

Committee on Rules
3/27/2023

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON RULES

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Monday, March 27, 2023
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT :

COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL

BILLS: 220940, 230007, 230080, 230107,
230132

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
3 morning, everyone. This is the
4 Committee on Rules, Monday, March 27,
5 2023.

6 I understand that state law
7 currently requires that the following
8 announcement be made at the beginning
9 of every remote public hearing as
10 follows: Due to the current public
11 health emergency, City Council
12 Committees are currently meeting
13 remotely. We are using Microsoft
14 Teams to make these remote hearings
15 possible.

16 Instructions for how the
17 public may view and offer public
18 testimony at public hearings of
19 Council Committees are included in
20 the public hearings notices that are
21 published in the Daily News, Inquirer
22 and Legal Intelligencer prior to the
23 hearing and can also be found at
24 PHLCouncil.com.

25 Will the Clerk please call

1 the roll to take attendance. Members
2 that are in attendance will please
3 indicate that they are present when
4 their names are called. Also, please
5 say a few brief words when responding
6 so that your image will be displayed
7 on the screen when you speak.

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Cindy Bass.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
11 morning, Mr. Chairman and colleagues.
12 I am present.

13 THE CLERK: Councilmember
14 Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
16 RICHARDSON: Good morning, Mr. Chair
17 and colleagues. I am present.

18 THE CLERK: And,
19 Councilmember Mark Squilla.

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
22 Vice-Chairman Squilla, are you there?

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I'm
24 here. Yeah, I was trying to get off
25 my mute button there. Sorry guys.

1 Present.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good to
3 see you. A quorum of the Committee
4 is present and this hearing is now
5 called to order. This is the public
6 hearing of the Committee on Rules
7 regarding Bill Nos. 220940, 230007,
8 23080, 230107 and 230132.

9 Will the Clerk please read
10 the titles of the bills.

11 THE CLERK: Bill No. 220940,
12 a bill continuing the Roxborough
13 Neighborhood Improvement District
14 beyond its termination date in an
15 area that generally includes both
16 sides of Ridge Avenue from Main
17 Street beginning with 5122 Ridge
18 Avenue to 7220 Ridge Avenue and
19 certain blocks of streets that
20 intersect a portion of Ridge Avenue;
21 continuing the designation of the
22 Roxborough Development Corporation, a
23 Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation,
24 as the Neighborhood Improvement
25 District Management Association for

1 the District.

2 Bill No. 230007, amending
3 Section 14-513 of The Philadelphia
4 Code, entitled "Transit-Oriented
5 Development Overlay District,"
6 amending Section 14-533 of The
7 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Mixed
8 Income Neighborhoods Overlay
9 District," to expand the applicable
10 areas of each district in the
11 vicinity of Market Street between
12 54th Street and 63rd Street, all
13 under certain terms and conditions.

14 Bill No. 230080, continuing a
15 neighborhood improvement district
16 known as the Northern Liberties
17 Business Improvement District, in an
18 area that generally includes both
19 sides of North 2nd from the north
20 side of Callowhill Street to the
21 south side of Girard Avenue, both
22 sides of North 3rd Street from Spring
23 Garden Street to south side of Wildey
24 Street, Spring Garden Street from
25 North 2nd Street to eastern side of

1 North 5th Street and certain blocks
2 of streets that intersect portions of
3 these streets; designating the
4 Northern Liberties Business
5 Improvement District, which has
6 organized itself as a Pennsylvania
7 nonprofit corporation, as the
8 Neighborhood Improvement District
9 Management Association for the
10 District.

11 Bill No. 230107, an ordinance
12 to amend the Philadelphia Zoning Maps
13 by changing the zoning designations
14 of certain areas of land located
15 within an area bounded by 63rd
16 Street, Callowhill Street, Felton
17 Street and Vine Street.

18 And finally Bill 230132, an
19 ordinance amending Chapter 14-600 of
20 The Philadelphia Code to clarify that
21 the sale of marijuana for
22 recreational use is not included in
23 the Medical Marijuana Dispensary use
24 category, under certain terms and
25 conditions.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
2 you so much. Will the Clerk please
3 call the first panel for the first
4 bill.

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember --
6 Mr. Chair, I believe there's still a
7 portion you have to read.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: It sure
9 is. Before we begin to hear
10 testimony from the witnesses we have
11 for today, everyone who has been
12 invited to the meeting to testify
13 should be aware that this public
14 hearing is being recorded. Because
15 the hearing is public, participants
16 and viewers have no reasonable
17 expectation of privacy. By
18 continuing to be in the meeting, you
19 are consenting to being recorded.

20 Additionally, prior to
21 recognizing Members for the questions
22 or comments they have for witnesses,
23 I will note for the record at this
24 time that we will use the chat
25 feature available in Microsoft Teams

1 to allow Members to signify that they
2 wish to be recognized. In order to
3 comply with the Sunshine Act, the
4 chat feature must only be used for
5 this purpose. Also, before we begin
6 I want to state for the record that
7 Bill No. 230132 is being held at the
8 request of the sponsor.

