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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON PARKS, RECREATION AND

4

CULTURAL AFFAIRS

5

6

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, May 24, 2010
11:15 a.m.

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PRESENT:

10

COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN, CHAIR

11

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL

12

COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO

13

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.

14

COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ

15

BILL 100283 - An ordinance renaming and
designating the 39th and Olive Street
Playground in Mantua as the "Norman (Butch)
Ellis Playground."

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COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good

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morning. Can we invite our witnesses to

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please come sit so we can see you, those

5

who will be testifying. Please join us

6

right in the front behind the railing.

7

Good morning. The City Council

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Committee on Parks, Recreation and

9

Cultural Affairs is now a public hearing

10

to hear testimony on Bill No. 100283.

11

I would like to acknowledge the

12

members of this Committee, starting from

13

my extreme right, Councilman Frank

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DiCicco, Vice-Chair of this Committee,

15

Councilman Curtis Jones, and member of

16

this Committee, Councilwoman Jannie

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Blackwell, wherein this effort sits.

18

I would like to ask the Clerk

19

to please read the title of Bill No.

20

100283.

21

THE CLERK: An ordinance

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renaming and designating the 39th and

23

Olive Street Playground in Mantua as the

24

"Norman (Butch) Ellis Playground."

25

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you

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2 very much.

3 I would like to ask any one of
4 my Councilmembers to please provide
5 opening remarks on this bill.

6 Councilwoman.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you.

9 Thirty-ninth and Olive Street
10 Playground is synonymous with the name of
11 Norman "Butch" Ellis. We have so many
12 people here from Mantua. We invite those
13 who would like to testify to testify, and
14 would other members -- would everybody
15 from Mantua please stand. I would like
16 the Committee to know that you're here.
17 And we're here because we all love Butch.
18 And Butch was the one who single-handedly
19 always called all of these folks out. We
20 had affairs there. He fed the community
21 there, paint-up, clean-up, fix-up. When
22 we contacted the Commissioner, she knew
23 of him. She came out. This is where we
24 started the discussion about trying to
25 cover the pool in the summer and the

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2 Recreation Department didn't want to do
3 it. Butch said, How come we can't keep
4 it clean in between seasons, and
5 everything about it, from Jane Golden at
6 the murals. Everything involving that
7 playground Butch Ellis was a leader of.

8 And so we're all here because
9 we love him, always will. And,
10 Stephanie, we know that time means
11 nothing when you -- love lives on
12 forever. We love him, and he certainly
13 deserves this honor, and we thank you all
14 for coming.

15 (Applause.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
17 you very, very much, Councilwoman Jannie
18 Blackwell.

19 And now we would like to call
20 up a number of individuals to testify on
21 behalf of this bill. Please, I would
22 like to ask to come to the witness table
23 Deputy Commissioner Leo Dignam on behalf
24 of our Recreation Commissioner, Susan
25 Slawson.

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2 And let me please acknowledge
3 in attendance another member of this
4 Committee, Councilwoman Maria
5 Quinones-Sanchez.

6 (Witness approached witness
7 table.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
9 morning.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DIGNAM:
11 Good morning. Thank you, Madam Chair.
12 Good morning, Councilmembers. My name is
13 Leo Dignam. I'm the Deputy Commissioner
14 of the Recreation Department, Program
15 Division, for the City of Philadelphia.
16 I appear before you to present testimony
17 in support of Bill No. 100283 that
18 authorizes naming a playground located at
19 39th and Olive Street in Mantua as the
20 "Norman (Butch) Ellis Playground."

21 The Department has no
22 objections to renaming the playground or
23 naming the playground. Butch Ellis
24 served the community as founder and
25 coordinator of MASCO, Mantua 39th and

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2 Aspen Street Community Organization, and
3 provided a variety of educational and
4 recreational programs for members of the
5 community there for many years.

6 Mr. Ellis was a great support to our
7 staff and to the community members alike.

8 Thank you for the opportunity
9 to testify for this bill.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
11 very, very much for your testimony.

