 O'Neill.

23 (No response.)

24 THE CLERK: Councilmember
25 Thomas.

1 (No response.)

2 THE CLERK: Councilmember

3 Gauthier.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

5 Present.

6 THE CLERK: And,

7 Councilmember Harrity.

8 COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

9 Present.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Great.

11 This is the public hearing of the

12 Committee on Rules regarding Bill

13 Nos. 240499, 240612, 240656 and

14 240661.

15 Will the Clerk please read

16 the title of these bills.

17 THE CLERK: Bill No.

18 240499, an ordinance to amend the

19 Philadelphia Zoning Maps by

20 changing the zoning designations of

21 certain areas of land located

22 within an area bounded by Locust

23 Street, 8th Street, South Street

24 and Broad Street.

25 Bill No. 240612, an

1 ordinance continuing the Fishtown
2 Kensington Area Business
3 Improvement District, in the area
4 that generally includes both sides
5 of Frankford Avenue from the west
6 side of Delaware Avenue to the
7 southwest side of Lehigh Avenue,
8 both sides of North Front Street
9 from the north side of Poplar
10 street to the south side of Diamond
11 Street, both sides of East Girard
12 Avenue from Frankford Avenue
13 continuing to the west side of East
14 Berks Street, the north side of
15 West Girard Avenue from Frankford
16 Avenue to North 2nd Street, and the
17 south side of West Girard Avenue
18 from Frankford Avenue to Howard
19 Street and certain blocks of
20 streets that intersect portions of
21 these streets; approving an
22 extension of the boundaries of the
23 District to include North Front
24 Street from Montgomery Street to
25 Diamond Street, East Girard Avenue

1 from East Fletcher Street to East
2 Berks Street, and the north side of
3 West Girard Avenue from Front
4 Street to North 2nd Street;
5 continuing to Fishtown Kensington
6 Area Business Improvement District,
7 Inc., a Pennsylvania nonprofit
8 corporation, as the neighborhood
9 improvement district management
10 Association of the District;
11 approving a plan for and report
12 concerning the District;
13 authorizing the Director of
14 Commerce, on behalf of the City, to
15 execute an agreement with the
16 Fishtown Kensington Area Business
17 Improvement District, Inc. relating
18 to the District; and re-authorizing
19 the Fishtown Kensington Area
20 Business Improvement District, Inc.
21 to assess property owners within
22 the District a special property
23 assessment fee to be used in
24 accordance with the approved plan;
25 all in accordance with the

1 provisions of the Community and
2 Economic Improvement Act, under
3 certain terms and conditions.

4 And Bill No. 240656, an
5 ordinance amending Section 14-303
6 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
7 "Common Procedures and
8 Requirements," to clarify
9 provisions related to public
10 hearings of the Zoning Board of
11 Adjustment and make technical
12 changes, under all terms and
13 conditions.

14 And finally, Bill No.
15 240661, an ordinance amending
16 Section 14-524 of The Philadelphia
17 Code, entitled "/FDO Fourth
18 District Overlay District," to
19 include certain areas of land
20 within the Morris Park
21 neighborhood, under certain terms
22 and conditions.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Will
24 the Clerk please call witnesses for
25 the first panel we have to testify

1 this morning on Bill No. 240499.

2 And I also want to recognize the
3 presence of Councilman Mark
4 Squilla.

5 THE CLERK: First panel,
6 Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director of
7 Legislation for the Philadelphia
8 City Planning Commission.

9 (Witness approached Witness
10 table.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
12 morning.

13 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Good
14 morning. How are you today?

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Great.
16 How are you?

17 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: No
18 complaints.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
20 state your name for the record and
21 proceed with your testimony.

22 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Good
23 morning, members of the Rules
24 Committee. I am Paula Brumbelow
25 Burns, Director of Legislation for

1 the Philadelphia City Planning
2 Commission. I am here to testify
3 on Bill No. 240499 introduced into
4 City Council on May 24, 2024 by
5 Councilmember Squilla.

6 Bill No. 240499 amends the
7 Philadelphia Zoning Maps by
8 changing the zoning designations of
9 land located within an area bounded
10 by Locust Street, 8th Street, South
11 Street and Broad Street in the
12 Washington Square West neighborhood
13 of the Central Planning District.
14 This bill will change the zoning of
15 a number of properties in the
16 Washington Square West neighborhood
17 in the Central Planning District.

18 The changes proposed by the
19 legislation work to protect
20 commercial corridors and better
21 manage the transition between the
22 neighborhood scale to the south and
23 east and the commercial scale to
24 the north and west. It also
25 encourages appropriate development

1 on vacant and underdeveloped lots,
2 correct zoning to reduce
3 non-conformities and protects the
4 area's character of single family-
5 attached homes.

6 This action is consistent
7 with the Philadelphia 2035 Citywide
8 Vision, which recommends
9 maintaining the scale of the
10 Washington Square West
11 neighborhood, ensuring that new
12 development reinforces the urban
13 scale and encouraging commercial
14 zoning on the strongest retail
15 blocks.

16 The Philadelphia City
17 Planning Commission considered Bill
18 No. 240499 at its public meeting on
19 June 6, 2024 and recommended the
20 bill for approval. I'll be happy
21 to answer any questions at this
22 time.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
24 you very much for your testimony.

25 Are there any questions

1 from the panel?

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Seeing
4 none, is there anyone else here to
5 testify on Bill No. 240499?

6 Paula, hold on. Don't go
7 anywhere yet.

8 Anyone else to testify?

9 No?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Seeing
12 that there's no one else to testify
13 on Bill No. 240499, Mr. Clerk,
14 please call the next bill, Bill No.
15 240656.

16 THE CLERK: Bill No.
17 240656, Paula Brumbelow Burns,
18 Director of Legislation,
19 Philadelphia City Planning
20 Commission.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
22 state your name for the record and
23 proceed.

24 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: I am
25 Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director of

1 Legislation for the Philadelphia
2 City Planning Commission. I'm here
3 to testify on Bill No. 240656,
4 introduced into City Council on
5 September 5, 2024 by Councilmember
6 Gilmore Richardson for Council
7 President Johnson.

8 Bill No. 240656 amends the
9 Philadelphia Zoning Code by
10 changing Section 14-303 of The
11 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Common
12 Procedures and Requirements," to
13 clarify provisions related to
14 public hearings of the Zoning Board
15 of Adjustment. This bill makes
16 technical updates to Bill No.
17 240446, which was passed in June
18 2024. The original bill revised
19 the number of Zoning Board of
20 Adjustment members required to vote
21 on any item at a public meeting.

22 It followed the passage of
23 a change to the Philadelphia Home
24 Rule Charter, which was approved in
25 2022, which increased the number of

1 Zoning Board seats from 5 to 7.
2 The Code provision being repealed
3 by this bill set the number of
4 members necessary for a quorum to a
5 static amount regardless of how
6 many members have been appointed to
7 vacancies of the Board.

8 This action amends the
9 quorum requirements to default to a
10 simple majority of members seated.
11 The Philadelphia City Planning
12 Commission considered Bill No.
13 240656 at its public meeting on
14 September 19, 2024 and recommended
15 the bill for approval.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
17 you for your testimony.

18 Are there any questions
19 from the panel?

20 Councilwoman Kathy Gilmore
21 Richardson.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

23 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much,
24 Madam Chair.

25 And thank you, Paula, for

1 this recommendation from Planning
2 regarding Bill No. 240656 that I
3 introduced on behalf of Council
4 President Johnson. And just wanted
5 to thank you all for understanding
6 the necessity to update the Code in
7 this way. It is more in line with
8 Robert's Rules of Order but also
9 for us, Mason's Manual of
10 Legislative Review. And so, we
11 appreciate your support on this
12 legislation and ask for the support
13 of all of our colleagues.

14 Thank you so much, Madam
15 Chair.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
17 you, Majority Leader.

18 Any other questions,
19 comments from the panel?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is
22 there anyone else here to testify
23 on Bill No. 240656?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And

1 seeing none, will the Clerk please
2 call forward Bill No. 240661?

3 THE CLERK: 240661, Paula
4 Brumbelow Burns, Director of
5 Legislation, Philadelphia City
6 Planning Commission.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
8 state your name for the record and
9 proceed.

