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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
PUBLIC MEETING
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

- - -

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, October 28, 1997
10:50 a.m.

- - -

BILL 970275 - An Ordinance authorizing the extension
of the terms of the Authority known as the "South
Street/Headhouse District of Philadelphia."

- - -

PRESENT:

JAMES F. KENNEY, Vice-Chair

COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILWOMAN ANNA C. VERNA
COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO
COUNCILMAN RICHARD T. MARIANO

- - -

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I N D E X

BILL 970275	PAGE
Steven Kujolic, Chairman, Board of Directors, South Street Headhouse District-----	4
Richard W. Ostrander, Executive Director, South Street Headhouse District-----	10
Ann G. Verber, Chair, Planning Committee, South Street Headhouse District-----	18
David Cohen, Consultant, South Street Headhouse District-----	33
Ray Kauffman, Board Member, South Street Headhouse District-----	37
Fluffy Palmer, President, South Street Neighbors Association-----	39
Melvin J. Buckman, President, Society Hill Civic Association-----	44
Bernice T. Hamel, President, Head House Conservancy-----	52
Irwin Edward Robinson, Solicitor, Blackwell Place Condo Association-----	63
Alan Hunter, President, Queen Village Neighbors Association-----	72
Deborah Robinson, Member, Blackwell Place Condominium Association-----	87
- - -	
Public Meeting-----	97
- - -	

1 BILL 970275

2 P R O C E E D I N G S

3 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Good morning,
4 ladies and gentlemen. The Council Committee on
5 Rules is now in session to take testimony on Bill
6 No. 970275.

7 In attendance today are myself,
8 Councilman Kenney, as Chair; Councilwoman Verna;
9 Councilman DiCicco and Councilman Mariano, who are
10 not formally on this Committee but are being
11 assigned today for purposes of a quorum.

12 Before we get started, I would like
13 to sincerely apologize to all the people who came
14 here today to testify. Every single one of you I
15 think I know.

16 And I know every single one of you
17 work for a living and have taken time out of your
18 businesses and out of your day to come here. And
19 the least that this Council could do is to be here
20 on time at 10 o'clock, as you were.

21 Councilman DiCicco is the sponsor of
22 the bill. He was going to be here. Councilman
23 Mariano was not scheduled to be here and has come
24 specially to get us a quorum.

25 So we do apologize. I guess it is

1 BILL 970275

2 the choir apologizing to the pastor. But I just
3 wanted to make sure that we made it clear that we do
4 apologize four your inconvenience and thank you for
5 coming.

6 This, Bill 970275, is an Ordinance
7 authorizing the extension of the term of the
8 Authority known as the "South Street/Headhouse
9 District of Philadelphia," pursuant to the
10 provisions of the Municipality Authorities Act of
11 1945, P.L. 382, as amended; approving the plan,
12 estimated costs and proposed method of assessment
13 and charges for and concerning business improvements
14 and administrative services to the South Street and
15 Headhouse areas of the City of Philadelphia.

16 The Chair would like to call the
17 first panel of witnesses, Steve Kujolic, Dick
18 Ostrander, and Ann Verber.

19 Please pull the microphone very close
20 to you, speak directly into it, and identify
21 yourself for the record.

22 MR. STEVEN KUJOLIC: Steve Kujolic.
23 I am Chairman of the South Street Headhouse
24 District.

25 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Please proceed.

1 BILL 970275

2 MR. KUJOLIC: Of course in front of
3 you, you have my testimony. So there is no point in
4 going over that or reading that.

5 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: For the record, if
6 you could synopsise your testimony without reading
7 it word for word, and give us a general idea as to
8 what it is your position is.

9 MR. KUJOLIC: Okay. That's what I
10 was going to do.

11 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

12 MR. KUJOLIC: The thing that I would
13 like to mention is, take a few points out of this
14 text and discuss them with you.

15 The 20 years of operation was the
16 first thing on my list. The reason we are trying to
17 go for the 20 years is stability.

18 About two, three years ago, Ann
19 Verber and myself and a couple of other people have
20 gone for financial positions to build our plazas
21 down there, and each and every one of them needed
22 stability.

23 Five years that we have originally
24 started for does not give us the stability for any
25 financial lender to give us the position that we

1 BILL 970275

2 have to go out and borrow or float bonds.

3 When Center City District took the
4 initiative to go for the 20 years, we followed in
5 their -- right behind them and went for the 20 years
6 for that reason.

7 Whether it is for a plaza, whether it
8 is for other items that we want to do on South
9 Street, we still need the stability of the long
10 term.

11 We certainly do not like to tax
12 ourselves for this long of a period of time. But we
13 realize if we want to keep our area the way it is,
14 we need this.

15 The other item that I would like to
16 talk about is the sidewalk, the cleaning and the
17 things that we have done on South Street.

18 A great deal of our budget money,
19 over \$100,000, is spent for cleaning of South
20 Street. Of course we know there is an abundance of
21 people that come down to that street.

22 We only collect a little over
23 \$200,000 totally in our budget. But we feel it is
24 very, very important to keep the area the way it is
25 and the way it's been.

1 BILL 970275

2 The last five years of our existence,
3 I think there's been a great, great improvement in
4 the South Street area as far as the sanitation goes,
5 and things like that. There is a lot more to do on
6 it.

7 The other thing, of course, is to
8 have the police mini-station on the street. Our
9 budget also provides over \$20,000 in support for the
10 mini-station, which brings us the police that we
11 need down there on time with -- for the crowds.

12 The neighborhoods, the district, we
13 all support this mini-station. I think it is a
14 great improvement. I think it is a great thing for
15 people, when they come into the city, to have the
16 security of the police at this location. So that's
17 another part of our budget that we work with.

18 My constituents will tell you a
19 little about our organizing process, so I am not
20 going to get into that. The only thing I did want
21 to get into, and the last thing I want to get into,
22 is that I am one of the founding members of the
23 district. I have been working very, very hard for
24 this district for seven years now.

25 It started in existence five years

1 BILL 970275

2 ago, but two years prior to that we worked in back
3 rooms, in Downey's Restaurant, and anyplace that we
4 could find to bring all these people together and to
5 see what we could do about South Street.