12 Any questions for this witness?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, then
15 thank you very much.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER DIGNAM:

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let us now
19 invite up Morris Ellis, brother of Butch
20 Ellis -- Maurice. Forgive me. Maurice
21 Ellis, brother of Butch Ellis, and
22 Stephanie Ellis, widow of -- please join
23 him at the witness table.

24 (Witnesses approached witness
25 table.)

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please be
3 seated, sir.

4 Let me just state for the
5 record and make it clear that I too
6 started my roots in Mantua, as
7 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell well knows.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I
9 always tell her that, too.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And I'm a
11 graduate of McMichael School. So I've
12 learned of the wonderful work of Butch
13 shortly after I returned there in
14 college, and the greatest hope is that we
15 could have a lot of clones of Butch. So
16 as Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell said,
17 let's appreciate and celebrate his good
18 work and his memory and how we want to
19 keep his work alive.

20 Please, if you would state your
21 name for the record and offer any
22 testimony.

23 MR. ELLIS: My name is Maurice
24 Ellis, Sr. I'm Norman Butch Ellis
25 brother, one of his younger siblings. I

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2 represent the Mantua area, and it will
3 give me great honor and pleasure to be
4 here today in acknowledgement of my
5 brother hard work for the community that
6 he had done.

7 Over the past years, I've been
8 involved with him in a lot of his
9 activities. And it just throws a lot of
10 chills through my heart and through my
11 family. It is a great privilege for me
12 to be here today. I want to thank you
13 again for having us to be here to speak.

14 His wife is unable to speak at
15 this present moment, and I'm going to do
16 the testimony for our whole family.

17 Norman Ellis had done plenty of
18 work in the neighborhood, dedicated all
19 his hard-earned hours and even
20 jeopardized his own family life-style to
21 maintain the community, helping the
22 senior citizens, those in need,
23 unprivileged, the young children. He had
24 activity of art and a whole lot of other
25 activities that he was doing for the

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2 community.

3 It's a little hard for me to
4 say all the things that he has done, but
5 I just want to say I just want to thank
6 Councilwoman and I want to thank this
7 board for giving my family an opportunity
8 to be here and renaming of the
9 playground. Once it is renamed, I will
10 be fully responsible and involved with
11 helping maintain it and keeping it in
12 order. And in honor of the whole family,
13 I just want to thank you again.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, we
15 thank you very much for your testimony.

16 Comments or remarks from any
17 members of the Committee?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, we
20 thank you for your continued devotedness
21 and commitment to sustain the work he has
22 started. That's a huge commitment.

23 MR. ELLIS: Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
25 very much.

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2 If we could please invite to
3 the witness table Ms. Mary Jenkins,
4 President Emeritus, President forever of
5 Mantua Community Planners.

6 (Witness approached witness
7 table.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Bring the
9 mike close to you. State your name for
10 the record and proceed with your
11 testimony.

12 MS. JENKINS: Lord, help me
13 through this.

14 My name is Mary Jenkins, mother
15 of Mantua. The other half of my name is
16 Elder Jenkins.

17 I thank God just to be here.
18 As I said, Lord, help me through this,
19 because Butch was more than just a
20 co-worker and a community worker. He was
21 my son. That young man, when he was a
22 young boy, spent many hours in my home
23 with my son. I had a lot of boys, but he
24 was one of the boys that never talked
25 that much, but whenever he talked, he had

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2 something to say. And I miss him so
3 much, because no matter what I needed to
4 get done, he would just come up, just
5 walk up. It's just like the spirit said,
6 Go see what she want.

7 Oh, I miss that boy. I miss
8 him so much. It's just like he's still
9 here, and he will be with me for a long,
10 long time. Just last week, the week
11 before last, I didn't feel good. I went
12 to the emergency ward, and they kept me.
13 And I said, Lord, where is Butch?
14 Because if he went around the house and I
15 wasn't there and Manny said she's at the
16 hospital, he would have been there,
17 saying, Now, what did you do?

18 I can't express in words what a
19 legacy is here, because he was a young
20 man that got involved in a lot of things.
21 He sat down with me one day and he said,
22 Momma, I'm cutting the foolishness out.
23 We got things to do. He said, I'm going
24 to do what you say do. And he just like
25 made a U-turn with his life and began to

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2 build all around him. Nothing was too
3 hard for him. The days was not long
4 enough for him. If I called him at
5 midnight, he was there and never said a
6 mumbling word.