9 Will the Clerk please call
10 the panel for Bill No. 230007.

11 THE CLERK: For 230007 we
12 Paula Brumbelow Burns.

13 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Good
14 morning.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
16 morning, Paula. Just state your name
17 and title for the record and begin
18 your testimony please.

19 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Sorry.
20 I just shrunk my visual screen for
21 just a moment.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

23 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: I'm
24 getting old. I cannot read that
25 small. So good morning, members of

1 the Rules Committee. I'm Paula
2 Brumelow Burns, Director of
3 Legislation for the Philadelphia City
4 Planning Commission. I am here to
5 testify on Bill No. 230007 introduced
6 into City Council on January 19, 2023
7 by Councilmember Gauthier.

8 Bill No. 230007 amends
9 Section 14-513 of The Philadelphia
10 Zoning Code, entitled "TOD, Transit-
11 Oriented Development Overlay
12 District," and amends Section 14-433,
13 entitled "Mixed-Income Neighborhoods
14 Overlay District," otherwise known as
15 MIN, to expand the applicable areas
16 of each district in the vicinity of
17 Market Street between 54th and 63rd
18 Streets.

19 This bill expands the
20 existing MIN, Mixed-Income
21 Neighborhoods Overlay District, to
22 include the area west of 54th Street
23 to 63rd Street between Chestnut and
24 Arch Street. One notable requirement
25 is that 20 percent of all new

1 residential units shall be provided
2 and maintained as affordable onsite
3 units.

4 Bill No. 230007 also
5 designates three stations on the
6 Market-Frankford Line as part of the
7 Transit-Oriented Development Overlay.
8 The stations are 56th Street Station,
9 60th Street Station and 63rd Street
10 Station. The overlay will cover all
11 blocks that lie partly or entirely
12 within 500 feet of an exit or
13 entrance of these stations.

14 The TOD overlay includes
15 provisions intended to encourage a
16 mix of increased moderate density
17 development that is more
18 pedestrian-friendly within walking
19 distance of transit stations. The
20 Philadelphia Planning Commission
21 considered Bill No. 230007 at its
22 meeting on February 16, 2023 and
23 recommended the bill for approval.
24 I'll be happy to answer any questions
25 at this time.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Any
2 questions or comments from members of
3 the Committee?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

6 RICHARDSON: Mr. Chair.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: My apologies. I'm
10 trying to use the chat feature. I'm
11 having a little difficulty with Teams
12 this morning. This is Councilmember
13 Katherine Gilmore Richardson, and I
14 just wanted to thank the
15 legislation's sponsor Councilmember
16 Gauthier for this TOD legislation.

17 I worked on the original TOD
18 legislation as a legislative aide in
19 Council, so it's good to see they are
20 adding more TOD development to the
21 City. So thank you very, very much.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
23 you very much.

24 Just one quick question
25 regarding the TOD for those

1 designated areas. What's the density
2 bonus? Because I know there's an
3 incentive bill next to these transit
4 stops, right, but what's the actual
5 bonus and incentive that's provided
6 when individuals decide to build
7 within 500 feet of a transit-oriented
8 site? Just wanted to know.

9 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: I'm
10 going to be honest. I do not have
11 that off of the top of my head. I
12 can get that to your office this
13 afternoon.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
15 I --

16 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: You do
17 get a little bit more density, a
18 little bit more height, a reduction
19 in parking. I just don't know the
20 numbers.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah, I
22 just want to get an idea of what that
23 density looks like as well as the
24 height and the parking. As soon as
25 you could provide that information,

1 that will be helpful.

2 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Yeah.

3 I apologize I don't know that off the
4 top of my head. And I just blanked
5 on that, so I will send that to you
6 this afternoon.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All
8 right. Thank you very much.

9 Any other questions or
10 comments from members of the
11 Committee?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
14 none -- and one last thing also.
15 With the density bonuses and the
16 height -- well, density and height
17 are the same thing, but the bonuses
18 obviously results in additional
19 units. Will they still be required
20 to do an affordable as well, so you
21 get additional density but also still
22 required to do the affordable as a
23 part of the mixed-income overlay?

24 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Yes, I
25 know that answer for sure. That is

1 yes.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All
3 right. Great. Thank you very much.

4 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: Thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Any
7 other questions or comments from
8 members of the Committee?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Will the
11 Clerk please call the next panel for
12 Bill No. -- I think my eyes too. One
13 second.

14 THE CLERK: 230107 should be
15 the next one, and it is again
16 Ms. Paula Brumbelow Burns.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
18 you, Paula. Please state your name
19 for the record and begin your
20 testimony.

21 MS. BRUMBELOW BURNS: I am
22 Paula Brumbelow Burns, Director of
23 Legislation for the Philadelphia City
24 Planning Commission. I am here to
25 testify on Bill No. 230107 introduced

1 into City Council on February 16,
2 2023 by Councilmember Curtis Jones,
3 Jr.