6 I myself think nothing of people --
7 or putting people on the Board, or anything like
8 that, that really worked for the district.

9 We have residents on the Board. We
10 have businesspeople on the Board. We don't need
11 free-loaders. We don't need people with figure
12 heads that just say they are on the Board of South
13 Street District; we need workers.

14 Businesspeople are very, very tied up
15 most of the time, and the residents that we have on
16 the Board do work for us. There's a 23-member
17 Board. It is not a big Board, but we accomplish a
18 lot of things.

19 In the last four and a half years, I
20 don't think that the South Street area would be like
21 it is if it wasn't for the district.

22 We have set up different committees
23 where we bring the neighborhood groups in. Ann and
24 myself have worked five years ago on setting up a
25 Committee with the zoning.

1 BILL 970275

2 And our objective was to have an
3 one-stop-shop for people coming into the area that
4 wanted to open up businesses.

5 It was very difficult before to --
6 for people coming in. They would have to go to all
7 the different committees.

8 Well, up until this year, this
9 committee is starting to roll. Our past president
10 is chairing that committee. But on that committee
11 he has Queen Village, he has South Street Neighbors,
12 and he has representatives of those two groups that
13 attend these meetings. And everybody gets a feed
14 for when these people come in and form -- want to
15 form a business. We hear it all at one spot.

16 So these are little things that we
17 do. And we try to bring everything into being with
18 the neighborhoods.

19 I live in the neighborhood for over
20 25 years, so it is not something that I don't think
21 highly of.

22 I work there. I live there. And we
23 try to bring everybody together with forums, with
24 meetings, with committees.

25 I just don't have a feel when people

1 BILL 970275

2 do not take advantage of this, and just want to be
3 on the Board just to be on the Board.

4 I thank you for hearing me. I don't
5 want to take too much time. But these are just some
6 of the points that I wanted to bring out.

7 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you for your
8 testimony. We will go through the entire panel and
9 then we will ask questions.

10 MR. RICHARD W. OSTRANDER: I am Dick
11 Ostrander. I am the Executive Director of the South
12 Street Headhouse District. I am one of the founding
13 Board members of the district, and was a Board
14 member for about the first two years of the
15 district's existence.

16 I live a block and a half from South
17 Street, in a house on the 400 block of South 6th
18 Street, where we moved 27 years ago, and soon
19 discovered that South Street was a vital part of our
20 lives.

21 And soon discovered and made a
22 realization, which I realize more today than ever,
23 that a healthy South Street, a good, vibrant
24 business community on South Street means everybody
25 in the world to all of the surrounding residential

1 BILL 970275

2 communities.

3 It has been my belief for years, and
4 it is firmly and strongly today, that a South Street
5 in good health, in good business health, a good
6 economy, raises property values in all the
7 surrounding communities. It is an absolute
8 necessity, in addition to being a lot of fun, the
9 places to go.

10 If I may just refer very briefly to
11 Steve's final comment. He mentioned the Zoning
12 Committee, and that several neighborhood groups were
13 on that committee and regularly appeared.

14 He left on Society Hill Civic
15 association, whose Zoning chairperson has always
16 been on our invitation list, but has, unfortunately,
17 never attended one of our meetings.

18 I am here, basically, to talk about
19 the organizing process, about where we hope to go
20 tomorrow, and detail a little bit the renewal
21 process that we have been through, Mr. Chairman.
22 And I only intend to take two or three minutes.

23 The organizing process was an amazing
24 one. You or your representative, Mr. Chairman, were
25 frequently in attendance, as was our then

1 BILL 970275

2 Councilman, representatives from various City
3 departments, the Police Department, the Commerce
4 Department, the Mayor's Office, et cetera.

5 It was an exciting and complicated
6 time. We spent many, many months and many, many
7 meetings going over how we were to compose
8 ourselves, how we were to organize ourselves, who
9 would be and who would not be represented on the
10 Board, and how those positions were to be chosen.

11 We have with us today, sitting back
12 available for comment, if you need his comments,
13 Mr. David Cohen, who was then with CPDC, the Central
14 Philadelphia Development Corporation, was our
15 consultant in the organizing process. And, in fact,
16 has been our consultant again in the renewal
17 process.

18 One of the things that we debated
19 extensively, and I know you are going to hear more
20 about it from several people this morning, was who
21 and how should people be represented on the Board.

22 There were discussions about whether
23 each block should have a designated seat on the
24 Board. There were discussions about whether each
25 neighborhood should have a designated seat on the

1 BILL 970275

2 Board.

3 There were discussions about each
4 business category -- restaurants, retail, drugstore,
5 various business categories -- each having a
6 designated seat on the Board.

7 The decision, after a lot of
8 consideration, was that that really was not the best
9 and strongest way to guarantee a good and strong and
10 continuing Board.

11 And the bylaws were very carefully
12 drafted to be as inclusive as possible, allowing any
13 person who has interest in the support and benefit
14 and welfare of the district to be qualified for
15 membership on our Board. And it is that way today.

16 I think that Ann Verber will make
17 specific reference to it. It is part of our Article
18 5 in the bylaws. And there is a single paragraph
19 which very specifically deals with the process, and
20 is advertised annually as we go to the nomination
21 process.

22 I recall one of the fun things as we
23 started our district was, we had several classes of
24 membership. Five-year terms were specified, but you
25 have to start some place.

1 BILL 970275

2 So we started with memberships of
3 one, two, three, four, and five years. And we drew
4 straws to see who was going to get which membership
5 category, and then we acted accordingly.

6 Looking a little bit toward the
7 future, which is the second thing I am to spend my
8 time with, I put on the floor just in front of the
9 table two renderings, two artistic renderings, of
10 the Streetscape Project, which has been a project
11 that has been under consideration by us and which we
12 hope to forward. And it is a complicated and
13 difficult and costly project.

14 When the Delta Group originally
15 created these plans, and looked over the work area,
16 over two years ago, two and a half years ago, the
17 project was estimated to cost in excess of \$12
18 million.

19 I would imagine that that project
20 today would be costed at maybe \$15 million, or some
21 such number. We don't have an exact number. We do
22 know it is a highly desirable development.