7 I just hope and pray, as I look
8 at the young men that I'm involved with
9 now, that they can follow in some of his
10 footsteps. I know they can't follow --
11 they won't be able to follow in all of
12 them, but I had some young men to come to
13 me just last week and said, I'm going to
14 join the team. I'm going to get busy.
15 He said, The time is now. And I said to
16 him, The time is now. Every day God
17 gives you a new day. You have an
18 assignment. Ask him what do he want you
19 to do, and you go out and do your very
20 best, do the best you can, and when the
21 sun set, say, Thank you, God, I made it
22 through this day. And if it's his will
23 that you rise the next day and you see
24 there's a new day that you didn't know
25 you was going to see, Lord, what do you

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2 want me to do? Don't worry about my
3 agenda. I want to follow your agenda.

4 Those were some of the things
5 that I instilled in Butch when he changed
6 his real -- he was just all over the
7 place. He just like narrowed his life
8 down and made a U-turn, and he just came
9 out in the ven yard and began to work.
10 And you're talking about work? He worked
11 from sun up to sun down, and get up at 5
12 o'clock in the morning and start all over
13 again.

14 I thank God for him. I thank
15 God for the spirit he left behind, and I
16 thank God for all those who gave him
17 strength when he wasn't feeling well or
18 just tired. And I thank God for my
19 Councilwoman, Ms. Blackwell, because he
20 used to say to me, We got to talk to
21 Jannie about this. We got to talk to
22 Ms. Blackwell about this. He said, We
23 can't let this happen. Let's go, let's
24 go, let's go talk to Ms. Blackwell.

25 She left a lot of strength for

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2 others to follow just being around Butch,
3 because she was one person that he had so
4 much respect for. He had respect for all
5 people, but it was something she would
6 say to him, and he would say, I know, I
7 know, I know, and he just go on out with
8 it and get the work done.

9 I'm not going to talk anymore,
10 because there's so much I could say about
11 this young man, because he's mine. He's
12 one of mine, but he was one of mine that
13 was always there. Whenever I need
14 something done, he was there, and it was
15 never too hard, never too late and never
16 too early.

17 I'm in the process of writing a
18 poem about him, and I'm going to make
19 copies of it and give it to the corner
20 boys. I have a lot of corner boys, and I
21 want them to have this poem, because he
22 related to that poem. And I believe that
23 God gave enough in Butch to spread out
24 just like a flower and the seeds blow in
25 the wind, and I believe some of those

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2 seeds are going to take root, and I'm
3 praying that they do.

4 Again, I thank God. I thank
5 God for his family and those who worked
6 with him so diligently and was there for
7 all of us in Mantua. God bless you. And
8 pray for us, because we have a lot of
9 work to do.

10 Every ending is a new
11 beginning. Butch is home now. He's with
12 peace and happiness all the time, but he
13 left the door open for us to follow, and
14 we must do that.

15 Thank you and God bless you.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
17 Ms. Elder Jenkins, Mary Jenkins,
18 Ms. Jenkins, allow me -- if you would, be
19 seated. Be seated for a moment. We need
20 to -- I need to seize the moment, because
21 you have been a mentor to many. I came
22 back to Mantua in 1976 and started out as
23 a block captain and then went on to
24 become a committee person and became
25 active down there, and you were always,

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2 always, always, always willing, through a
3 phone call or a face-to-face, to offer
4 advice and guidance and instruction. So
5 know that you've touched the lives of
6 many, including me.

7 Thank you very much.

8 MS. JENKINS: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If we
10 could now ask Rick Young, President of
11 Mantua Community Improvement Committee,
12 to come to the witness table.

13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
16 morning.

17 MR. YOUNG: Good morning. I'd
18 like to take the time to thank Council
19 for this opportunity to speak on behalf
20 of Butch Ellis and the potential renaming
21 the playground after him and his family.
22 And, again, my name is Rick Young,
23 Executive Director for Mantua Community
24 Improvement Committee, as well as one of
25 the developers in Mantua.