4 Bill No. 230107 amends the
5 Philadelphia Zoning Maps by changing
6 the zoning of two properties bounded
7 by 63rd, Callowhill, Felton and Vine
8 Streets. This bill will change the
9 zoning to two properties from RM1,
10 Residential Multi-Family, to Special
11 Purpose, Civic, Educational and
12 Medical, SP-CIV, zoning district.

13 This request came from the
14 Boys' Latin of Philadelphia Charter
15 School to bring their property into a
16 more appropriate zoning district for
17 the current use. The Philadelphia
18 City Planning Commission considered
19 Bill No. 230107 at its meeting on
20 March 16, 2023 and recommended the
21 bill for approval. I'll be happy to
22 answer any questions at this time.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
24 you very much.

25 Any questions or comments

1 from members of the Committee?

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
4 none, will the Clerk please call the
5 next bill and the next panel.

6 THE CLERK: The next bill
7 that we'll be speaking on is Bill No.
8 230080. And we have Denis Murphy
9 followed by Kristine Kennedy and
10 William Reed, in that order.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Please
12 state your name for the record and
13 please begin your testimony.

14 MR. MURPHY: Good morning,
15 Chairman Johnson. My name is Denis
16 Murphy. I'm the Deputy Director
17 within the City Commerce Department.
18 I'm here to testify in favor of Bill
19 No. 230080, reauthorizing the
20 Northern Liberties Business
21 Improvement District.

22 This legislation includes the
23 Northern Liberties plan for services
24 and would allow the BID to continue
25 to levy assessment fees on property

1 owners within the District. The fees
2 fund a variety of vital services to
3 keep the District inviting for
4 shoppers, new businesses and
5 residents.

6 The Northern Liberties BID
7 launched in 2018 and it quickly began
8 to do sidewalk cleaning, it organized
9 street festivals, conducted marketing
10 and served the District that's
11 primarily located along North 2nd
12 Street from Callowhill to Girard
13 Avenue.

14 These efforts fortified the
15 District's representation as a
16 regional restaurant destination and a
17 great place to live. In 2020
18 however, this reputation came into
19 jeopardy with the extreme challenges
20 of the pandemic. The BID responded
21 swiftly by assisting businesses with
22 access to business relief programs,
23 they advocated for outdoor dining and
24 supported and lending encouragement
25 to their local businesses at a time

1 of great uncertainty.

2 Because of the BID, the
3 Northern Liberties has emerged from
4 the pandemic resilient and it remains
5 one of Philadelphia's great
6 commercial districts. Besides
7 addressing the District's immediate
8 needs in the five years since it
9 started, the BID has also worked
10 closely with the community to lay out
11 a long-term vision for North 2nd
12 Street.

13 We commend the Northern
14 Liberties property owners, local
15 businesses and City Council for their
16 ongoing support of the Northern
17 Liberties Business Improvement
18 District. Thank you for the
19 opportunity to testify, and I'm happy
20 to answer any questions you may have.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
22 you very much.

23 Any questions or comments
24 from members of the Committee?

25 (No response.)

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
2 none, thank you very much for your
3 testimony.

4 Will the Clerk please call
5 the next bill and the -- oh, I'm
6 sorry.

7 THE CLERK: We actually
8 have --

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm
10 sorry. I see Kristine. I'm sorry.
11 Go ahead, Kristine.

12 THE CLERK: And also William
13 Reed as well.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
15 you. And I want to also acknowledge
16 Councilman O'Neill for being present
17 for the Committee hearing.

18 Kristine, you can go ahead
19 and begin your testimony.

20 MS. KENNEDY: Thank you very
21 much. Good morning, everybody. My
22 name is Kristine Kennedy. I'm the
23 Executive Director of the Northern
24 Liberties Business Improvement
25 District. I'm here to speak about

1 Bill 230080.

2 So I've been a part of this
3 organization since 2016 when the
4 businesses along the North 2nd Street
5 corridor had just began to coalesce
6 around creating a self-funded
7 organization to meet the area's many
8 challenges. The NL BID encompasses
9 the main commercial streets of
10 Northern Liberties. That includes
11 North 2nd Street, five blocks of
12 Spring Garden Street, a portion of
13 North 3rd and a portion of Girard
14 Avenue as well as impacted
15 cross-streets.

16 There are 792 properties
17 within our boundaries, many of which
18 are owner-occupied. That means they
19 don't pay our assessments even though
20 they are within our boundaries, and
21 they receive the benefits of our
22 street cleaning and public safety
23 initiatives. Our 200 businesses are
24 largely locally-owned micro-
25 enterprises with fewer than 50

1 employees. Not a week goes by that
2 we don't assist these understaffed
3 and really stressed-out entrepreneurs
4 as well as residents with everything
5 from public safety concerns to
6 accessing grants.