10 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: I am
11 Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director of
12 Legislation for the City Planning
13 Commission. I'm here to testify on
14 Bill No. 240661, introduced into
15 City Council on September 5, 2024
16 by Councilmember Jones, Jr.

17 Bill No. 240661 amends the
18 Philadelphia Zoning Code by
19 amending the /FDO Fourth District
20 Overlay District to include areas
21 of land within the Morris Park
22 neighborhood in the West Planning
23 District. This bill proposes to
24 add a new Morris Park subarea to
25 the commercial review area of the

1 /FDO Fourth District Overlay
2 District to include an area bounded
3 by Malvern Avenue, 63rd Street,
4 Lansdowne Avenue and 68th Street.

5 Within this new review
6 area, a wide range of retail uses,
7 consumer goods, food, beverages and
8 groceries, Sundries Pharmaceuticals
9 and convenience sales and drug
10 paraphernalia sales will require a
11 special exception to be granted by
12 the Zoning Board of Adjustment for
13 commercially-zoned properties where
14 they would otherwise be allowed
15 by-right.

16 While it is understood that
17 the intent of the bill is to
18 discourage nuisance uses, this
19 action could also discourage the
20 operation of essential neighborhood
21 retail services by adding
22 additional administrative hurdles
23 and legal costs to opening a
24 business. This may pose a
25 significant burden on potential

1 small business owners.

2 The Philadelphia City
3 Planning Commission considered Bill
4 No. 240661 at its public meeting on
5 September 19, 2024 and recommended
6 the bill not for approval.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
8 you very much for your testimony.

9 Questions from the panel?

10 Chair recognizes Majority
11 Leader Kathy Gilmore Richardson.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
13 RICHARDSON: Thank you very much,
14 Madam Chair.

15 And thank you again, Paula,
16 for the work of the Planning
17 Commission. But I just want to
18 uplift my colleague Councilmember
19 Curtis Jones in the 4th Council
20 District relative to this 4th
21 District Overlay for the Morris
22 Park neighborhood with the
23 boundaries included from Malvern,
24 63rd Street, Lansdowne and 68th.

25 If you know anything about

1 this community where I've been
2 privileged to live all of my life
3 in the great 4th Council District,
4 you know that we have been
5 inundated with a number of nuisance
6 businesses and drug paraphernalia
7 stores in this community. And in
8 addition to that, we have been
9 inundated with residual development
10 because of some additional larger
11 development or larger scale
12 development projects that have
13 recently come to the community with
14 the completion of the school, which
15 is not too far from the bounds of
16 this Morris Park area, as well as
17 some additional residential
18 developments that are quite
19 different than what we are used to
20 seeing in this area.

21 But relative to the
22 commercially-zoned portions of the
23 community and the type of
24 businesses that we do want to see
25 in the 4th Council District, I am

1 of the belief that we must have
2 this 4th District Overlay to ensure
3 we can maintain the quality and the
4 character of our community. And
5 so, for that reason I am in support
6 of Bill No. 240661 and I'm thankful
7 to my colleague Councilmember Jones
8 for his work with the community to
9 ensure we can preserve the quality
10 of our life.

11 So thank you very, very
12 much colleagues. And I ask humbly
13 for your support for 240661 on
14 behalf of Councilmember Jones.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
16 you, Madam Majority Leader.

17 Any other additional
18 questions, comments, suggestions?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
21 I just want to very briefly echo
22 the sentiments of my colleague
23 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson in
24 support of Councilman Jones'
25 legislation. As a District

1 Councilmember, it is extremely
2 difficult to get any level of
3 enforcement once a nuisance
4 business comes in.

5 And so, I would strongly
6 encourage the Planning Commission
7 if you don't particularly like the
8 legislation that we're offering to
9 deal with these matters, to give us
10 something from your end if you
11 think this is going to cause
12 additional administrative and legal
13 cost to open a business.

14 If you think that that's
15 actually the case, then we would
16 implore you to provide us a remedy.

17 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Okay.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Because
19 otherwise we'll make our own
20 remedies which the Planning
21 Commission doesn't seem to really
22 particularly want to support. So
23 again, we want to put the ball back
24 in your court since we know that
25 you all have a lot to do and say

1 with these nuisance businesses when
2 they originally open. We're asking
3 for your support and your help so
4 that we can be on the same page.

5 But I too want to echo that
6 I will be supporting this piece of
7 legislation today. So thank you.

8 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Thank
9 you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
11 you for your testimony and thank
12 you for being here today.

13 Mr. Clerk, can you please
14 call forward the next panel to
15 testify on Bill No. 240612.

16 THE CLERK: First up is
17 Philip Green, Senior Manager,
18 Business Advocacy from the
19 Department of Commerce.

20 (Witness approached Witness
21 table.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
23 morning.

24 MR. GREEN: Hello. Good
25 morning. Philip Green, Department

1 of Commerce. I'm here to testify
2 regarding Bill No. 240612 for
3 re-authorizing the Fishtown
4 Kensington Area Business
5 Improvement District for a second
6 five-year term. BIDs are an
7 important component of fostering
8 vibrant and well-managed
9 neighborhood commercial corridors
10 that provide essential goods and
11 services to area residents and
12 contribute dining and entertainment
13 destinations for Philadelphians and
14 visitors alike.

15 It's also helped create
16 clean and safe environments where
17 entrepreneurs want to invest their
18 time, talent and treasure and where
19 employees prefer to spend their
20 work days. The Department of
21 Commerce supports Business
22 Improvement Districts because
23 they're a way for business and
24 property owners to join together
25 and fund staff, services and high

1 priority projects for their areas.

2 Passing Bill No. 240612

3 will continue the BID's ability to
4 levy fees on commercial properties
5 within the District. These fees
6 fund full-time staff whose job it
7 is to assist mom-and-pop businesses
8 and attract new ones. These fees
9 fund crucial services like sidewalk
10 cleaning and graffiti removal along
11 Front Street, Frankford Avenue and
12 Girard Avenue. The fees also fund
13 special projects like the colorful
14 plaza installed at Front and Cecil
15 B. Moore.

16 When commercial property
17 owners self-fund staff, services
18 and special projects, it allows the
19 Department of Commerce to apply its
20 limited resources toward areas
21 experiencing greater legacies of
22 historic disinvestment. Through
23 its Targeted Corridor Management
24 Program, its Taking Care of
25 Business Clean Corridors program

1 and its Corridor Enhancement
2 grants, the Department of Commerce
3 mostly funds Community Development
4 Corporations to perform BID-like
5 services.

6 Simply put, because BIDs
7 like the Fishtown Kensington Area
8 BID largely sustain themselves, the
9 Department of Commerce is able to
10 sustain programs in areas with
11 steeper hills to climb. On behalf
12 of the Department of Commerce, I
13 encourage your support for Bill No.
14 240612 to continue the
15 authorization of the Fishtown
16 Kensington Area BID through
17 December 31, 2029. This will allow
18 the BID to self-fund the cleaning,
19 security and beautification
20 services that residents, businesses
21 and visitors have come to expect.
22 I'm happy to take any questions at
23 this time.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
25 you very much.

1 Any questions from the
2 members of the panel?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No?
5 Okay.

6 MR. GREEN: Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
8 you very much for your testimony.

9 Mr. Clerk, can you please
10 call forth the next witnesses to
11 testify.

12 THE CLERK: Next is Mark
13 Collazzo, Executive Director of the
14 Fishtown Kensington Area BID.

15 (Witness approached Witness
16 table.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
18 morning.

19 MR. COLLAZZO: Good
20 morning.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
22 state your name for the record and
23 proceed.

24 MR. COLLAZZO: Certainly.
25 Mark Collazzo, Executive Director

1 of the Fishtown Kensington Area
2 Business Improvement District.
3 Good morning, Madam Chair, members
4 of Council, guests today and
5 friends and neighbors. A community
6 is a group of people who agree to
7 grow together. As we conclude 2024
8 and excitedly plan for the future,
9 no better quote defines the spirit,
10 purpose and mission of the Fishtown
11 Kensington Area Business
12 Improvement District.

13 We've all come together to
14 preserve, grow and enhance our
15 commercial corridor and this union
16 has made our beloved hamlet the
17 envy of the region. Our
18 collaborative spirit and determined
19 action has led to unprecedented
20 growth in both residential and
21 commercial density as well as the
22 increase of dynamic dining,
23 hospitality, retail, professional
24 and entertainment enterprises
25 throughout our entire district.