23 The things that you are looking at
24 were first presented to public meetings held at the
25 4th and Pine Street Community Center two years ago

1 BILL 970275

2 January. They were almost universally applauded,
3 welcomed, and people wished us well in the process.

4 As we go forward in our renewal
5 process, the Streetscape is one of the principal
6 reasons for our interest in an extended renewal
7 period.

8 We will be working to get included in
9 the capital budget, and I'm sure that we will be
10 back to City Council in one fashion or another for
11 that.

12 We will also be looking toward the
13 Commonwealth, towards the federal government,
14 towards foundations, towards corporate sponsors,
15 towards businesspeople in the community to support
16 the project with financial aid.

17 Clearly, every one of these funding
18 sources is going to require stability. They will
19 require an extended period of our existence, as was
20 the case in the Center City District, when they were
21 renewed for 20 years so that they could float a bond
22 issue to support the project which is now going on
23 so significantly and so stunningly.

24 The improvements they have made are
25 made because they have the 20-year stability. That

1 BILL 970275

2 is what we ask for 20 years for.

3 My final comments will be, briefly,
4 about our actual renewal process. And I won't
5 deviate very much from the statement, the written
6 statement, which you have, because it is a very
7 precise process, and I don't want to risk
8 misstating.

9 The procedure requires that every
10 property owner who has a chance to be assessed may
11 be -- must be advised of the renewal process. And
12 after that, they have a 45-day period during which
13 they may vote us down, if you will, by responding
14 that they do not wish to have the district renewed.

15 If more than one-third of the
16 property owners take that step, if they vote against
17 us, the district ceases to exist, it automatically
18 is down.

19 In our case, that down number means
20 that we would have to have in the vicinity of 150 to
21 175 objections. I have forgotten the exact number
22 of assessed properties. But it is on the low side
23 under 200, but approaching that number.

24 In our particular case, nearly a
25 thousand formal letters were mailed to all of the

1 BILL 970275

2 property owners and also to all of the business
3 owners.

4 The business owners do not have a
5 vote unless they own the property. But they have
6 the privilege of speaking to their landlords and
7 saying the district is or is not doing a good job,
8 and they should or should not be renewed.

9 I have copies of those letters, if
10 you are interested in them. I have a copy of the
11 public notice that was published on April 22,
12 advising everybody of the community hearing, which
13 was held on May 6 at the Old Pine Community Center.

14 The 45-day period for objections to
15 the renewal process expired on the 20th day of
16 June.

17 We were amazed, surprised, and
18 delighted, any wonderful adjective that you would
19 like to apply, on the date of June 20 to find that
20 we had a grand total of one objection, one. It was
21 an astounding affirmation of what we had done.

22 The assessments are not
23 insignificant. And everybody -- I made reference
24 here when I was writing my notes, looking over my
25 notes last night, that I remembered the Ivory Soap

1 BILL 970275

2 slogan. 99-and-44-one-hundredths percent pure. We
3 exceeded that. Almost as close to -- literally as
4 close to 100 percent as you can get.

5 We feel strongly that we have an
6 excellent opportunity to make significant
7 contributions to the community at large, to the
8 South Street Headhouse District, and to the
9 neighboring communities as we go forward.

10 We are hopeful that your actions
11 today will help us in that process of renewal.

12 Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
14 for your testimony.

15 Please identify yourself and
16 proceed.

17 MS. ANN G. VERBER: My name is Ann
18 Verber. I am the Chair of the Planning Committee
19 for the District. I am the Chair of the Nominating
20 Committee. I am on the Board, and was one of the
21 founding Board members when the district was brought
22 into existence.

23 I was on the committee early on that
24 contained the business and commercial
25 representatives, the community representatives.

1 BILL 970275

2 I was at that time the President of
3 Queen Village Neighbors. I lived in Queen Village
4 for 14 years, and have just moved into Society
5 Hill. So I am still bracketing South Street.

6 Dick Ostrander was the Chair of
7 Society Hill Civic. Dominic Lazaro was representing
8 Bella Vista.

9 And I think I would like to make the
10 point that the district began with an all-inclusive
11 consideration of business and communities.

12 The organizers of the district, who
13 were the initial property owners, who had the idea
14 in the first place, understood that this is a
15 commercial business district.

16 That, by law, the only people who can
17 be actual members, voting members, of the district
18 are those who own property within the boundaries of
19 the district, commercial property.

20 However, there was a sensitivity
21 then, which we were all very pleased about -- and I
22 believe it has continued -- to the neighborhood
23 concerns.

24 Because although residents of Queen
25 Village and Society Hill, Bella Vista, the

1 BILL 970275

2 neighbors' associations, would not actually ever be
3 assessed for taxes or voting on the renewal of the
4 district, the impact of the founding of the district
5 was going to be felt in an area that was much larger
6 than just the corridor of South Street.

7 And, so, residential input was sought
8 right from the beginning.

9 And the Chairs of the various civic
10 groups were asked to participate, or to delegate the
11 initial representation. And the Chairs all decided
12 to participate because we wanted to see what was
13 happening.

14 And we were all part of the ensuing
15 debate about how the Board of the district would be
16 structured once City Council voted the district into
17 existence.

18 And we realized that the district is
19 not going to have a great many outside resources.
20 Our budget is not large. We have one professional
21 staff member we employ, one part-time business --
22 one part-time bookkeeper, and we needed to depend on
23 our Board members, and, through them, our committee
24 structures, to accomplish all of the work of the
25 district.

1 BILL 970275

2 So it was decided, as Dick said --
3 and I won't continue to repeat -- that we would
4 elect people to the Board as individuals who showed
5 an interest in rolling up their sleeves and coming
6 to work, individuals who wanted to further the goals
7 of the district and who were willing to put in the
8 time that we could not pay professionals to, you
9 know, to do for us.

10 The bylaws, which you have in front
11 of you, the main section that we wanted to call your
12 attention to about the nominations, show that it is
13 individuals who are solicited to participate on the
14 district Board.

15 We have a nominating process. We
16 do -- well, let me step back a moment. We do all
17 our business in the sunshine. We are the most open
18 organization that we can possibly be.

19 Our monthly Board meetings are
20 advertised well in advance. They occur on the same
21 day of each month. And all the public is invited to
22 participate. And we often have a very nice gallery
23 of interested people who come and participate and
24 comment and give us the benefit of their thinking.