7 We've gotten potholes filled,
8 downed tree limbs cleared, scratches
9 buffed from storefront windows,
10 sidewalks repaired and so much more.
11 And each one of these things might go
12 unnoticed by itself, but it's their
13 cumulative effect that really creates
14 an environment for economic growth.

15 All BIDs are created to
16 respond to unique challenges and also
17 harness the unique qualities of the
18 areas that they serve. When the NL
19 BID was created, our programming and
20 budget reflected the input of 331
21 people who completed a
22 needs-assessment survey and the
23 residents, property owners and
24 business owners who served on our
25 steering committee.

1 We had only been in action
2 for about a year and half when COVID
3 profoundly redirected our resources
4 to help triage imploding businesses
5 with PPP loan information and grants
6 of streetery applications. Many of
7 our initial goals, such as more fun
8 events had to be postponed.

9 As we plan for our second
10 five-year term, we again gathered
11 input from a needs-assessment survey,
12 which considered the desires of 149
13 respondents. We also analyzed the
14 past five years to see what had been
15 a good use of our time and funds,
16 what was most impactful, what did our
17 constituents feel most strongly
18 about.

19 It should be no surprise that
20 the budget and the plan presented to
21 City Council reflects a major shift
22 towards cleaning and public safety.
23 Five years ago when this BID was
24 first authorized, Northern Liberties
25 was a hard sale. Many people weren't

1 even sure where the neighborhood was,
2 no less what we had to offer.

3 Now, I field enthusiastic
4 calls from prospective tenants eager
5 to find their forever home here. I
6 see the streets and sidewalks
7 markedly cleaner than those just
8 outside of our boundaries, and
9 businesses just five blocks away are
10 asking how they can get included in
11 our marketing effort, but there are
12 still major challenges ahead.

13 Northern Liberties is perhaps
14 the City's fastest growing
15 neighborhood. At just a little more
16 than a half a square mile, there are
17 about 5,000 new housing units that's
18 apartments and single-family
19 residences along with more than
20 150,000 square feet of new commercial
21 space under construction or
22 permitted.

23 We expect our population to
24 also double from 9800 to almost
25 18,000 in the next three years.

1 Though the increase in density may be
2 a boom for businesses who are not yet
3 recovered from the pandemic, it's
4 going to put tremendous strain on our
5 sidewalks, our streets and our public
6 right-of-way.

7 Now more than ever,
8 professionalized organization
9 dedicated to cultivating vibrancy and
10 quality of life in Northern Liberties
11 is needed. An entity with a seasoned
12 and knowledgeable and dedicated staff
13 that can guide and advocate for
14 infrastructure and streetscape
15 improvements is needed. Our BID is
16 needed.

17 Guided by a Board of long-
18 time residents and owners of beloved
19 businesses, this organization is
20 driven of what we can accomplish
21 together as a community when we pool
22 our resources. One of the most
23 important aspects to having
24 assessment revenue is our ability to
25 raise money around it.

1 Through grants, event revenue
2 and other streams we've been able to
3 bring in \$0.26 of assessment revenue.
4 And as a participant in the CDC tax
5 credit program, we'll be able to
6 continue to multiply our ratepayers
7 contributions for many years to come.

8 While getting into just a few
9 brackets of tax, our assessment
10 millage for Fiscal Year '23, which
11 will start July 1st, is estimated to
12 be about .00122 percent of full
13 market value. That's essentially
14 what it is right now. With new
15 development, East Callowhill will be
16 able to grow our budget and our
17 assessment revenue without
18 significantly increasing or having an
19 impact to our current ratepayers.

20 The only major increase they
21 would see in our bill would be
22 because of the valuation change by
23 OPA. Our projected income from
24 assessment revenue will increase by
25 \$76,659 from our current budget.

1 This plan differs from our first five
2 years in several key aspects. In
3 2018, our street cleaning program was
4 funded for two days a week. We've
5 expanded that to six days a week.

6 We've allocated more towards
7 public safety so when we engage
8 private detail in response to an
9 increase in need. Other services
10 will include maintaining our recently
11 installed planters, upkeep and
12 expansion of community trash cans,
13 monthly retail-focused events and
14 retail, recruitment and retention
15 programs.

16 To spread awareness of our
17 reauthorization and take feedback on
18 our proposed budget and plan, we held
19 two virtual meetings, the recordings
20 of which live on our website. Those
21 meetings were promoted on our website
22 through our biweekly newsletter.

23 We sent a postcard to all
24 property and business owners inviting
25 them to a third meeting earlier this

1 month that covered the timeline and
2 important information about our
3 reauthorization, and this ordinance
4 is also posted on our website.

5 So in closing, it's been a
6 great honor of mine to serve the
7 community of Northern Liberties these
8 past five years and I look forward
9 with your approval to serving them
10 for more to come. So I thank you
11 today for your time and consideration
12 and I am also happy to take
13 questions.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
15 you very much.