1 It isn't just the daily
2 services that we provide such as
3 our award-winning cleaning crew in
4 blue from Ready, Willing and Able,
5 daytime cleaning initiative with
6 our Fishtown Community Corp. and
7 our cherished safety patrols from
8 our Fishtown ambassadors that make
9 the Fishtown District stand above
10 all others.

11 It is the privilege of
12 working with our stakeholders, many
13 of whom are here today, to protect
14 and vitalize their time, talent and
15 treasure that they infused into our
16 neighborhood. By working together,
17 the Fishtown Kensington Area BID
18 has secured over 1.8 million in
19 grant and CDC tax credit funding to
20 plan and develop several capital
21 development projects such as our
22 Pedestrian Plaza at Front and Cecil
23 B. Moore Avenue from a local share
24 account award of \$88,500, our
25 upcoming renovations improvements

1 to Front Street and Girard Avenue,
2 a Keystone Community Grant award of
3 72,500 and gateway activations for
4 Frankford and Lehigh Avenues from a
5 pending local share account grant
6 of \$100,000, respectively.

7 These public space
8 amplifications along with our
9 Congressional Community Project
10 Funding award of \$750,000 for our
11 Frankford Avenue Connector Project
12 to connect our neighborhood to the
13 Delaware River Trail will provide
14 design and accessibility to and
15 from our special Fishtown and
16 Kensington communities.

17 The Fishtown District
18 believes in the importance of
19 accessibility and connectivity to
20 and from our community.
21 Accordingly, we have begun initial
22 planning of the second installment
23 of our vision plan with ISA
24 Architects as well as commencing a
25 first of its kind transformational

1 connector project with our friends
2 and neighbors in the Northern
3 Liberties Business Improvement
4 District.

5 Thousands travel to our
6 thriving thoroughfare each day to
7 eat, shop, work and play. And our
8 work together continues to ensure
9 the long-term success, liveliness,
10 energy and spirit of our
11 one-of-a-kind locale for decades to
12 come. The Fishtown District takes
13 pride in providing effective,
14 enhanced cleanliness and safety
15 measures to ensure that our
16 commercial corridor follows the
17 motto, A clean place is a safe
18 place.

19 We are proud recipients of
20 the City of Philadelphia's Taking
21 Care of Business Clean Corridors
22 Program since our inception, and
23 our TCB litter index evaluation
24 reports repeatedly provide
25 excellent scores of litter to no

1 litter. In fact, Ready, Willing
2 and Able have collected and removed
3 over 34,737 bags of trash since our
4 inception. In addition, the
5 Fishtown District has installed and
6 serviced 34 new fish-head trash
7 cans throughout our corridor.

8 Finally, our safety
9 measures such as our Fishtown
10 Ambassador Safety Team and
11 surveillance camera placement at 12
12 separate intersection locations
13 increased feelings of physical and
14 emotional safety for all who live,
15 visit and work in the Fishtown
16 District.

17 It has not always been an
18 easy road. The BID began its work
19 with little assessment revenue in
20 January of 2020. Then the world
21 shut down due to the global
22 pandemic. We knew that the most
23 important thing we could do was
24 devote all of our energies to
25 ensuring the survival of our

1 corridor enterprises through this
2 perilous period. The executive
3 staff worked tirelessly to bring
4 federal, Commonwealth and municipal
5 resources to our stakeholders to
6 protect their investment in our
7 community.

8 The Department of Commerce
9 stated that 10 percent of all
10 emergency funding provided by the
11 city of Philadelphia actually went
12 to the businesses within the
13 Fishtown Kensington communities.
14 Together we survived this crisis,
15 united, determined and focused on
16 the future.

17 Since January of 2020, our
18 Business Improvement District has
19 seen unparalleled broadening with
20 continued mixed-use development,
21 which is expected to bring over
22 10,000 units over the next two
23 years, as well as the opening of
24 well over 50 new businesses. With
25 our assistance, over 35 business

1 property owners have successfully
2 improved their storefronts.

3 All these comprehensive
4 measures have led the Philadelphia
5 Inquirer to call the Fishtown
6 District the hottest neighborhood
7 in the city. As you listen and
8 reflect through this testimony, I
9 hope that you share our pride and
10 all that we have accomplished to
11 date and share our sentiments that
12 the future of the Fishtown
13 Kensington Area Business
14 Improvement District is as bright
15 as ever.

16 Pearl S. Buck said, Growth
17 itself contains the germ of
18 happiness. And our caring
19 compassionate work together has
20 brought about a magnet of optimism
21 that draws many to us. Thank you
22 all for your time, and I provided
23 letters of support to not totally
24 glut up your time today, but we do
25 appreciate your time and I'm

1 available for any questions.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
3 you so much for your very thorough
4 testimony.

5 MR. COLLAZZO: Thank you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any
7 questions from the panel?

8 Councilmember Squilla.

9 MR. COLLAZZO: Madam Chair,
10 that was actually short for me as
11 Councilman Squilla will attest.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
13 you, Mark. Thank you for your
14 testimony and your team. Obviously
15 there's been a lot of challenges as
16 you mentioned in your testimony.
17 And as we go through those
18 challenges and you work not only
19 with the businesses, because being
20 a BID is overseeing the business
21 corridor, but it also incorporates
22 the community, right. So you have
23 to weigh both options when you're
24 doing that and the challenges that
25 we feel.

1 And I want to thank you and
2 your team for always being there
3 for when we reach out when we get
4 challenges and requests from us, to
5 be able to then forward them to you
6 and vice versa when you reach out
7 to us, we work with you. But there
8 has been some things with your
9 ambassador program that I thought
10 was very, very helpful, at least
11 being able to keep data on your
12 issues that you are reaching for
13 the businesses and what you're
14 seeing as the real problems in that
15 area, what you need to address.

16 And a lot of times we don't
17 get that -- like people say, oh, we
18 know what the problems are. But
19 the way you track your issues and
20 your concerns, how you address
21 those issues and concerns and
22 knowing that you're not going to
23 make everybody happy all the time
24 is part of it, but I appreciate the
25 efforts that you put in and even

1 sort of the out-of-the-box thinking
2 for looking at new ways to create
3 opportunities for business and
4 increasing foot traffic and other
5 things is important. And we still
6 have a lot of work to do, right.

7 There are still some
8 challenges. We still get some
9 concerns from some of the local
10 businesses on how we can improve
11 that. But looking forward to
12 working with you to continue down
13 that path of making those
14 improvements and making it better
15 for all the small businesses there
16 in the Kensington Fishtown BID. So
17 thank you.

18 MR. COLLAZZO: Thank you,
19 Councilmember Squilla. And I want
20 to thank also Councilmember Lozada
21 and Councilmember Young, our other
22 District Councilpeople. None of
23 this happens in a vacuum. We're
24 not always perfect. And what we
25 try to do is always try to learn

1 and just try to be better, but
2 we're very lucky to have very
3 engaged Councilmembers who really
4 want to work with us to try to
5 solve problems. So thank you and
6 thank you all today.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And
8 one other point. It is very
9 difficult sometimes when you have a
10 district that spans three different
11 Councilmembers, right. So
12 sometimes that makes it very
13 challenging and we're able to work
14 through that also. So a lot of
15 times it's, oh, that's not my
16 district, you know. We have to
17 talk to Councilmember Young or
18 Councilmember Lozada, so you guys
19 have done a pretty good job of
20 trying to bridge that also. So
21 thank you.

22 MR. COLLAZZO: Thank you
23 all again. Thank you, Madam Chair.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
25 you. Thank you for your testimony.

1 Mr. Clerk, can we please
2 call forward the next witness to
3 testify on this matter.

4 THE CLERK: Amanda Aratin.
5 (Witness approached Witness
6 table.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
8 morning.

9 MS. ARATIN: Good morning.
10 My married name is Aratin so if you
11 see my last name Bosard, I
12 apologize for the confusion.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Just
14 get to the microphone. Please have
15 a seat.

16 MS. ARATIN: Aratin is my
17 married name. I'm using it for
18 this because I'm representing the
19 owners of a property at 111 East
20 Girard Avenue who are in their 80s
21 and cannot be here, but they've
22 asked me to represent them.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's
24 fine. Please have a seat.