25 We have a very active committee

1 BILL 970275

2 structure. And the Board members are involved in
3 the committees. We have, just for your information,
4 Sanitation Committee, Public Safety, Traffic and
5 Parking, Marketing and Promotion, Zoning, Business
6 Communication, Street Decor, and Development and
7 Planning.

8 And the business of the district gets
9 done in those committees, the work gets done in the
10 committees, and then comes up to the Board for
11 public discussion, public approval, modification if
12 something isn't working.

13 When we have our annual election of
14 Board members to fill expiring or vacant terms, we
15 publicize this for -- well, for weeks in advance.
16 We invite self-nominations of people who are
17 interested in working.

18 We encourage people who nominate
19 themselves and say, "This sounds good. I'd like to
20 be on the Board," we encourage them to join us, to
21 come into the committees, to work and to see what
22 we're all about, and we get to know them and they
23 get to know us.

24 It doesn't work 100 percent of the
25 time exactly that way. But in order to get our work

1 BILL 970275

2 done, we need people who are going to come and do
3 the business of the district.

4 We have a very, very diverse Board.
5 And attached to my testimony is a list -- at the
6 very end is a list of the Board members listed by
7 their neighborhood of residence.

8 And of the 23 Board members, 15 are
9 clustered around South Street. We have 5 from
10 Society Hill, 5 from Queen Village, 2 from South
11 Philadelphia, 2 from Bella Vista, we have a Wash
12 West representative, and then we have a handful of
13 business owners who commute in from the suburbs and
14 get caught in traffic every time we have an
15 early-morning Board meeting.

16 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: That's why they
17 should move back.

18 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: They could avoid
19 that if they would just move back.

20 MS. VERBER: If they only knew the
21 right place to live, they could avoid all of that.

22 MR. KUJOLIC: One of them is still on
23 the Expressway.

24 MS. VERBER: That's probably true.

25 The other point that I would like to

1 BILL 970275

2 make is to just reaffirm, from my perspective as
3 Chair of the Planning Committee, the need for us to
4 be able to stay in business for the period of time
5 for which we have asked reauthorization.

6 There are many of us here who have
7 been traveling the circuit from one funding source
8 to another to try to do the things that will achieve
9 our goals, which really is to make South Street not
10 only a benefit for the businesspeople who live
11 there, but a vital link in the whole city
12 development for tourists' visits, for entertainment,
13 and yet to keep it civil so that all the surrounding
14 communities can enjoy the improvement of South
15 Street, without being burdened by incivilities that
16 might go along with bringing in more people.

17 When we have taken our dog and pony
18 show on the road to potential funders, we have been
19 told, "Well, this is a great idea. We love it. Who
20 else is going to support you, and how do we know you
21 are going to be here?"

22 So that if we, a corporate sponsor,
23 wants to dedicate a plaza, that sponsor isn't going
24 to want to see the corporate logo over an area where
25 grass is growing through the cracks because suddenly

1 BILL 970275

2 we are out of business.

3 And it makes a difference to the --
4 our ability to continue and to achieve our expanded
5 goals for the future.

6 And I want to thank you very much for
7 the opportunity to present this testimony.

8 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
9 for your testimony.

10 On a personal comment, the work of
11 the district, I think, has made a marked improvement
12 on the condition of the street, primarily its
13 cleanliness.

14 One of the problems that I was very
15 concerned about a number of years ago was the
16 sidewalks had seemed to be caked with material from
17 restaurants and people dropping.

18 There is just such a significant
19 difference in the quality of sidewalk and just in
20 the organizational aspects of the street.

21 That there seems to be a lot more
22 order, without decreasing the benefits of the
23 eclectic nature of South Street.

24 I think you have had a nice mix of
25 order and still freedom and funk and other things

1 BILL 970275

2 that make the street what it is.

3 But it is cleaner and safer, I feel
4 safer there, than in the past number of years. And
5 I really think you have done a wonderful job.

6 One question. Do you have any
7 numbers on the average annual cost per business? I
8 know businesses pay different rates based on their
9 assessment.

10 But I'm wondering if there has ever
11 been established what each individual businessperson
12 on average is putting into the district.

13 MR. OSTRANDER: David Cohen could
14 address that. He probably, David probably, knows
15 the formula.

16 The formula is rather archaic. It
17 involves a calculation that includes the combined
18 value of all the properties in the district. And
19 the other factors that are considered are the
20 individual assessment related to that combined
21 value, and the district's budget related to that.

22 So there is no specific number. It
23 depends upon the valuation of the individual
24 property. The more expensive properties pay more.

25 As a rule of thumb, as just a

1 BILL 970275

2 round -- this is sort of the number -- it is about a
3 7 percent surcharge on their regular city taxes. It
4 is in that vicinity.

5 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Not insignificant.

6 MR. OSTRANDER: Not insignificant.

7 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: And so the record
8 is clear, there is no cost whatsoever to any
9 residential property owner in the district or around
10 the district, for that matter?

11 MR. OSTRANDER: Any residential
12 property owner is invited -- they receive an
13 assessment bill at the proper time of year, which
14 will be in late January.

15 At that time, any single-family,
16 owner-occupied dwelling can exempt themselves from
17 paying the assessment simply by filing a piece of
18 paper. And that's very clear.

19 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: And the
20 solicitation on this go-around for commercial
21 property owners, was it clear to them that the
22 request was going to be made for a 20-year term?

23 MR. OSTRANDER: It was, indeed. It
24 was part of the letter.

25 And enclosed with the -- enclosed

1 BILL 970275

2 with the renewal letter was the district renewal
3 plan, the reauthorization plan, which you have seen
4 copies of, and which details exactly what our
5 mission is, what our expectations are, and what the
6 assessment -- how the assessment formula will be
7 adjusted over the years.

8 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Okay.

9 Councilman DiCicco.

10 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chairman.

12 My question any one of you can
13 answer.

14 When this Streetscape plan was first
15 designed, or when you began the design of it, how
16 long ago was that?

17 I remember attending, I think it may
18 have been at the Society Hill Sheraton or some
19 place, there was a lender came in and did a slide
20 presentation?