16 Mr. William Reed.

17 MR. REED: Okay. Am I live
18 there?

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, you
20 are live.

21 MR. REED: Okay. Great.
22 Good morning, Rules Committee and
23 other attendees. Thank you for
24 inviting me to speak. My name is
25 William Reed. I'm here to express

1 strong support for the
2 reauthorization of the Northern
3 Liberties Business Improvement
4 District.

5 I'm very enthusiastic. But
6 Kristine just did such a great job in
7 her testimony, I'm going to try to
8 keep my comments brief. My
9 perspective comes from serving on the
10 Board. I'm currently the BID Chair,
11 but I've also been running Standard
12 Tap, a local business for over 20
13 years and just as relevant, I'm a
14 Northern Liberties resident and a
15 father and I've raised two kids in
16 this neighborhood.

17 The Northern Liberties BID
18 has been instrumental in helping
19 enhance the economic vitality of the
20 area. I personally witnessed the
21 positive impact it has had on my
22 business and others in the community.
23 The BID provides valuable services,
24 you're familiar with them, cleaning,
25 marketing, promotional efforts,

1 public safety initiatives. All those
2 services fill in crucial gaps and
3 they also amplify the impact of other
4 services. It creates a safer, more
5 attractive and welcoming environment
6 for both residents and visitors to
7 our community. It's crucial to all
8 of us in the business community.

9 New businesses find valuable
10 information and resources to help
11 navigate Philadelphia's sometimes
12 challenging regulatory environment,
13 this recent scare with the water
14 quality and things like that. Having
15 the BID around in that network really
16 helps us regulate and navigate and
17 find relevant information and help.
18 In addition to these services, the
19 BID also provides a platform for
20 business owners to collaborate and
21 work together toward common goals.
22 Marketing vacant storefronts,
23 increasing foot traffic, festivals
24 and farmer's markets are good
25 examples recently.

1 The BID's efforts have helped
2 to foster a sense of community and
3 camaraderie among local business
4 owners, and that's been invaluable,
5 facing the challenges of running a
6 business in today's environment. I
7 believe the reauthorization of the
8 Northern Liberties BID is critical to
9 maintaining the positive momentum
10 that has been established in the
11 area.

12 The BID's efforts have helped
13 to create a thriving business
14 district, and that benefits not only
15 the businesses but also the community
16 as a whole. I hope you support the
17 reauthorization so that we can
18 continue to build upon the progress
19 that has been made. Thank you for
20 your time and consideration. Thank
21 you.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
23 you very much.

24 Any questions or comments
25 from members of the Committee?

1 (No response.)

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
3 none, I thank all of the panelists
4 for that enthusiastic support for
5 Northern Liberties BID. Thank you
6 very much for your presentation.

7 If hearing no other questions
8 from the Committee, will the Clerk
9 please call the next bill and
10 panelists.

11 THE CLERK: The next bill we
12 will hear is 220940, and we will have
13 Denis Murphy followed by Jo Anne
14 Desper and Chris Endrikat.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Please
16 state your name for the record and
17 begin your testimony.

18 MR. MURPHY: Good morning,
19 Chairman Johnson and members of the
20 Rules Committee. My name is Denis
21 Murphy. I'm the Deputy Director
22 within the Commerce Department. I'm
23 here to testify in support of Bill
24 No. 220940, which would reauthorize
25 the Roxborough Business Improvement

1 District for an additional 10 years.
2 The legislation includes their plan
3 for services and would allow the BID
4 to levy assessment fees on property
5 owners within the districts to
6 provide those services.

7 The Roxborough BID was formed
8 in 2003 to improve conditions and
9 spur reinvestment along Ridge Avenue.
10 Like many other Philadelphia
11 commercial districts, the Roxborough
12 District fell behind its suburban
13 competitors despite all of its
14 endowments, including charming
15 architecture and strong neighborhood
16 pride.

17 Now, 20 years into its work,
18 the Roxborough BID has capitalized on
19 the corridor strengths and reversed
20 its trajectory. Ridge Avenue is
21 experiencing a construction boom and
22 it's attracting residents and
23 shoppers back into the City from
24 neighboring suburbs.

25 We recommend the Roxborough

1 BID be reauthorized to maintain this
2 positive momentum and benefit
3 longtime property owners, business
4 owners and surrounding residents.
5 The Roxborough BID has demonstrated a
6 strong and meaningful commitment to
7 community engagement throughout their
8 reauthorization and planning.

9 They held several meetings to
10 gather community and business owner
11 input towards their 10-year plan.
12 Commerce Department staff attended
13 these meetings and reported merchant
14 support for the BID's track record
15 and future plans. The Roxborough
16 Business Improvement District
17 provides a great example of the
18 positive change that can be possible
19 when neighborhood constituents lead,
20 guide and implement services to
21 improve their area. Thank you for
22 the opportunity to testify today and
23 I'm happy to take any questions.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
25 you very much.