25 MS. ARATIN: Mm-hmm.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
2 you.

3 MS. ARATIN: Thank you. My
4 goal here today is to say things
5 worthy of your attention and I
6 appreciate it.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
8 start out with your name. I know
9 you said it several times, but just
10 for the record your name and then
11 begin your testimony.

12 MS. ARATIN: Amanda Aratin,
13 and I'm here on behalf of Bill
14 240612.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very
16 good.

17 MS. ARATIN: I represent
18 opposition to the bill. The first
19 question that I seek clarity on
20 that is related to my opposition on
21 behalf of not just those I
22 represent but those who have handed
23 me letters of opposition in hopes
24 that I would be able to attend this
25 meeting today.

1 The first question is when
2 does the 45-day opposition period
3 begin and end? So after reading
4 the BID plan that we received on
5 September 12th, it is unclear to
6 many of us what the limits of the
7 beginning and the deadline end for
8 the 45-day submission for letters
9 of opposition are. And that point
10 is essential to this process
11 working the way it's supposed to
12 work and represent everybody
13 involved in the area. I read it
14 many times and I come up with two
15 separate dates for when the
16 deadline is, so we definitely need
17 clarification on that.

18 The other question I wanted
19 to ask is that in light of the fact
20 that 17 percent of Philadelphia are
21 not English-speaking as a first
22 language and in consideration of
23 our BID area being so large and
24 expansive, including two Council
25 Districts and possibly greater than

1 17 percent property ownership of
2 non-English-speaking property
3 owners as a first language, was a
4 notice given prior to the BID plan
5 presentation allowing property
6 owners to choose which language
7 they would like to receive this BID
8 plan presentation?

9 I've had personal
10 experience with individuals that
11 are non-English-speaking as a first
12 language and I was not able to
13 translate using Google Translate
14 and make a point to stress the
15 importance of them being able to
16 read this through and make a
17 decision on their own best interest
18 clearly to them at all, and they
19 deserve that.

20 I believe it's their right
21 to have that. And a notice would
22 have to go out before the plan
23 allowing them to choose within a
24 reasonable amount of time what
25 language they need this plan

1 delivered to them. And it was
2 really difficult and painful for me
3 to see how many people there were
4 that have no idea based on language
5 barriers. I felt like I was
6 apologizing all the time for not
7 speaking their language, you know.
8 That's all I could say.

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: How
10 many people? What was the number?

11 MS. ARATIN: My number
12 personally interacting directly was
13 three, but they said more, the son
14 did. One of the sons called me and
15 said, I have other people that I
16 think is affected by this.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All
18 right. So you know of three?

19 MS. ARATIN: I know of
20 three that I couldn't communicate
21 with in English.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I will
23 ask you to give me their
24 information so we could reach out
25 to them.

1 MS. ARATIN: All right, but
2 that's not all of them. I would
3 assume if 17 percent is the average
4 for our whole city, 3 is not going
5 to be the total of them in an area
6 of 1100 properties.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Just
8 the ones you know of. I'm not
9 asking you to go find everybody.
10 Just the ones you know of just send
11 them so we can make sure we reach
12 out to them.

13 MS. ARATIN: Okay.
14 Absolutely. Thirdly, the issue
15 that I need clarification on, that
16 I believe I'm not the only one that
17 needs clarification on, is the
18 total list of addresses on the BID
19 plan. One situation that is posing
20 a misunderstanding on our end and
21 my end is that there's a property
22 on there that is zoned commercial
23 CMX 2.5. But because the owner
24 occupies it, they've already been
25 exempt from the assessment for the

1 last five years, but their address
2 is on the list. So we need
3 clarification whether or not their
4 opposition letter would be counted
5 because --

6 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: What
7 is the address?

8 MS. ARATIN: Hold on. I
9 think it's 1812 Frankford Avenue.
10 So it is owned commercial but it is
11 exempt from the assessment. So
12 does being exempt from the
13 assessment mean that you don't get
14 to oppose the assessment? Do you
15 give up your right to --

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Well,
17 if you're not being assessed, it
18 doesn't affect you.

19 MS. ARATIN: True. But
20 then that address being on the list
21 becomes part of the total list of
22 addresses that opposition has to
23 meet the one-third requirement.
24 It's disproportionately affecting
25 the businesses and the property

1 owners who don't want the BID. So
2 it's stacking the cards against us
3 by giving people that don't have a
4 vote a place in the list where
5 we're comparing ourselves against
6 the totality of a third.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I will
8 look up 1812 Frankford and I'm
9 going to ask you to email me. You
10 could write this down. Mark,
11 Mark.squilla --

12 MS. ARATIN: May I follow
13 up with you on that after this?

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes,
15 because we want to be able to get
16 you the answers that you -- we're
17 not going to be able to answer all
18 these questions. So we'll be able
19 to get you the answers that you
20 need through email and you'll have
21 them all.

22 MS. ARATIN: All right.
23 And so, another clarification with
24 regard to that list that we are
25 under a one-third obligation to

1 represent a minimum of a third in
2 order for opposition to be
3 effective in its goal. The other
4 one is though some of the addresses
5 on there are residentially zoned
6 owner-occupied, which we know are
7 exempt from the BID, but again
8 their addresses are on the list so
9 they're creating an aggregate
10 number that's bigger, thereby
11 making our job of getting one-third
12 together more complex and difficult
13 for us to manage because the total
14 number is larger than the amount of
15 people that have a say in this BID.

16 So that list is just -- it
17 needs so much vetting and combing
18 through by residents in order to
19 determine where our lines are drawn
20 for our deadlines and for our
21 accountability of how many letters
22 we need. And I think that that is
23 not an acceptable plan to finalize.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We
25 could get you those answers. Just

1 the 45 days starts after the
2 hearing today, so this is the start
3 of the process.

4 MS. ARATIN: I see.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All
6 right. So --

7 MS. ARATIN: I appreciate
8 that. I did not understand that
9 reading this.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.
11 All right. And then you have a
12 language question that if people
13 get to choose what language they
14 receive the mailer in?

15 MS. ARATIN: Yes.

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All
17 right. I do not know that answer.
18 I'll have to get back to you on
19 that. And as far as 1812 Frankford
20 Avenue about being commercial but
21 not being assessed, you want to
22 know if they're included in the
23 total number of people when you
24 have to have the 33 percent --

25 MS. ARATIN: Right. If

1 you're not being assessed but you
2 are commercial, are you still
3 counted in the aggregate total
4 properties and does your vote still
5 count?

6 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I
7 would say no, but I'll get you a
8 clear answer on that.

9 MS. ARATIN: That was two
10 questions though. Which one are
11 you saying no to?

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: That
13 you are not counted in the total
14 number and you wouldn't have a
15 vote.

16 MS. ARATIN: Okay. So you
17 would have to come off the list
18 then, because that list has got
19 more than a few of those type of
20 addresses?

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We'll
22 be able to -- I'm going to ask you
23 to email me that list of questions
24 and I'll get you an answer for all
25 of them just to be accurate so

1 you're getting the right
2 information. Hold on one second.
3 I guess we could bring Philip.

4 Philip, can you come up
5 real quick?

6 (Witness approached Witness
7 table.)

8 MR. GREEN: I would like to
9 start out by saying that I am not a
10 lawyer. But I have read the
11 Community Economic Improvement Act
12 and there are certain areas where
13 it doesn't specify these finer
14 questions. However, I would say
15 that since they are on the list of
16 properties, their objection would
17 count because they are included
18 even though they're exempt right
19 now because they may be an owner-
20 occupied house or there may be a
21 nonprofit operating on that
22 property. That property may be
23 exempt from assessment now.

24 In the future let's say
25 that that property went into a

1 for-profit use. Let's say that a
2 church later became something
3 for-profit, right. Throughout the
4 term of their reauthorization
5 period, they could become
6 accessible depending on --

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: If
8 they change their use. But I think
9 the question is if you're on that
10 list now and you are not being
11 assessed and even though you're on
12 that list, can you still vote in
13 opposition to it and does that
14 number count as the total when
15 you're trying to get to your
16 one-third opposition?

17 MR. GREEN: In my opinion,
18 in my non-lawyer opinion, yes,
19 because in the future their
20 property could be assessed. And
21 so, in my view they would have a
22 right to object to that.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: But if
24 you're not being assessed, you do
25 not have a vote on the BID

1 assessment even though your address
2 is part of the total because you're
3 not going to -- if everybody who's
4 not assessed goes and says, we
5 don't want it, then the people who
6 do want it who are part of the BID,
7 it would sort of change the actual
8 number to get to one-third.