21 MS. VERBER: Yes. We contracted with
22 the Delta Group between four and five years ago to
23 start this process.

24 And they have very generously
25 exceeded the amount we were able to start with them,

1 BILL 970275

2 to give us additional updates and renderings and to
3 suggest how costs might be cut without sacrificing
4 the overall plan.

5 We have pursued it actively, and have
6 been hampered because money is -- as certainly I am
7 preaching to the choir -- money is not easily
8 available and we did not have the -- either a track
9 record or a guarantee that we were going to be able
10 to use and then administer and maintain what we were
11 asking people to give to us.

12 We have had a tremendously
13 enthusiastic reception, as I think you know. And I
14 believe that if Council authorizes the district
15 under the pending reauthorization proposal, that,
16 plus our planning of how we can break the project
17 into segments and have the segments funded
18 individually, will bear fruit very soon.

19 I think we are going to be able to
20 hit the ground running if we get the
21 reauthorization.

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: So my point, I
23 guess, is that since the inception, the vision, the
24 idea of the new Streetscape plan, you have already
25 spent between four and five years -- without being

1 BILL 970275

2 critical -- and the best we have gotten is,
3 obviously, some drawings and a concept and a plan.
4 But we haven't been able to go any further.

5 And it took almost five years to get
6 to that point.

7 MS. VERBER: That is correct.

8 And Dick said he had an additional
9 comment.

10 MR. OSTRANDER: I can speak to the
11 date.

12 The Delta Group's work came to a
13 state where it could be publicly exposed for the
14 first time late in 1994, and there was a public
15 meeting.

16 They took the comments from that
17 meeting, made additions, changes, and subsequently
18 came back to us, to another public meeting, which
19 was in January of 1995.

20 And that was the first time at which
21 we saw these color renderings.

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: I guess that's
23 the presentation that I was present at. I didn't
24 even think I would be a Councilman at that time.

25 MR. OSTRANDER: I believe you were at

1 BILL 970275

2 that meeting.

3 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Thank you.

4 And if I can read into the record,
5 there is a letter from Paul Levy, who was not able
6 to be here this morning, and asked that I read this
7 into the record. Paul Levy is the Executive
8 Director of the Center City District.

9 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Please proceed.

10 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: "I am writing in
11 support of the proposed reauthorization of the South
12 Street Headhouse District. The South Street
13 community has demonstrated clearly that they have
14 been able to make the special service district
15 concept work in a smaller scale commercial
16 district.

17 "My understanding is that they have
18 been reauthorized by an almost unanimous vote of the
19 affected property owners who must pay the
20 supplementary charges.

21 "They have thus served as an
22 important model for neighborhoods across the city
23 who may have initially thought that this approach
24 could only work in densely populated, central
25 business districts.

1 BILL 970275

2 "I am in support, as well, of the
3 proposed longer life for the South Street Headhouse
4 District to give them the long-term stability
5 necessary to carry out Streetscape improvements."

6 Signed by Paul R. Levy, Executive
7 Director of Center City District.

8 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: That will be made
9 part of the record.

10 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
11 Verna.

12 COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman.

14 I don't have any questions. I simply
15 want to tell you how impressed I am with your
16 testimony.

17 I think that you are certainly well
18 organized. And I want to applaud you, because, I
19 will tell you, it is not very frequently that we get
20 groups come in as organized as you have been. And I
21 think that you are to be applauded for all of your
22 contributions.

23 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
24 much. Thank you for your testimony.

25 MS. VERBER: Thank you for the

1 BILL 970275

2 opportunity.

3 Mr. Cohen and Mr. Kauffman, do you
4 have anything you want to add?

5 MR. DAVID COHEN: Thank you. I am
6 David Cohen, and I am a consultant to the South
7 Street Headhouse District.

8 I consulted initially in a prior
9 capacity to help get the district up and running.
10 And I have also been involved in working with the
11 district on the process to getting reauthorized this
12 time.

13 I just want to make a brief statement
14 about the 20-year reauthorization time period.

15 Under the enabling legislation, the
16 Municipality Authorities Act of 1945, as amended,
17 districts can be operational for a period up to 50
18 years. So under the legal basis, 20 years clearly
19 falls within that parameter.

20 Also, the district chose to follow
21 the precedent set by the Center City District to be
22 reauthorized for a 20-year period.

23 As earlier speakers have commented,
24 the 20-year period will better enable the district
25 to carry out Streetscape improvement plans and other

1 BILL 970275

2 capitalization projects by possibly incurring debt
3 to be paid in future years with assessments, and
4 also by entering into cooperative arrangements with
5 public and private funders that want to see
6 stability and a long-term track record that the
7 20-year process can provide.

8 Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
10 much.

11 Any questions for Mr. Cohen?

12 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Yes. Thank you,
13 Mr. Cohen.

14 It is obvious that there are some
15 people here this morning who will be suggesting that
16 the reauthorization be held to a lesser time than 20
17 years.

18 In your professional opinion, could
19 you shed some light on to why that may not be in the
20 best interests of the South Street Headhouse
21 District?

22 And I know you just explained
23 something about the bond things. But why wouldn't
24 it work for five years?

25 MR. COHEN: There are two or three

1 BILL 970275

2 points I want to address in response to that
3 question.

4 The authorization process for a
5 district is time-consuming, it costs money and
6 effort, which diverts districts from the true
7 mission of improving an area, whether it is Center
8 City or South Street or another neighborhood in
9 Philadelphia, that is involved in the district
10 process.

11 So that will be one reason why the
12 district should be for a period of time that has a
13 certain longevity involved to it.

14 The second reason would be that the
15 20 years would enable South Street District
16 conceptually to incur debt that could be repaid over
17 a longer period of time.

18 I am not suggesting that South Street
19 will do this or can do this, because their
20 assessment rate and total assessed valuation is much
21 smaller than Center City.

22 But Center City District is able to,
23 as I understand it, to incur some financial
24 obligations the city would normally have to incur to
25 provide matching funds for Streetscape improvement

1 BILL 970275

2 plan.

3 So potentially through loans and
4 potentially through floating bond issues, the South
5 Street Headhouse District can legally incur both of
6 those expenses and use both of those processes.

7 It could determine a way to pay back
8 debt over a period of time, with the much more
9 substantial base of funding than they would have
10 over a five-year period.