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2 Currently, my last experience
3 with Butch is the building of the
4 supermarket that's been so needed in the
5 community for the last past 25 years.
6 We've been working on it. And we talked
7 to Butch. Butch last conversation is
8 that, you know, We really need to get
9 this supermarket. And one of the hardest
10 things that has been is to get a vendor,
11 and, finally, we have a vendor in Shop
12 Rite. I'd like to say that Butch is
13 very, very, very supportive of that, and
14 he's been one of the many reasons that's
15 going to happen. And I think this is a
16 small token of the City's and the
17 community's generosity for some of the
18 things that he's done over the period of
19 time.

20 Mr. Ellis and Butch is sort of,
21 I guess you can kind of call, my old
22 heads. We used to live across the street
23 from each other, and I grew up with their
24 younger brother, and it's been more
25 family than it's been friendship or

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2 partners. And the Councilwoman would
3 call Butch or she would call me or she
4 would name Butch and Rick kind of and
5 Ms. Jenkins all in the same sentence. If
6 I wasn't there, Butch was there and vice
7 versa. If Butch wasn't there, I was
8 there or Ms. Jenkins was there.

9 So, again, on behalf of Mantua,
10 MCIC, Mantua community, the development
11 team, we look forward to continuing Butch
12 legacy with the good things that he's
13 done in the community and possibly the
14 renaming of a street after Butch to kind
15 of just to keep that legacy on. But I
16 think this playground is a wonderful idea
17 that he had.

18 His organization, I think, in
19 the past 25 years, they've been having
20 their reunion. Most people in the, I
21 guess, in the City would probably call it
22 gangs, but it's more than a gang, because
23 it's something that they don't do
24 anymore, but for the last 25 years when
25 it was 39th Street and Empire and The

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2 Hub, everybody now just has a day of
3 reunion, and more so it's a family
4 reunion, and Butch has been doing it and
5 taking care of that playground for the
6 last 25 to 30 years. So I think it's a
7 great honor, and thank you for having me
8 speak on his behalf.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
10 you very, very much for your testimony.

11 Councilwoman Blackwell.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you very much.

14 I see the men who keep Mantua
15 clean. Would you stand up, please. And
16 this is Mantua Community Improvement
17 Committee as well.

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And I
20 will tell you, Mantua was one of the
21 poorest areas in the City. We had the
22 Lex Street Massacre, the worst massacre
23 in the history of the City. Now when you
24 go to Mantua, if you knock on a door on
25 Lex Street, a senior is going to come out

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2 and greet you. Now when you go to
3 Mantua, the streets are clean. People
4 care about one another.

5 Mantua is a historic community
6 because it withstood university
7 expansion. So everybody there is related
8 or grew up together. Their parents grew
9 up together. Their grandparents grew up
10 together, and, therefore, it is a unique
11 community. And as was said, whatever we
12 needed, I would call Ms. Jenkins, call
13 Butch, call Rick, and it was all done, no
14 matter what it was. And certainly Butch
15 was available, as has been said, 24 hours
16 a day, seven days a week. And we're
17 having our annual cookout, everybody's
18 birthday party, July the 16th, and we
19 always had Butch out there cooking, Rick
20 out there cooking. We had their grills.
21 Ms. Jenkins isn't even well and is always
22 everywhere. Whenever we call, she's
23 there. I talk to her all the time now.
24 It was their grills. In fact, at our
25 last meeting, the last time I saw Butch,

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2 Ms. Jenkins called and said, Pick me up,
3 we're going to the meeting. This was at
4 38th and Brown, as you all know, at the
5 office, and when we went there, Butch
6 came in and Butch said, I'm sick, but,
7 you know, we have the seniors coming in
8 on Monday, the people coming in, you got
9 to have the food ready. I need some of
10 you to step up to the plate, because I
11 can't do it.

12 The last time -- the week
13 before he died -- he only lived, what, a
14 couple days later -- he was in his office
15 trying to get people to make sure when
16 the food came in, that they would get it
17 to the seniors and those who needed it.