9 MR. GREEN: Sorry if I'm
10 not understanding this correctly.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: By
12 state law everybody who's in the
13 geographic area has to be notified.

14 MR. GREEN: Yes.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All
16 the addresses have to be notified.

17 MR. GREEN: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: But
19 not everybody is assessed.

20 MR. GREEN: Yeah. So if
21 it's an owner-occupied house,
22 right --

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
24 Correct.

25 MR. GREEN: -- it's still

1 within the boundaries of the
2 Business Improvement District
3 because that house could be sold
4 and then knocked down and turned
5 into a mixed-use development,
6 right.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.

8 MR. GREEN: So over the
9 course of the authorization period,
10 the use of that property could
11 change from being not assessed to
12 being assessed.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I
14 know. But I think the question was
15 initially that even though you're
16 being notified, even residential
17 people are being notified, if you
18 look at the addresses, right,
19 they're in there. But they're not
20 being assessed. So when we
21 calculate the one-third
22 opposition --

23 MR. GREEN: Yeah.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: --
25 right, the people who aren't

1 assessed when they actually get the
2 list of all the assessment, that's
3 what they go by when they say
4 one-third of those people who are
5 assessed have to oppose it in order
6 for the BID to fail.

7 MR. GREEN: Yeah, I would
8 say it's one-third of the total
9 number of properties within the
10 list that are within the bill.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: See, I
12 don't think he's right. I don't
13 believe that is correct. We'll get
14 you the correct answer on that.

15 MS. ARATIN: Can I get it
16 in like a 5th grade reading level
17 in multiple languages?

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes,
19 we'll just say -- we'll clarify
20 that for you. When you email us,
21 we'll give you that answer.

22 MS. ARATIN: Because I
23 don't even know who has the
24 authority right now. Like, I
25 thought it was him. You brought

1 him up.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Well,
3 I brought him up. But I mean, we
4 do these all the time. And the
5 clerk actually gets the opposition.

6 MS. ARATIN: Right, that's
7 how I understood it. I called the
8 clerk and --

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: The
10 clerk tallies those opposition
11 within the 45 days and then they
12 let us know how many oppositions
13 there are to that case. But if you
14 allow all these people who are
15 unassessed to vote and they're not
16 paying it, it's really not the
17 people who are paying the
18 assessment that has the bigger
19 voice.

20 MS. ARATIN: Well, we're
21 giving up all of our responsibility
22 to ourselves to people that have no
23 skin in the game basically by
24 allowing them to vote is what's
25 happening. And then on top of

1 that, the language of the plan is
2 constantly reminding people that
3 are owner-occupied that you're not
4 subject to the assessment which
5 makes them feel apathetic to it at
6 all even though they have a huge
7 relationship to our opposition by
8 being a part of that aggregate need
9 of a third. So they feel as though
10 they're exempted. Therefore,
11 they've given up their vote and
12 they don't participate. But
13 realistically, the act of community
14 that's required in order to get
15 that kind of cohesive opposition,
16 it begs them to participate.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Well,
18 we want people to participate in
19 the process, right. That's why we
20 notify everybody. And even people
21 who are -- by state law, you have
22 to notify everybody, but not
23 everybody is assessed.

24 MS. ARATIN: Mm-hmm.

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Right.

1 And so, I see where that can cause
2 a confusion.

3 Hold on. Kate, you --

4 MS. ANDERSON: (Inaudible).

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good.

6 Come on up.

7 (Witness approached Witness
8 table.)

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Just
10 state your name for the record.

11 MS. ANDERSON: Kay
12 Anderson, Director of Operations
13 for the Fishtown Kensington BID. I
14 am reading from the PA state law.
15 This is Chapter 54, Business
16 Improvement Districts in Part 5
17 from Title 53. Part 5 is titled
18 Public Improvements Utilities and
19 Services.

20 Again, moving down to
21 Chapter 54 talking about Business
22 Improvement Districts, Powers of
23 the Governing Body: To establish
24 within the municipal corporation an
25 area designated as a Business

1 Improvement District, which
2 district or districts may be
3 designated by all or part of the
4 community which is zoned
5 commercial, which is used for
6 general commercial purposes.

7 No. 2, to appropriate and
8 expand those amounts -- let me just
9 skip down, sorry. Notice of the
10 hearing shall be advertised at
11 least 10 days prior to in newspaper
12 circulating the municipal
13 corporation. The ordinance shall
14 specify improvements. The
15 ordinance shall not become
16 effective if before the expiration
17 of 20 days after its enactment.
18 Property owners of the proposed
19 district whose property valuation
20 as assessed for taxable purposes
21 amounts to more than 50 percent of
22 the total property valuation of the
23 district's sign and file in the
24 Court of the Prothonotary, of the
25 Court of Common Pleas written

1 protest against the ordinance.

2 To appropriate and expand
3 in accordance with the specific
4 provisions of the enabling
5 ordinance, such amounts must be
6 required to acquire by purchase or
7 lease, real or personal property,
8 to effectuate the purposes of the
9 improvement district, including
10 sidewalks, retaining walls, et
11 cetera, et cetera. So by my
12 reading of this it does
13 specifically say assessed.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: People
15 who are assessed are the ones who
16 get to vote.

17 MS. ANDERSON: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We
19 will clarify that and give that to
20 you in plain language. And sorry
21 for creating more confusion, but we
22 will definitely give you those
23 answers and I think you'll
24 understand that very clearly once
25 you get that. But the 45 days of

1 opposition and people submitting
2 their oppositions all starts after
3 the hearing today.

4 MS. ARATIN: And I have one
5 final point of clarification.

6 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
7 you, Kate.

8 MS. ARATIN: Thank you.
9 The opportunity to influence the
10 plan's scope and area and included
11 properties, where is that in the
12 process for the property owners
13 that are affected by the BID? I
14 know one property owner on Girard
15 Avenue who was successfully able to
16 since the last five-year BID
17 operational period get his property
18 off of this BID list and a lot of
19 properties at the far end of Girard
20 Avenue.

21 And I'm wondering what that
22 process was, why it was effective
23 and how can other people and
24 property owners within the BID
25 utilize that opportunity for their

1 own area because they know their
2 area better and whether or not it
3 really falls into the community
4 standard of what kind of business
5 support is being provided and
6 whether or not it's actually being
7 provided down in the far reaches of
8 such an expansive BID area. The
9 size and scope of the BID, it's not
10 ringing well with many of us.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Every
12 five years when the BID is renewed
13 is when the boundaries are redrawn.
14 You could always work with the BID
15 itself and speak to them. If
16 you're on the outskirts of the BID,
17 you could maybe expand it to make
18 it bigger or shrink it, but it has
19 to be continuous so you can't take
20 the middle out and break it into
21 two separates.

22 So if you want to add
23 additional, you only could do that
24 during the renewal process or if
25 you want to make it shorter, you

1 only could do that during the
2 renewal process.

3 MS. ARATIN: And the
4 renewal process starting today?

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: No,
6 the next five years. So five years
7 from now.

8 MS. ARATIN: So we're on
9 the second five years. When did
10 our renewal process start for this
11 one? Was it the July introduction?

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
13 Today -- when the notices went out
14 30 days ago is when it started.

15 MS. ARATIN: Is it over?
16 Are we still allowed to influence
17 the boundaries of the BID?

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: No.

19 MS. ARATIN: When did it
20 end?

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: What's
22 that?

23 MS. ARATIN: When did it
24 end?

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: When

1 this was introduced, that's when it
2 started. These boundaries are the
3 boundaries that we're having the
4 hearing on today. So five years
5 from now you can work with --
6 change the boundaries and work with
7 the BID to change the boundaries or
8 work with our office or whoever
9 district you're in to change those
10 boundaries.

11 MS. ARATIN: 1100 property
12 owners is a lot of people that are
13 unaware of how long of a time they
14 have to wait to have an influence
15 over the boundaries of this BID.

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: They
17 don't know they're in the BID?

18 MS. ARATIN: Not all of
19 them.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Oh,
21 they have to do a better job of
22 notifying them if they don't know
23 they're in the BID.