11 Also, in regards to the 20-year
12 period, the district, I believe, during the first
13 five years has established a track record as being
14 credible, as being productive, efficient, and
15 achieving a lot of their stated goals in the first
16 five years.

17 The district would not be operating
18 in perpetuity, but would operate under an additional
19 20-year time sunset provision.

20 The third point is, if the process
21 was decided by Council to be less than 20 years for
22 reauthorization, the district would have to go back
23 and notify all property owners again, redo a plan,
24 submit that plan to all the property owners and
25 commercial tenants by now, hold a public hearing,

1 BILL 970275

2 and then wait for the vote back, the one-third
3 negative vote against the district.

4 So it would incur additional time and
5 expense to the district, and would put the district
6 back at least four months in the process to be
7 reauthorized because of building time delays in
8 regards to that process.

9 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Thank you very
10 much.

11 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Mr. Kauffman.

12 MR. RAY KAUFFMAN: Thank you. Ray
13 Kauffman, and I am a member of the Board of the
14 South Street Headhouse District.

15 The testimony that was already given
16 this morning pretty much handles most of the
17 situation.

18 I don't really want to go over all of
19 it, except to say that, in the very beginning, we
20 set very, very high standards and very large goals
21 for this district, which we have tried to do.

22 We have, for many, many years,
23 handled tremendous groups of people with probably
24 one of the best safety records in the entire city.

25 We have done everything that we could

1 BILL 970275

2 to support the local police. We have done
3 everything we could as far as sanitation. And we
4 still are continuing in these efforts.

5 These people who formed this Board at
6 the beginning, this was not a
7 taxation-without-representation situation. This is
8 a situation where people voluntarily decided to give
9 their money and their efforts to make the area --
10 not just South Street itself, but the entire area --
11 a better place for people to live and to work and to
12 invest their money into property. And this is
13 what's happened.

14 And we have a growing situation that
15 should continue to flourish. I think that the
16 20-year plan, because of the things that other Board
17 members have already expressed, as far as being able
18 to come up with the money to be able to put these
19 projects forth, so that more people will want to
20 come to the South Street area and enjoy it for what
21 it is, and the better thing that it can even
22 become.

23 So that's my opinion that I wanted to
24 express here this morning.

25 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very

1 BILL 970275

2 much.

3 Any questions of Mr. Kauffman or
4 Mr. Cohen?

5 Thank you very much for your
6 testimony.

7 The Chair now calls Mr. Buckman, Miss
8 Palmer, Mr. Robinson, and Miss Hamel, if they want
9 to come up as a panel.

10 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Mr. Hunter is not
11 on my list. Is he interested in testifying?

12 MS. FLUFFY PALMER: Yes.

13 Good morning.

14 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Good morning.

15 MS. PALMER: I think that you have a
16 copy of my testimony. Officially introducing
17 myself, I am Fluffy Palmer, President of South
18 Street Neighborhood Association.

19 I would also like to introduce myself
20 as a founding non-member of the district, because I
21 was initially on all the task forces that -- or the
22 majority, anyway, of the task forces that were set
23 up when we, as residents, were invited to the
24 Mayor's task force, when discussions about a
25 district and how to kind of clean up our act were

1 BILL 970275

2 held. I am guessing six and seven years ago.

3 Before the actual formation of the
4 district, there were several other task forces that
5 certainly didn't do the same thing, but the intent
6 was to be the initiators of this kind of a
7 district.

8 In fact, I can't remember the exact
9 name -- maybe somebody else does here -- it wasn't a
10 special services district, but it was in fact called
11 a district.

12 I have rolled up my sleeves on many
13 of the committees of the special services district.
14 I have been actively in the past participating on
15 the Sanitation Committee, on the Planning
16 Committee.

17 I have introduced my name to be a
18 Board member for several years in a row. The last
19 couple of years I actually think I wrote a letter
20 saying, "Please see last year's letter, it's pretty
21 much the same."

22 I actually do not have the time now
23 to serve as a member, so I feel safe in saying
24 this. Usually it is the person who comes up with an
25 idea that gets put on that committee.

1 BILL 970275

2 Because I am President of the South
3 Street Neighborhood Association, I don't have time
4 right now to serve as a district Board member. But
5 I certainly have introduced my name many years in a
6 row after having, I believe, fulfilled all the
7 qualifications of a Board member, which includes
8 showing up, rolling up your sleeves and working,
9 having the interests of the district and the
10 neighborhood in mind.

11 Maybe not always having the same
12 exact opinion, but certainly overall having the same
13 goals in mind.

14 I have never been invited to be a
15 Board member. So I just want to clarify that for
16 the rules. That there is something more than just
17 putting your name in and volunteering your time that
18 enables you to be a member of this Board.

19 I would like to say officially that
20 the South Street Neighborhood Association goes on
21 record as saying that we enthusiastically support
22 this special services district being recertified.

23 The South Street corridor is being
24 better served because of them in terms of
25 sanitation, safety, and communication.

1 BILL 970275

2 We would, however, like to see
3 certain changes made in the Charter, and we feel
4 that it will benefit all of us who work and live in
5 the corridor.

6 First we need to have specified and
7 required community representation on the district's
8 Board. There are many decisions being made daily
9 and monthly that affect our everyday lives.

10 While there is limited representation
11 now, that is strictly at the whim of the membership,
12 and not based on any systematic representation for
13 each of the affected communities.

14 We need to have representatives
15 selected by each association who cannot always speak
16 for our interests, but communicate the interests of
17 the Board to us, the people who live and work here.

18 It is very important that this is
19 established as a standard, and not an intermittent
20 event.

21 In order for this to consistently
22 happen, I believe it must be required by the bylaws
23 of the district.

24 Second, to approve any body for 20
25 years is stretching the boundaries of my common

1 BILL 970275

2 sense. A 5-year term, or 10 at most, would be a
3 more reasonable limit, at the end of which the
4 district could be reconfirmed. How can we begin to
5 know what we will want and what will be best for us
6 in 20 years?

7 I think for us that is especially
8 exaggerated because we don't have the input of ideas
9 into what the district does, while we do receive the
10 effect of the actions.