18 So no matter what it was, he
19 gave 100 percent of himself. His heart
20 was there to his community. And, you
21 know, people like this, you can't pay.
22 You can't -- there's nothing you can do,
23 because it is who they are, and they
24 would do it and will do it as long as
25 they can, and Butch did it as long as he

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2 could. He was there. He was sick. He
3 came out. Reesie brought him out, and he
4 let everybody know that he was there and
5 that they would have to step up to the
6 plate, but always worried about taking
7 care of his community.

8 And so we applaud him in this
9 Committee, with our Chair and the other
10 members of this Committee, honoring him.
11 Certainly we honor all of you and we
12 express the love and respect that we
13 have, one for the other and for us all,
14 so that we may continue to have his
15 legacy live on as long as we live on and
16 those behind us do.

17 Thank you very much, Madam
18 Chair.

19 MR. YOUNG: Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
21 very much, Councilwoman.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Is there
24 anyone else to testify on this bill?

25 (Witness approached witness

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2 table.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
4 morning.

5 MR. DURHAM: Good morning.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
7 state your name for the record and
8 proceed with your testimony.

9 MR. DURHAM: My name is Johnny
10 Durham. I'm now the sitting President of
11 MASCO that Butch had. I took his place.
12 And we've been together for most of all
13 our lives, because I've been knowing
14 Butch since he was a teenager with my
15 baby brother, and he was one of my, what
16 you call, my young boys. And we used to
17 sit in the playground. It was a mess.
18 That playground was like no apparatus for
19 the kids, nothing for the kids to do,
20 just come in and they were just trashing
21 the place. But we would have a reunion
22 there every year to bring all the people
23 in Mantua together, and Butch said,
24 What's brewing? We need a better place.
25 So he got with Jannie, said, We need a

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2 better playground. It's a mess. We need
3 paver, we need apparatus, we need
4 basketball courts, and we would like to
5 have a pool, if we can get one. So all
6 that got in the work, and so they started
7 coming.

8 Jannie and Sharif Street came
9 and surveyed it one day, and they said,
10 Okay, well, you need a lot of work done.
11 It's going to take a lot of money, but we
12 will get together and get it done. They
13 came in, they redone the whole
14 playground. They put in basketball
15 courts, they put in a pool, they put
16 everything in there, and we started
17 having like food programs in the summer
18 feeding kids to come in. And then Butch
19 said, Well, we need more. The
20 neighborhood is going down. We need
21 housing. He got with Union Hill
22 Contractors. They came in, they put the
23 houses in. But they wasn't exactly where
24 he wanted them, but he said, But they're
25 here. It's a start. So the Union Hill

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2 said, We're going to develop more, but we
3 need more participation in the
4 neighborhood, the people. So the people
5 started coming. And Butch would like
6 have our reunions and put everybody name
7 on T-shirts, their paths, who is who and
8 where you at. Well, if you ain't on that
9 T-shirt, then we'll find you alive, you
10 know.

11 So many things that he always
12 wanted for the neighborhood, for his
13 friends, because he never forgets his old
14 friends. He'd go all out. His last
15 breath was old friends. And like he say,
16 old friends and new friends are good, but
17 the old friends bring the new friends in.

18 So he was always there for
19 everybody. I can always call and he'd
20 say, Johnny, you taking care of your
21 mother? My mother is 98. He said, You
22 ain't got to do this running. I'll do
23 the running. You just be there to
24 support me and help me out and help keep
25 the guys together so we can make this

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2 community work. Because when we first
3 started MASCO, we had a meeting in the
4 playground, we had nowhere to go, and it
5 started raining on us. We said, We go
6 down Johnny's house and we have meetings
7 down there, because I was close, because
8 I'm always in the neighborhood, but I
9 never left Mantua. I've been down there
10 all my life. I'm 68 years old now.

11 So we had meetings in my house.
12 They said, We need our own headquarters.
13 We don't need to be going to nobody's
14 house. So we got with Jannie. We got
15 this house. It was a wreck, but he put
16 it together and he said, Well, we ain't
17 got the money to fix it all up. He
18 borrowed money with his wife. They
19 borrowed money to help get the house
20 together, and then we started getting
21 together, got grass, helped pay for it,
22 and now the house is still standing. We
23 still got our offices there. We still
24 open for the community. We still doing
25 the work that he started us to do, and we

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2 try to -- it's not easy now to catch up,
3 because Butch has gotten far ahead of us
4 a little bit, but we're working at it,
5 and Jannie and all of them helping us and
6 advising us to keep it going. And the
7 playground is vital to that area, because
8 it brings the people in. The kids are
9 doing more respect.