24 MS. ARATIN: Yeah. I think
25 we have a lot of old residents and

1 old property owners. And I also
2 think we're probably going to run
3 into a situation where some of the
4 names on the owners of the property
5 has changed since the BID documents
6 went out. They might accidentally
7 get discarded as being able to
8 oppose the BID because their name
9 doesn't match OPA. But, in fact,
10 they are the owners of the
11 property.

12 We have people dying
13 constantly within this BID area. I
14 mean, the turnover rate I've never
15 seen anything like it. And --

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: But
17 also, they're being assessed. They
18 don't know they're being assessed?

19 MS. ARATIN: You know, it
20 takes a lot of support to keep
21 octogenarians well-informed in
22 their community and especially
23 legislatively. I mean, Trump is
24 sucking all the oxygen out of the
25 room for their seven seconds of

1 attention on a daily basis.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Who?

3 MS. ARATIN: I'm just

4 saying media in general. It's an

5 election year. This isn't a good

6 time to be trying to add more

7 information to the life of an

8 80-year-old.

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.

10 All right. Thank you. Thank you

11 for your questions. And we'll get

12 the answers to you in writing. If

13 you want to email us the specific

14 questions, I wrote some down, but

15 email us and we'll get them to you

16 in writing.

17 MS. ARATIN: All right.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All

19 right. Thank you.

20 MS. ARATIN: Thank you all

21 for your time and attention. I

22 appreciate it.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank

24 you for your testimony.

25 And can we have the Clerk

1 call forward anyone else who's here
2 to testify?

3 THE CLERK: There's no one
4 else on my list.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
6 Is there anyone here for public
7 comment that would like to speak?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
10 Can we have the first two folks who
11 would like to testify come forward?
12 We are going to ask that you limit
13 your testimony to two minutes.

14 (Witnesses approached
15 Witness table.)

16 MR. ROOT: Good morning.
17 My name is Greg Root and I --

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
19 morning. Please state your name
20 again for the record and begin.

21 MR. ROOT: How are you. My
22 name is Gregory Root and I am a
23 proud business owner of at least
24 five businesses in the Fishtown
25 Kensington BID. And I'm here to

1 obviously be in full support of the
2 BID's reauthorization. The BID's
3 efforts and actions have massively
4 improved not only the corridor of
5 the BID but has also improved and
6 will also improve the community as
7 a whole.

8 It is a cleaner and safer
9 neighborhood now and continues to
10 be than it was in 2010 when I began
11 to work in the neighborhood. These
12 improvements include cleaning and
13 beautifying our neighborhood
14 through Ready, Willing and Able,
15 not only our corridor but the
16 streets beyond.

17 Safety of the corridor
18 through the Fishtown Ambassador
19 Team, this includes protection of
20 our -- I own restaurants. It's
21 protection of our restaurant staff
22 at the end of the night and the
23 overall safety of the community.

24 Protection of the
25 neighborhoods and business best

1 interests via the neighbors and
2 business owners community and also
3 continued development and
4 assistance for such. If one of my
5 restaurants needs assistance for
6 paperwork to improve streets,
7 parking, et cetera, Mark K. and his
8 team are quick resources for our
9 assistance to improve wanting to do
10 business in the neighborhood.

11 Fishtown is what it is
12 today because of the wonderful
13 community, business owners,
14 residents, staff and visitors but
15 also because of the BID's valiant
16 efforts. It is a neighborhood
17 where business owners like myself
18 will want to continue to invest
19 their time and money. The future
20 of Fishtown is very bright. And
21 again, I proudly support the BID's
22 reauthorization. Thank you very
23 much for your time.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
25 you for your testimony.

1 And can we have you state
2 your name for the record and please
3 proceed.

4 MR. CHILES: Yes. Hi. My
5 name is David Chiles, C-h-i-l-e-s.
6 I saw you all yesterday when you
7 were recognizing domestic violence
8 agencies. You know now that I only
9 own one blazer. It's embarrassing
10 for me but I'm going to push
11 through.

12 I'm the Executive Director
13 of Lutheran Settlement House. We
14 are a nonprofit on Frankford Avenue
15 founded in 1902 serving survivors
16 of domestic violence, families
17 experiencing homelessness, older
18 adults and people who are food
19 insecure. As a nonprofit, we do
20 not pay to be a member of the
21 Fishtown Kensington Business
22 Improvement District. But even so,
23 their work has had particularly
24 positive impact on Lutheran
25 Settlement House and the people

1 that we serve.

2 The BID's commitment to
3 cleaning has been incredible. LSH
4 has certainly experienced the
5 challenge of fighting trash on our
6 own property so I know the heavy
7 lift that it is to do this in a
8 full corridor. I'm grateful for
9 these efforts which keep a safe,
10 inviting and dignified environment
11 for our clients as they come for
12 services. And I'm grateful that
13 Mark and the BID staff, who I know
14 have personally picked up trash to
15 help us and who are quick to
16 contact 311 and graffiti removal
17 when there have been issues on our
18 property.

19 I also want to highlight
20 the Fishtown ambassadors. We had
21 concerns about the Fishtown
22 ambassadors when they started. We
23 worked with many unhoused people
24 and people in crisis and we were
25 concerned about how they would be

1 treated and we worried that
2 Fishtown would be less welcoming to
3 the people that we serve.

4 I'm grateful that these
5 concerns have proven unfounded.
6 The BID has actually gone to
7 admirable lengths to bring
8 resources supporting unhoused
9 people into the community, even
10 when there have been individuals
11 who have caused problems for the
12 business community.

13 The BID is first looked for
14 solutions, rooted in compassion and
15 finding resources to help people as
16 an organization that performs
17 de-escalation on a regular basis.
18 We've seen the ambassadors in
19 action and we appreciate their
20 skill and sensitivity. As the
21 neighborhood has changed, we have
22 worked -- we have wondered if our
23 presence on the corridor and in the
24 heart of the business community and
25 the presence of our clients, we

1 wondered if they would continue to
2 be embraced.

3 We've been grateful that
4 the BID has been responsive, eager
5 to help, open to talking through
6 issues. The BID has helped create
7 relationships between LSH and the
8 business community, increasing our
9 donations and volunteers while also
10 helping businesses understand what
11 we do.

12 As a result, we have
13 received many referrals from local
14 businesses, for our domestic
15 violence counseling, for our food
16 pantry and for our center for older
17 adults. LSH has been grateful for
18 the ways the BID has helped us
19 serve our community and help the
20 business community to support LSH.

21 I think thriving
22 communities need strong business
23 businesses and strong social
24 services and we're grateful that
25 the BID has gone out of their way

1 to include us as a valuable part of
2 the community. Our hope is to
3 continue to collaborate with the
4 BID in the years to come. Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
7 you.

8 Chair recognizes
9 Councilmember Squilla.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
11 you. I also want to thank you for
12 the dunk tank at the event that
13 Luther Settlement had. The water
14 was cold though.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You got
16 dunked? Mark got dunked.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes.
18 Thank you for your testimony.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any
20 photos? Love to see that. Thank
21 you for your testimony.

22 Any other questions from
23 the -- okay. All right. Thank you
24 for being here, for your testimony.

25 Is there anyone else here

1 for public comment? Please step
2 forward. Two more.

3 (Witnesses approached
4 Witness table.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All
6 right. Please state your name for
7 the record and proceed with your
8 testimony.

9 MR. SERRANO: My name is
10 Robert Serrano. Last name is
11 S-e-r-r-a-n-o. Good morning,
12 Chairman and members of the
13 Committee. My name is Robert
14 Serrano. I'm speaking on Bill
15 240612 as an affected property
16 owner of the Fishtown BID. I'm a
17 public school teacher and I've
18 lived in the neighborhood for 40
19 years.

20 I would like to voice my
21 opposition to the BID plan as
22 presented with the hope that it can
23 be dissolved or improved. I want
24 to first point out that the BID has
25 not been the best neighbor. I live

1 on Frankford Avenue and the BID has
2 often closed the street in front of
3 my house for events. Sometimes we
4 get no notice.

5 One time I had scheduled a
6 delivery of a new stove for my
7 family. The BID changed the date
8 of a street closure and I was
9 unable to accept delivery. These
10 kind of inconveniences have piled
11 up over years. As long as I've
12 lived here, I've cleaned my own
13 sidewalk. The BID hires a team to
14 pick up trash, but they are not
15 responsive and we frequently have
16 overflowing trash cans.