1 Any questions or comments
2 from members of the Committee?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
5 none, can the Clerk call the next
6 witness for this particular bill.

7 THE CLERK: Our next witness
8 to speak is Jo Ann Desper.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Jo Ann,
10 just state your name for the record
11 and begin your testimony.

12 MS. DESPER: Good morning,
13 Chairman Johnson and members of the
14 Rules Committee. My name is Jo Ann
15 Desper. I proudly serve as the
16 President of the Roxborough
17 Development Corporation Board for
18 five years. I'm testifying for Bill
19 No. 220940.

20 I moved to Roxborough over 30
21 years ago and I joined my local civic
22 association shortly thereafter. I've
23 been active in community engagement
24 since then, including a dozen years
25 with the RDC, Roxborough Development

1 Corporation. In addition to our
2 family home, my husband and I own a
3 historic house on the Ridge that was
4 build in 1811.

5 As a long-time resident, I
6 remember before the Business
7 Improvement District was created
8 there was more litter, more
9 vacancies, fewer opportunities to
10 meet neighbors at community events.
11 It was hard for our District to be
12 competitive with the retail corridors
13 only a short distance away.

14 As a neighbor, I was happy to
15 see the RDC begin to work,
16 revitalizing the community which took
17 huge strides forward by the creation
18 of our BID two decades ago. Since
19 then, the sidewalks have been
20 cleaner, the businesses more abundant
21 and the entire community is stronger
22 and safer.

23 RDC is the neighborhood
24 improvement district management
25 association for the Roxborough

1 District. The Roxborough District is
2 one of the 14 Business Improvement
3 Districts or BID in the City of
4 Philadelphia and it serves the
5 2.5-mile Ridge Avenue commercial
6 corridor which extends from Main
7 Street to just above Domino Lane.

8 The District contains 465
9 properties, including both commercial
10 or income-producing properties and
11 exempt single-family houses and
12 nonprofits. Most of the properties
13 front on Ridge Avenue with additional
14 properties clustered around certain
15 key intersections such as Shurs Lane,
16 Leverington Avenue and Domino Lane.

17 Today the District offers a
18 diverse mix of convenience, retail,
19 restaurant, services and
20 entertainment venues frequented by
21 the residents of Roxborough and other
22 Northwest Philadelphia communities.
23 It's also home to
24 neighborhood-anchored institutions
25 such as Roxborough Memorial Hospital,

1 the YMCA and Inner Community Action.
2 Nearly 200 historic structures were
3 scattered throughout the District and
4 they're protected by the Ridge Avenue
5 Thematic Historic District.

6 Since 1992, the Roxborough
7 Development Corporation Board
8 volunteers and staff have been
9 working hard to enhance the Ridge
10 Avenue commercial corridor. The
11 Roxborough District was created in
12 2003, granting the RDC the authority
13 to assess property owners with a
14 special property assessment fee to be
15 used in accordance with the approved
16 plan.

17 The RDC uses its assessment
18 fees to revitalize and maintain the
19 Ridge Avenue commercial corridor. We
20 organize special events, provide
21 cleaning and beautification services,
22 connect businesses to technical
23 assistance and other resources,
24 recruit new businesses and market to
25 corridors throughout the year. Our

1 work benefits both the individual
2 businesses and the Roxborough
3 District as a whole.

4 In preparation for the
5 reauthorization, the RDC engaged with
6 residents, businesses and property
7 owners starting in the summer of
8 2022. We discussed the BID renewal
9 process and solicited stakeholder
10 input on the services we provide.
11 Our outreach included the corridor
12 and community-wide survey and public
13 meetings to solicit interest in a
14 planning committee, propose
15 adjustments to property assessments
16 with property and business owners and
17 present our final plan before it was
18 submitted to City Council for review.

19 In our survey and
20 discussions, residents, businesses
21 and property owners within the
22 District expressed satisfaction with
23 our impact on the Ridge Avenue
24 commercial corridor. They pointed to
25 our work keeping the corridor clean

1 and green and organizing festivals
2 and other special events that now
3 bring over 12,000 visitors to the
4 Ridge each year.

5 The projected revenue from
6 our annual BID assessments is
7 budgeted at \$352,207 for Fiscal Year
8 '22, '23. In addition to this
9 revenue source, we more than doubled
10 our revenue by applying and
11 qualifying for grants, tax credits
12 and events sponsorships.

13 For example, the RDC has
14 secured a CDC tax credit partnership
15 through the City of Philadelphia that
16 provides us with \$100,000 in revenue
17 through partnership with Penn Beer
18 distributors and MGMT Residential.
19 This 10-year tax credit partnership
20 will run through 2033.

21 The need for strong
22 commercial corridor stewardship has
23 never been more critical. While the
24 Roxborough District is recovering
25 from the pandemic, 10 percent of its

1 commercial space remains vacant. The
2 RDC needs to continue its successful
3 efforts to attract the larger share
4 of Roxborough's 38,000 residents to
5 the Ridge Avenue commercial corridor.