10 Mural Arts came and put a park
11 there and put a mural on the wall.
12 Tourists come in, they look at it. They
13 would call Butch and call me to come out
14 and tell the tourists about the area.
15 They want to know how the area came
16 about, redeveloped like it is.

17 So a whole lot of good things
18 came out of him just sitting in that
19 playground that was a dump for like
20 20-some years. We had a hard time in
21 that place. And when it developed like
22 it is now, the kids are more like -- I've
23 been trying to get them to keep it clean
24 or not. Since he passed, they're doing a
25 lot better with it now too, but not

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2 breaking the glass, and they coming
3 around, all the guys, they help really
4 keeping it spotless. So last week the
5 Recreation Department came out to clean
6 it. They said, Ain't no cleaning need to
7 be done. They said, We got here, it's
8 already clean. But that's the legacy
9 that Butch always wanted, to keep that
10 playground together. That brings the
11 community together. We have that reunion
12 every year. For 28 years we have our
13 reunion, and the people come down every
14 year. It got bigger and bigger and
15 bigger.

16 So we'd like to have his
17 name -- and Mural Arts is going to put a
18 mural up of him, that we didn't really
19 pick the wall yet, but to keep him in
20 memory. So I would like for y'all to
21 pass this legislation to get it done.

22 Thank you for letting me
23 testify.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

25 Absolutely, and we thank you for your

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2 testimony.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let me
4 note that he's now the President of
5 MASCO, which is Mantua and Aspen Street
6 Community Organization. That's MASCO.
7 And when he said his name was Johnny
8 Durham, did not I say all of Mantua is
9 related? As you know, when Lucien
10 Blackwell took office January 3rd, 1976,
11 he succeeded Charlie, Charles Durham, and
12 this is a Durham. So we're all --
13 everybody is friends and everybody is
14 family and all extended family. Thank
15 you.

16 Thank you, Johnny.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
18 very much.

19 Anyone else to testify on this
20 bill?

21 (Witness approached witness
22 table.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
24 morning.

25 MR. SMITH: Good morning.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Welcome.

3 Please state your name for the record and
4 proceed with your testimony.

5 MR. SMITH: Good morning. My
6 name is Albert Smith. I'm leader of the
7 Mantua Leadership Council and I'm also a
8 resident of Mantua.

9 What I'd like to say about
10 Norman -- and I always called him Butch,
11 but I'll say Norman today, because Norman
12 not only just extended himself in Mantua,
13 he reached out and helped a lot of
14 addicts to go to Williamsport and form a
15 bottom picnic annual affair that they
16 have every year in Williamsport that's
17 been going on now almost about ten years,
18 I guess. Also, he helped a lot of people
19 that was incarcerated. He used to go up
20 to the prisons. And he just extended
21 himself to the community.

22 I mean, it will take all day to
23 really talk about the good things that he
24 did from a life-style that we had when we
25 was gang guys, you know. I have a lot of

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2 respect for him, because he's offered his
3 service, he offered his organization, his
4 home to us, because we didn't have a
5 place to meet for our organization. So
6 he extended us a Wednesday night meeting.

7 He drove the drug dealers out
8 of there. He was a mentor for a lot of
9 the young guys that people don't even
10 know about that -- like drill teams that
11 he would have come in there. He had
12 students that was playing music and stuff
13 that would meet there on Saturdays. He
14 always had room for everybody.