17 We have a sanitation
18 department and we are a union city.
19 This work should be theirs.
20 Likewise, the BID hires a security
21 team but some of the neighbors find
22 this intimidating. Once again, we
23 have a police department and this
24 should be done by them.

25 We talk about affordable

1 housing, but the BID fees make
2 housing less affordable. The
3 residential properties do not
4 benefit from any of the BID
5 services either. Our businesses do
6 not all benefit either. Our
7 dentists and barbers do not benefit
8 from extra Friday night foot
9 traffic. None of these business
10 should be paying for this.

11 I respectfully ask that
12 further changes be made to the BID
13 plan, if not dissolved. I would
14 like to propose two modest changes
15 to this plan. First, 22 of the
16 properties listed in the plan are
17 owned by the government. Even
18 though they won't be paying, this
19 inflates a denominator used to
20 calculate the share of objectors.

21 These properties will
22 neither pay nor object and should
23 not be counted at all. I would
24 like to introduce that list to
25 Council, (inaudible) admit it, ask

1 Council to remove them from the
2 plan. And I have that right here.
3 Okay. I'd also like to propose
4 that the Chief Clerk keep the
5 objection letters confidential
6 under certain conditions to prevent
7 a chilling effect on public
8 involvement. I have amendment text
9 if Council would admit it. And
10 this is the proposed amendment
11 text.

12 In the event that the final
13 plan does not receive a sufficient
14 number of written objections to
15 disapprove the plan, any objection
16 letters received will be kept
17 confidential by the Chief Clerk
18 until January 1, 2030 or until the
19 dissolution of the BID, if any,
20 whichever comes earlier.

21 In the event that the final
22 plan is not approved, any written
23 objections will become public
24 record. Explanation: To avoid any
25 chilling effect arising from the

1 passage of the plan despite
2 objections, identity of the
3 objections will be kept
4 confidential for the duration of
5 the BID term. Should the BID not
6 be approved as a result of the
7 objections, the objections
8 necessarily become part of the
9 public record. And again, I would
10 love to submit this and this, these
11 two items.

12 One last thing, I just want
13 to say -- it says here in the
14 package you sent us that there's
15 going to be a final plan, so that
16 was not clear. It didn't state
17 whether or not. Then it says, a
18 copy of a final plan and notice of
19 the public hearing on the plan will
20 be mailed to all property owners
21 within the proposed district.

22 I, myself, own a property
23 but it's owner-occupied. I feel
24 like I should have a vote because
25 you're making decisions on my

1 property. Like, if I decide I want
2 to turn it into a rental tomorrow,
3 I have to pay that money. If I
4 want to open up a business, I have
5 to pay that money. So I should
6 have a seat at the table and should
7 be able to have a vote on it.

8 As I understood it, that's
9 what I thought I read here in this
10 paper that you sent out to us. It
11 includes -- if you look at your
12 passage, it says affected
13 properties within the district will
14 have 45 days from the date of the
15 last hearing on the final plan to
16 file objections to and disapprove
17 the final plan for the proposed
18 continuation of the district. Such
19 objections must be in writing.

20 Now, you've made this
21 really hard on the people. It's
22 easy for them because if you don't
23 vote, it's a yes vote for them.
24 I've never seen anything like that.
25 It's very undemocratic. They

1 should have -- the onus should be
2 on them to get people to say, hey,
3 we want this BID, it's such a great
4 thing. Why don't you work it that
5 way where they have to come out and
6 bring the people rather than have
7 something?

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: It's
9 the way the BIDs were started.
10 It's state law. We would have to
11 change the state law if we were
12 going to change the way it is, the
13 voting process takes place.

14 MR. SERRANO: Yeah. If
15 it's something you guys can do
16 here, Councilmembers --

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We
18 can't do it here, but the state can
19 change it.

20 MR. SERRANO: It's
21 undemocratic, I mean, the way it's
22 set up. And at least we should
23 have a vote. We should have a say
24 in our property and what we can do
25 with it because it does affect us.

1 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
4 state your name for the record and
5 proceed with your testimony, sir.

6 MR. PASTON: Scott Paston
7 and we own a property at 127 West
8 Girard. We're on the list. It's
9 own commercial. However, we've
10 owned it since 1989, I think. Our
11 taxes are completely paid up even
12 though you guys keep raising it
13 unreasonable. The commercial part
14 of it has never been occupied. We
15 store our own personal possessions
16 there.

17 I have bars on the window.
18 I have a security system. And
19 during Black Lives Matter, I
20 installed wooden panels and I never
21 took them off. I just painted
22 them. And whenever there's
23 graffiti which is quite frequent, I
24 take care of it. I called the City
25 once and they painted it the wrong

1 color so I had to do it again.

2 We're really close to the
3 El, which has a population that
4 some of your people spoke about, I
5 say homeless, but I guess it's
6 unhoused nowadays. And they come
7 under drug influences and they drop
8 stuff. They leave trash. I'm
9 constantly picking up trash because
10 we have had a couple of citations
11 for trash. It's not our trash. I
12 pick it up anyway because I'm not
13 going to -- I see people do it and
14 I'm not going to say a word to them
15 because they could retaliate. I
16 don't want to get involved in that.

17 Also, I shovel the snow. I
18 have to dig myself out at my own
19 house to get over and do that, and
20 I do it within a certain, I think
21 it's six hours after it's
22 officially ending of the snow. I
23 do all that every single time. I
24 have seen Willing, Able -- Willing,
25 Ready and Able guys every so often.

1 I see a truck but I have never seen
2 them do anything.

3 We're close to Frankford
4 Avenue where all the bars and
5 restaurants are, so there's always
6 a lot of trash all over the place,
7 not necessarily there but towards
8 where we own property and we have
9 to clean it up. Anyway, basically
10 I'm objecting to this additional
11 tax because this paper comes out
12 right after you re-assess the
13 properties and you raised
14 everybody, so now the percentage --
15 the percentage might be the same
16 but the dollar number out of the
17 pocket is higher. Nice trick for
18 statistics.

19 But in the meantime since
20 our commercial property is
21 unoccupied, we would like to be
22 exempted from the list. I'll
23 continue to take care of the trash
24 and the graffiti and the paint and
25 the snow and all that. I don't

1 really have a problem with that,
2 but I'm pointing out that I do it
3 because if you depend on the City
4 or somebody else to do it, they
5 won't necessarily do it. Usually
6 they don't and we don't want a
7 citation because that's just more
8 money out of our pocket. So we
9 object.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well,
11 thank you for your testimony.

12 I do want to state for the
13 record that Philadelphia City
14 Council has not enacted a tax
15 increase in recent memory. I want
16 to say probably back to AVI I think
17 was the last time --

18 MR. PASTON: Wait. Say
19 that again.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yeah,
21 you're talking about re-assessment
22 which is not Philadelphia City
23 Council. It is through the
24 Administration. It's not
25 Philadelphia --

1 MR. PASTON: Well, the City
2 of Philadelphia.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All
4 right. I'm sorry. But as a
5 legislative body, I just wanted to
6 make it clear it wasn't us.

7 MR. PASTON: No, I know
8 that. I'm just telling you that
9 goes into our reasons for
10 objecting.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I
12 understand. The assessments are
13 higher and an increased cost as
14 well to property owners, so I
15 understand that's the point that
16 you're making.

17 MR. PASTON: They doubled
18 it for no apparent reason. They
19 say the property has --

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Have
21 you filed an appeal?

22 MR. PASTON: Yes, and they
23 argue anyway. The definition of
24 the word improvement for the City
25 of Philadelphia is it improved in

1 the market, but we're not in the
2 market. If we were selling, okay,
3 I agree with that. We're just
4 paying our taxes.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

6 Understood. Thank you for your
7 testimony. I don't want to cut
8 anybody short but we are going to
9 lose our quorum shortly, so I want
10 to make sure that anyone else who
11 is here to testify has an
12 opportunity to do so.

13 (Hand raised.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
15 Please come forward.

16 (Witnesses approached
17 Witness table.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
19 morning.

20 MS. DIPIETRO: Hi. Good
21 morning.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Please
23 state your name for the record and
24 proceed with your testimony. We
25 are going to ask you to be brief so

1 that we can conduct the business of
2 the Committee.