6 In addition, the RDC has the
7 once-in-a-generation opportunity to
8 capture a new audience. The
9 residents of the over 1200 rental
10 apartments is completed or under
11 construction on Ridge Avenue.

12 Reauthorization will enable the RDC
13 to continue its important work,
14 revitalizing Ridge Avenue, providing
15 property owners and businesses with
16 commercial corridor services,
17 improving the public realm and
18 offering Roxborough residents more
19 local shopping, dining and
20 entertainment options.

21 I am also pleased to submit
22 letters of support today from several
23 assessment payers, including
24 Roxborough Memorial Hospital, the
25 Gallman Group, Throwbacks Bar and

1 Grill, Fountaine Street Auto Service,
2 Studio Torres, and Friends of Gorgas
3 Park.

4 We appreciate the assistance
5 provided by the Commerce Department
6 and by Councilman Curtis Jones, Jr.
7 and his staff and request your
8 support in reauthorizing the
9 Roxborough District. Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
11 you very much.

12 Any other questions or
13 comments from members of the
14 Committee?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I want
17 to thank you for that great
18 presentation regarding the Roxborough
19 BID.

20 MS. DESPER: You're welcome.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: With
22 that being said, we are going to --

23 MS. DESPER: We have one more
24 speaker.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: One more

1 speaker, okay. Is that Chris
2 Endrikat?

3 MR. ENDRIKAT: Yep. Let me
4 just turn my camera on.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Sure,
6 Chris. Just state your name for the
7 record, Chris, and your title and
8 begin your testimony.

9 MR. ENDRIKAT: Yep. Good
10 morning, Chairman Johnson and members
11 of the Rules Committee. My name's
12 Chris Endrikat. I'm the co-owner of
13 New Ridge Brewing Company. My family
14 is proud to have been a part of the
15 Roxborough community for over 35
16 years. My brother, father and I
17 opened our business in the summer of
18 2020 and we've been part of the
19 Roxborough Business Improvement
20 District ever since.

21 Our brewery restaurant is in
22 the heart of the Ridge and Northwest
23 Philadelphia Roxborough's
24 neighborhood. We're dedicated to
25 using the highest quality ingredients

1 to make our beers on our site in our
2 seven-barrel brewhouse.

3 Between the restaurant,
4 kitchen and brewery, we currently
5 employ around 35 people, the majority
6 of which are from the Roxborough
7 neighborhood. We offer a seasonally
8 rotating food menu featuring local
9 and sustainable vendors and farms,
10 along with a curated cocktail and
11 wine list made up entirely of
12 Pennsylvania wineries and
13 distilleries.

14 Our goal is to provide a
15 unique and enjoyable experience for
16 our customers while also supporting
17 our local community and businesses.
18 One of the key features of our
19 location is the Roxborough Pocket
20 Park, which was developed by the
21 Roxborough Development Corporation,
22 the neighborhood improvement district
23 managing association.

24 This beautiful park is
25 located adjacent to our building and

1 features colorful murals and native
2 plantings that provide a lovely view
3 for our outdoor dining guests to
4 enjoy. The Pocket Park serves as a
5 neighborhood hub for families and
6 events, noticeable change from the
7 vacant lot that used to be when I was
8 a child growing up in the
9 neighborhood.

10 The RDC has also hosted
11 several street festivals and has
12 featured our business as well as
13 others along the commercial corridor,
14 which has helped drive foot traffic
15 and traffic in general to the area
16 and support local business. As a
17 small business owner in Roxborough, I
18 can attest to the positive impact
19 that the Business Improvement
20 District has had on our community.

21 The support and resources
22 provided by the BID have helped us to
23 navigate the challenges of starting a
24 new business, particularly during the
25 pandemic and we are grateful for

1 their continued efforts to make our
2 neighborhood a better place to live,
3 work and do business.

4 The New Ridge Brewing family
5 strongly supports the reauthorization
6 of the Business Improvement District
7 in Philadelphia and in Roxborough and
8 we urge City Council to do the same.
9 Thank you for your time.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
11 you very much.

12 Any questions or comments
13 from members of the Committee?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
16 Hearing none, this is all of the
17 bills that we have for this
18 particular Committee. We will now
19 conclude this hearing and go into a
20 public meeting.

21 Is anyone else here to
22 testify whose name has not been
23 called?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And

1 last, any questions or comments from
2 members of this Committee?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

5 We're going to ask for all of the
6 witnesses -- we thank you for your
7 participation. You can now
8 disconnect from the hearing and we
9 will now conclude this hearing and go
10 into the public meeting. We'll take
11 a moment and give the Tech team an
12 opportunity to make that transition.

13 Modesto, are we ready?

14 THE CLERK: Mr. Chair --

15 COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: Yes,
16 we're ready to go. Mr. Chair, we
17 don't have any public comment today.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Great.

19 We will now convene the public
20 meeting to consider the action to be
21 taken on the bills before this
22 Committee today.