11 I would like to commend the officers
12 and Board members of the district for all the hard
13 work they do and the time and energy they
14 volunteer. I have seen and witnessed that myself.

15 We, the South Street Neighborhood
16 Association, as well as all of the other nearby
17 community groups, share the same goals as the
18 special services Board, to provide a better,
19 cleaner, and safer neighborhood in which to live,
20 work, shop, and dine, and to attract a diverse and
21 responsible group of visitors to the area.

22 Thank you very much for considering
23 these modifications.

24 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
25 for your testimony.

1 BILL 970275

2 Whoever would like to go next, please
3 identify yourself.

4 MR. MELVIN J. BUCKMAN: Good morning,
5 Mr. Kenney, and good morning, Mr. DiCicco.

6 My name is Mel Buckman. I am
7 President of the Society Hill Civic Association, and
8 have been for the last two and a half years. And I
9 thank Council for giving us this opportunity to
10 participate in these proceedings.

11 And I am sure that our testimony will
12 be considered, even though, in a way, it comes at
13 the very end of the process, as opposed to what
14 happened six or seven years ago, when the
15 communities were involved all during the process.

16 I think that the testimony we heard
17 from the district demonstrates that before there was
18 a district, everybody thought that the people that
19 lived around the district should have some
20 participation in its creation and in its operation.

21 And I will talk more about that
22 later. But, first, a brief statement of what is
23 Society Hill.

24 It is a neighborhood of over 5700
25 residents in Center City. Basically we lie between

1 BILL 970275

2 the South Street District, the Independence Park,
3 8th Street, and Delaware Avenue.

4 We are in the midst of extensive
5 business, entertainment, and tourist activity,
6 which, as you know, brings thousands of visitors
7 annually to Philadelphia, most of whom go through
8 Society Hill at one time or another.

9 But our neighborhood itself is
10 predominantly residential. Over the past 30 years
11 it has been one of the great urban successes in this
12 country.

13 It has been upgraded from a blighted
14 area of flop houses, et cetera, to one of the most
15 beautiful residential districts of any city
16 anywhere, and certainly the most extensive historic
17 residential district of any major American city.

18 We live in Society Hill because of
19 its beauty and its location in the heart of the
20 city, convenient to shopping and all the other
21 things the city provides.

22 To keep the neighborhood as it is, it
23 is essential that it remain a good place to live.
24 This is required not only for our own tranquility,
25 but to maintain our property values and to attract

1 BILL 970275

2 new residents, when, as is inevitable, for many
3 reasons, people move away.

4 The association itself is a voluntary
5 neighborhood association of residents of Society
6 Hill. We have over 660 memberships, most of which
7 are households of two or more individuals.

8 We are all unpaid volunteers. We
9 have an administrator who takes care of clerical
10 functions. We certainly don't have an
11 \$80,000-a-year administrative and professional
12 budget, as does the South Street District.

13 Our mission is to preserve the
14 beauty, tranquility, and quality of our community.

15 And, in passing, I must say that if
16 our Zoning Chair has ignored invitations to a
17 meeting, it is news to me. But if Miss Verber said
18 that happened, I guess it happened.

19 Now, what are our concerns about
20 this? We don't oppose the continuation of the
21 district. Indeed, we urge its continuance, but
22 under different terms than have been proposed.

23 And this is the reason: The district
24 was created to promote business activity in the
25 South Street corridor adjacent to our neighborhood.

1 BILL 970275

2 It does this by bringing in more and
3 more customers. And they congest our streets, spill
4 over into our neighborhood, and are noisy, and
5 otherwise deleterious fashion.

6 There has been so much in the press
7 about the need for toilet facilities, about the need
8 for better sanitation, about the need for noise
9 control. And I need not go into it all now.

10 Now, we have had lip service from the
11 district from all this. But the thrust of all the
12 district's activities has been, from the first, to
13 promote business, without regard to how that may
14 impact on the surrounding areas.

15 And believe me, I don't think it is
16 evil that they did this. That's what they were
17 formed for. But it does have an effect on us.

18 Now, as I said before, that attitude
19 has not always prevailed. Before the district was
20 authorized, as has been testified by the district
21 proponents themselves, there was substantial
22 neighborhood support and participation.

23 And I believe that if the
24 neighborhoods had not approved this, there probably
25 wouldn't be a district.

1 BILL 970275

2 But now that they have been in
3 business for five years, they don't want to hear
4 from us.

5 And going back to this process, they
6 have known for several years that we wanted
7 representation on their Board. And they have just
8 stonewalled us and said no, even though in the
9 beginning everyone says that it was promised that
10 the neighborhood would continue to be represented.

11 Now, is the neighborhood
12 represented? Yes, there is a list that Miss Verber
13 provided. And it shows five members from Society
14 Hill.

15 Without getting into personalities, I
16 will tell you that every one of those persons listed
17 have important business or professional interests on
18 South Street or in the district.

19 And, therefore, if there is an issue
20 as to whether the district should do something that
21 the neighborhood really wouldn't want, there is an
22 innate conflict of interest. These people do not
23 represent the residential community.

24 The second matter of concern is this
25 20-year extension. 20 years is a long time. And

1 BILL 970275

2 the city should not cede its power over the district
3 for such a long period of time.

4 Because once you give this 20-year
5 charter, gentlemen, you cannot change it without the
6 district's consent under the prevailing
7 constitutional law.

8 Now, there has been some talk about
9 floating a bond issue. Well, if you look at the
10 budget of 323,000 a year, and figure that maybe they
11 take 25 percent of all this money and put it into
12 bond payments, they might raise a million and a half
13 dollars.

14 I can tell you, because it is part of
15 my professional work, that you will not find an
16 investment banker that will float a
17 million-and-a-half-dollar bond issue. It doesn't
18 exist.

19 Now, we now have been told about
20 corporate support. It is the first we have heard
21 about it. And I want to address that briefly in a
22 moment.

23 But our position, basically, is,
24 first -- and I want this to be very clear on the
25 record -- we believe the district has had a

1 BILL 970275

2 beneficial effect, and should be renewed, but on
3 different terms.

4 Second, the district shouldn't be
5 continued, though, unless the surrounding
6 neighborhoods are provided with dedicated Board
7 representation.