3 MS. DIPIETRO: Perfect. My
4 name is Bianca DiPietro. I've been
5 a member of the BID since the
6 beginning. I've lived in Fishtown
7 for about 15 years. I've owned a
8 store on Frankford for 11, and 10
9 years ago we tried to do this
10 without the BID and it was just a
11 bunch of business owners getting
12 together trying to make positive
13 changes in the area, and it was
14 hard. We could not do this.

15 A lot of the retail owners
16 are women, they're mothers. They
17 work multiple jobs. Like, we do
18 not have time additionally and
19 funds to do this without the BID,
20 so we are very thankful to have
21 them. And as you've heard, there's
22 a lot of concerns over safety and
23 trash. And, yes, ideally this is
24 something the City should be doing,
25 but the area is growing

1 exponentially. Whether you support
2 it or not it's happening. And the
3 City just does not have the
4 resources to give us when it comes
5 to trash removal and safety.

6 I'm very thankful I don't
7 have to spend the first two hours
8 every day cleaning up trash out in
9 front of my store, and I'm very
10 happy that I have the security team
11 available to assist during
12 altercations. When in the past
13 when you call the police, they
14 don't show up. So it's been
15 invaluable to us as business owners
16 to have them as a resource, and
17 we're better off with the BID than
18 we are without. It's not going to
19 be ideal for everybody, not
20 everyone's going to like it. But I
21 think the overall benefits that it
22 provides to people is invaluable
23 like I said. So I hope you support
24 the reauthorization. Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank

1 you for your testimony.

2 And can we have you state
3 your name for the record and
4 proceed.

5 MS. GREEN: Yes. My name
6 is Janae Green. I am a local
7 business owner. Also, a resident
8 of Fishtown and I'm a committee
9 person within that district as
10 well. And I'm definitely for our
11 re-authorization. Being a business
12 owner in the area for over 11 years
13 now, we've been really hard struck
14 on our corner of Front and Girard
15 and being able to have this special
16 security to help us and to have the
17 City actually help with the BID of
18 making sure that our corner is
19 clear and helping us clean, and the
20 police district is not overwhelmed
21 with having so many other things to
22 deal with, it just makes it easier
23 having the BID.

24 The BID not only does that,
25 but if we want to have any special

1 events within the community, we're
2 able to contact Mark and Kay and
3 they get things done for us, also
4 with the help of you, Councilman
5 Squilla. We're right at the corner
6 of Front and Girard, so we
7 technically have two different
8 Councilmen and it's very difficult.

9 And having the BID be the
10 liaison to go to say, okay, we
11 would like to get this done, who do
12 we reach out to, it would be
13 impossible without them. I am also
14 now the Chairperson of the BID and
15 I feel that -- I'm not trying to
16 bring anything into it, but being a
17 minority and a woman and a mother,
18 having the BID to be something that
19 I can count on really helps to
20 alleviate any issues that I have
21 within my business.

22 So I really appreciate the
23 BID. I appreciate everything that
24 we have done together. Like
25 Bianca, we started the Fishtown Co.

1 before we had a BID just trying to
2 help each other out before even
3 having the City back us. So now
4 that we actually have this BID I
5 really, truly hope that you
6 consider reauthorizing it for us.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well,
8 thank you for being here and thank
9 you for your testimony.

10 And is there anyone else
11 here to testify or to offer public
12 comment?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
15 Seeing none, we'll now go into our
16 public meeting. This concludes the
17 public hearing. We will now go
18 into a public meeting shortly to
19 consider the action to be taken on
20 the bills before the Committee
21 today.

22 The Chair now recognizes
23 Councilmember Squilla for a motion
24 on an amendment to Bill No. 240499.

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank

1 you, Madam Chair.

2 I offer an amendment to
3 Bill No. 240499. A copy of the
4 amendment has been circulated to
5 all members of the Committee. I
6 move that the amendment to Bill No.
7 240499 be approved.

8 (Duly seconded.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
10 Chair notes for the record that
11 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore
12 Richardson seconds the motion. And
13 it's been moved and properly
14 seconded that Bill No. 240499 be
15 reported from this Committee with a
16 favorable recommendation and
17 further move that the rules of
18 Council be suspended to permit
19 first reading of this bill at the
20 next session of Council.

21 All those in favor of the
22 motion will signify by saying aye.

23 (Aye.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Anyone
25 opposed?

1 (No response.)

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
3 ayes have it and the motion
4 carries.

5 And the Chair now
6 recognizes Councilmember Squilla
7 for a motion on Bill No. 240612.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Madam
9 Chair, we want to do this motion,
10 as amended.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
12 The Chair now recognizes
13 Councilmember Squilla for a motion
14 on Bill No. 240499 as amended.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
16 you, Madam Chair.

17 I move that Bill No. 240499
18 as amended be reported from this
19 Committee with a favorable
20 recommendation and further move
21 that the rules of Council be
22 suspended and submit the first
23 reading of this bill at the next
24 session of Council.

25 (Duly seconded.)

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
2 Chair notes for the record that
3 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore
4 Richardson seconds the motion.

5 It's been moved and
6 properly seconded that Bill No.
7 240499 be reported from this
8 Committee with a favorable
9 recommendation and further move
10 that the rules of Council be
11 suspended to permit first reading
12 of this bill at the next session of
13 Council.

14 All those in favor of the
15 motion will signify by saying aye.

16 (Aye.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Anyone
18 opposed?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
21 ayes have it and the motion
22 carries.

23 The Chair recognizes
24 Councilmember Squilla for a motion
25 on Bill No. 240612.

1 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
2 you, Madam Chair.

3 I move that Bill No. 240612
4 be reported from this Committee
5 with a favorable recommendation and
6 further move that the rules of
7 Council be suspended as to the
8 first reading of this bill at the
9 next session of Council.

10 (Duly seconded.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
12 Chair notes for the record that
13 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore
14 Richardson seconds the motion. And
15 it has been moved and probably
16 seconded that Bill No. 240612 be
17 reported from this Committee with a
18 favorable recommendation and
19 further move that the rules of
20 Council be suspended to permit the
21 first reading of this bill at the
22 next session of Council.

23 All those in favor of the
24 motion will signify by saying aye.

25 (Aye.)

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Anyone

2 opposed?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The

5 ayes have it and the motion

6 carries.

7 The Chair recognizes

8 Councilmember Squilla for a motion

9 on Bill No. 240656.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank

11 you, Madam Chair.

12 I move that Bill No. 240656

13 be reported from this Committee

14 with a favorable recommendation and

15 further move that the rules of

16 Council be suspended as to permit

17 the first reading of this bill at

18 the next session of Council.

19 (Duly seconded.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The

21 Chair notes for the record that

22 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore

23 Richardson seconds the motion. And

24 it's been moved and properly

25 seconded that Bill No. 240656 be

1 reported from this Committee with a
2 favorable recommendation and
3 further move that the rules of
4 Council be suspended to permit the
5 first reading of this bill at the
6 next session of Council.

7 All those in favor of the
8 motion will signify by saying aye.

9 (Aye.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is
11 there anyone who's opposed?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
14 ayes have it and the motion
15 carries.

16 The Chair recognizes
17 Councilmember Squilla for a motion
18 on Bill No. 240661.

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
20 you, Madam Chair.

21 I move that Bill No. 240661
22 be reported from this Committee
23 with a favorable recommendation and
24 further move that the rules of
25 Council be suspended as to permit

1 the first reading of this bill at
2 the next session of Council.

3 (Duly seconded.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
5 Chair notes for the record that
6 Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore
7 Richardson seconds the motion.

8 It's been moved and
9 properly seconded that Bill No.
10 240661 be reported from this
11 Committee with a favorable
12 recommendation and further move
13 that the rules of Council be
14 suspended to permit the first
15 reading of this bill at the next
16 session of Council.

17 All those in favor of this
18 motion will signify by saying aye.

19 (Aye.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Those
21 opposed?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
24 ayes have it and the motion
25 carries.

1 And if there's no
2 additional remarks -- okay. The
3 ayes have it. The motion carries.

4 If there's no additional
5 remarks, this concludes the
6 business of the Committee on Rules
7 today. We thank you very much for
8 your attendance. Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
10 you.

11 (Committee on Rules
12 concluded at 11:40 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings
and evidence noted are contained fully and
accurately in the stenographic notes taken by
me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a
correct transcript of the same.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Taneha Carroll". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Taneha" and the last name "Carroll" clearly distinguishable.

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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