23 Will the Clerk please call
24 the roll to take attendance. Members
25 that are in attendance will please

1 indicate they are present when their
2 names are called. Also, please say a
3 few brief words when responding so
4 that your image will be displayed on
5 screen when you speak.

6 THE CLERK: Councilmember
7 Cindy Bass.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
9 morning, Mr. Chairman and colleagues.
10 I am still present.

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember
12 Gilmore Richardson.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
14 RICHARDSON: Good morning, Mr. Chair
15 and colleagues. I am present.

16 THE CLERK: Councilmember
17 Brian O'Neill.

18 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Present.

19 THE CLERK: Vice-Chair Mark
20 Squilla.

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Vice-
23 Chair Mark Squilla, are you
24 available?

25 (No response.)

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Vice-
2 Chair Mark Squilla, are you
3 available?

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Sorry.
5 I don't know why I'm having a hard
6 time unmuting myself.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
8 As long as you're here.

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I'm
10 here.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: We will
12 now go into our public meeting. The
13 Chair recognizes the gentleman from
14 South Philadelphia, Councilman Mark
15 Squilla, for a motion on Bill No.
16 220940.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
18 you, Mr. Chair.

19 I move that Bill No. 220940
20 be reported from this Committee with
21 a favorable recommendation and
22 further move that the rules of
23 Council be suspended as to permit the
24 first reading of this bill at the
25 next session of Council.

1 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Second.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The
3 Chair notes for the record that
4 Councilman Brian O'Neill seconds the
5 motion.

6 It has been moved and
7 properly seconded that Bill No.
8 220940 be reported from this
9 Committee with a favorable
10 recommendation and further move that
11 the rules of Council be suspended to
12 permit first reading of this bill at
13 the next session of Council.

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

16 (Aye.)

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Those
18 opposed?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The ayes
21 have it and the motion carries.

22 The Chair recognizes
23 Councilman Mark Squilla for a motion
24 on Bill No. 230007.

25 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank

1 you, Mr. Chair.

2 I move that Bill No. 230007
3 be reported from this Committee with
4 a favorable recommendation and
5 further move that the rules of
6 Council be suspended as to permit the
7 first reading of this bill at the
8 next session of Council.

9 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Second.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The
11 Chair notes for the record that
12 Councilman Brian O'Neill seconds the
13 motion.

14 It has been moved and
15 properly seconded that Bill No.
16 230007 be reported from this
17 Committee with a favorable
18 recommendation and further move that
19 the rules of Council be suspended to
20 permit first reading of this bill at
21 the next session of Council.

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

24 (Aye.)

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Those

1 opposed?

2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The ayes
4 have it and the motion carries.

5 The Chair recognizes
6 Councilman Mark Squilla for a motion
7 on Bill No. 230080.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
9 you, Mr. Chair.

10 I move that Bill No. 230080
11 be reported from this Committee with
12 a favorable recommendation and
13 further move that the rules of
14 Council be suspended as to permit the
15 first reading of this bill at the
16 next session of Council.

17 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Second.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The
19 Chair notes for the record that
20 Councilman Mark Squilla seconds the
21 motion --

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Brian
23 O'Neill.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm
25 sorry. The Chair notes for the

1 record that Councilman Brian O'Neill,
2 gentleman from Northeast
3 Philadelphia, seconds the motion.

4 It has been moved and
5 properly seconded that Bill No.
6 230080 be reported from this
7 Committee with a favorable
8 recommendation and further move that
9 the rules of Council be suspended to
10 permit first reading of this bill at
11 the next session of Council.

12 All those in favor of the
13 motion will signify by saying aye.

14 (Aye.)

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Those
16 opposed?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The ayes
19 have it and the motion carries.

20 The Chair recognizes
21 Councilman Mark Squilla for a motion
22 on Bill No. 230107.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
24 you, Mr. Chair.

25 I move that Bill No. 230107

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

7 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Second.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The
9 Chair notes for the record that
10 Councilman Brian O'Neill seconds the
11 motion.

12 It has been moved and
13 properly seconded that Bill No.
14 230107 be reported from this
15 Committee with a favorable
16 recommendation and further move that
17 the rules of Council be suspended to
18 permit first reading of this bill at
19 the next session of Council.

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

22 (Aye.)

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Those
24 opposed?

25 (No response.)

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The ayes
2 have it and the motion carries.

3 Before we conclude, let the
4 record reflect that Bill No. 230132
5 is being held at the request of the
6 sponsor.

7 If there are no additional
8 remarks, this concludes the business
9 before the Committee on Rules today.
10 And I want to thank all of my
11 colleagues for taking time out of
12 your schedule and being here for this
13 Committee. Have a great day.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
15 you, Mr. Chair. Have a good day.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
17 welcome.

18 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank
19 you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
21 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

22 (Committee on Rules concluded
23 at 10:45 a.m.)
24
25

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 this is a correct transcript of the
same.

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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