15 He worked tremendously hard,
16 not just his sick days, just every day.
17 Butch was always giving, giving. I never
18 seen a guy that was a former gang member
19 give so much back. And Maurice and Butch
20 were brothers, but they were from
21 different areas in that bottom, and we
22 would watch Butch come home every night.
23 So he put his legacy down back in the
24 '60s on us as young boys, and now the
25 work that he did, he gave us everything,

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2 and I'm proud that his name and his mural
3 will go up there for him, because that's
4 one guy that deserve that. I even think
5 that he need to go on a library about
6 some of the community service. They need
7 to write a book about guys that do
8 community service. Mr. Young, he does it
9 also and Mantua Leadership, MCIC, and
10 it's a lot of different organizations
11 that we are former gang members, some of
12 us are former drug addicts, like myself.
13 I've been clean 18 years. Butch
14 instrumented a lot of people, and he
15 touched a lot of people.

16 I don't think there's going to
17 be two Butches. I don't think there's
18 going to be two of them. But I'd like to
19 say I'm glad that God gave me the
20 strength to be here to testify for him
21 and to everybody that know Butch, like
22 they said, he didn't talk. He just did.
23 He did. He did. His actions showed, you
24 know. He just -- he touched everybody,
25 and he touched a lot of young people that

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2 have a lot of things -- I ain't talking
3 about the guys that's confused and out
4 here and doing a lot of things that's
5 wrong because nobody has gotten them the
6 right way. He got at a lot of young guys
7 that I knew that a year before they were
8 troubled guys, they was confused, they
9 was gun-carrying guys. When they seen
10 Butch coming, it was like they seen
11 Jesus, and he put -- they had a level of
12 respect for him that young boys don't
13 have for old heads. They called us old
14 heads out of a fad, but when I was coming
15 up, you call your old head "old head,"
16 because that's what you earned. And he
17 said you was a young boy, you earned
18 that. And Butch was an old head and I'm
19 proud to say it.

20 I'm not going to say no more.

21 I'd like to thank you for having the
22 opportunity to speak on his behalf.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
25 you very, very much for your testimony,

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2 sir.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you very much. I'd note Butch was
5 always -- he went to prisons every week
6 visiting people every week.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Is there
8 anyone else to testify on Bill No.
9 100283?

10 (Witness approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
13 morning. State your name for the record.

14 MR. THAHIR: Good morning. My
15 name Muhammad Abdul Thahir and I'm the
16 Outreach Coordinator for MCIC, and I'm
17 also the Executive Director of the Muslim
18 Christian Alliance of Philadelphia.

19 You know, I'm a man of a few
20 words. I know that when a person does
21 good and the people around him start
22 noticing that and they speak about that,
23 then we know that God is pleased. So I
24 made a prayer that God touch everybody's
25 heart here and allow this changeover to

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2 happen for him and his family. And not
3 only for that, maybe the people in the
4 community would like look at the
5 changeover and stay on a straight path
6 and stay focused. You know what I mean?
7 So they can help themselves and they
8 family.

9 So I appreciate you listening
10 to me. God bless you and keep you safe.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
12 you for your testimony, indeed.

13 This concludes testimony on
14 Bill No. 100283. This concludes the
15 public hearing on the Committee on Parks,
16 Recreation and Cultural Affairs. We will
17 now go into a public meeting.

18 The Chair recognizes
19 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell for a
20 motion on Bill No. 100283.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
22 you, Madam Chairman. I move that Bill
23 No. 100283 be reported out of Committee
24 with a favorable recommendation and a
25 recommendation that the rules of Council

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2 be suspended so as to permit first
3 reading at our next session of Council.

4 (Duly seconded.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: This bill
6 has been properly moved and seconded that
7 Bill No. 100283 be reported out of this
8 Committee with a favorable recommendation
9 and that the rules of Council be
10 suspended so as to permit first reading
11 at the next scheduled session of City
12 Council.

13 All those in favor signify by
14 saying aye.

15 (Aye.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All
17 opposed?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Seeing
20 none, this bill has been moved and
21 properly seconded and, furthermore, the
22 rules of Council have been suspended so
23 as to permit first reading at the next
24 Council session.

25 This concludes this hearing.

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2 We thank you all for your testimony.

3 (Committee on Parks, Recreation

4 and Cultural Affairs concluded at 11:45

5 a.m.)

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stenographic notes taken by me upon the

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foregoing matter on May 24, 2010, and that

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this is a true and correct transcript of same.

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MICHELE L. MURPHY

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RPR-Notary Public

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