8 Experience has shown that we cannot
9 rely upon the promises of the managers of the
10 district to provide that representation, or, indeed,
11 to give attention to the needs of the
12 neighborhoods.

13 Therefore, we request that the
14 neighboring associations most directly impacted be
15 entitled to dedicated Board seats to give them an
16 effective vote on the Board.

17 And, last, 20 years is too long. The
18 reorganization plan, which has been submitted as
19 part of the proposed bill, does not contain any
20 detail of any project for which a 20-year term would
21 be required.

22 It does not say anything about
23 corporate sponsorship or bond issues or loans or
24 anything of the sort.

25 They have given no reason to Council

1 BILL 970275

2 to cede its jurisdiction to the district for 20
3 years.

4 The only specific proposals in that
5 plan are to keep the sidewalks clean and purchase
6 waste baskets. And I don't think you need a 20-year
7 term for that purpose.

8 We ask that in considering this bill,
9 Council keep in mind that it is creating an entity
10 of substantial power. This district has the power
11 to tax and, from that power, to use its tax funds in
12 many, many different ways.

13 Insofar as the district's activities
14 bring more and more visitors into our crowded
15 community, they necessarily affect the quality of
16 life of all the surrounding neighbors who are close
17 by.

18 I believe that Council would be
19 remiss in its duty to the public if it does not
20 retain the right to review these activities at
21 reasonable intervals, and we suggest that the
22 original five-year interval be continued.

23 I have submitted with my written
24 testimony a copy of a letter that we sent to
25 Councilman DiCicco in June. It repeats many of the

1 BILL 970275

2 things I have said, some of that in more detail.

3 In closing -- and I thank you for
4 your patience -- we ask the Council, as our elected
5 representatives, consider and agree with our
6 requests on the extension of the district, which,
7 after all, is a creature of Council and which we
8 hope Council will structure in a manner that will
9 require it to operate in a fashion that will give
10 due regard to the welfare of the surrounding
11 communities.

12 We believe that requires a shorter
13 period of time and dedicated community
14 representation.

15 Thank you very much.

16 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
17 for your testimony.

18 The next witness, please.

19 MS. BERNICE T. HAMEL: Good morning
20 or good afternoon, as the case may be.

21 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: It is still
22 morning.

23 MS. HAMEL: My name is Bernice
24 Hamel. I am a resident at 302 South 2nd Street,
25 which is two blocks from historic Headhouse,

1 BILL 970275

2 America's oldest surviving volunteer fire house
3 attached to the Colonial era Old Second Street
4 Market.

5 I am a founding member and President
6 of the Headhouse Conservancy, the grass-roots,
7 nonprofit organization that intervened to restore
8 Headhouse and to preserve it for the pleasure of
9 Philadelphia's citizens and for future generations.

10 As you probably know, these important
11 18th Century structures, unique in the country, are
12 owned by the City of Philadelphia.

13 After federal and city resources
14 helped save them from demolition in the late 1950s,
15 the city failed to maintain them and began a 30-year
16 period of neglect that seriously threatened their
17 integrity.

18 The Conservancy raised approximately
19 \$250,000 and conducted a series of major repairs,
20 including a complete renovation of the interior of
21 Headhouse, to make it habitable and suitable for
22 public service, which was its original purpose.

23 Incidentally, had this restoration
24 been accomplished at true market value, or without
25 significant contributions by a host of volunteers

1 BILL 970275

2 who provided professional services and donations,
3 the cost of this preservation achievement would have
4 been closer to \$1.5 million.

5 When the newly authorized South
6 Street/Headhouse District needed a home, the
7 Conservancy rapidly completed the interior
8 renovation to suit the district's needs.

9 The Conservancy then acted as brokers
10 in the lease arrangement between the Department of
11 Public Property and the district, convincing both
12 the district and the department that the renovated
13 Headhouse building would be ideal as headquarters
14 for the district.

15 This arrangement has been
16 satisfactory. And the district, as well as the
17 city, has been benefitting from the beautiful and
18 fully modernized building for the last few years at,
19 I believe, the symbolic rental rate of \$1 a year.

20 I don't know for sure, since I have
21 never actually seen the final lease that was
22 drafted. In fact, the Conservancy has had no
23 official role in the building's management.
24 However, we do maintain an ongoing interest in it
25 and continue to monitor its needs.

1 BILL 970275

2 In fact, the Conservancy is designed
3 and will soon pay for and replace the
4 graffiti-damaged signs that currently deface the
5 property.

6 The new signs will welcome tourists
7 to the district and will provide fascinating
8 historical information about the structures and
9 their important roles within the district.

10 Since the district's establishment in
11 1993, I have supported and will continue to support
12 the district's goals to provide a safer, cleaner,
13 and well-managed district.

14 I complement the district's Board of
15 directors, good people all, who have devoted their
16 time and energy to further the district's mission.

17 But these unpaid volunteers are not
18 elected officials. Why should the district's
19 appointed representatives be exempt from the same
20 kind of scrutiny that any official is subject to?

21 I argue strongly that monitoring in
22 five-year intervals would be best for the district
23 and for the city as a whole.

24 Without such a built-in mechanism of
25 oversight, there would be nothing to prevent a

1 BILL 970275

2 self-perpetuating bureaucracy evolving from within.

3 I have neither heard nor read any
4 compelling reasons for seeking a 20-year period
5 prior to reauthorization.

6 If there is a rationale that 20 years
7 would enable the issuing of bonds for future
8 development of the district, I think the district is
9 obliged to provide at this time such detailed plans
10 for evaluation by City Council and the public, but
11 no plans of this kind have been announced.

12 That, in my opinion, is all the more
13 reason why our elected City Council should be
14 involved in a timely -- should be involved in timely
15 five-year intervals to determine whether the
16 district's long-range development plans would serve
17 in a truly beneficial way the district's business
18 community and nearby residential communities.

19 Everyone in this room wants what is
20 best for the city, both for the short and long term,
21 but none of us have a crystal ball.

22 I strongly urge that discussion,
23 reevaluation, and reauthorization of the district be
24 held in five-year intervals.

25 If there are any compelling reasons

1 BILL 970275

2 to extend this process beyond that window of time,
3 may I suggest that you negotiate an equitable and
4 true compromise that would be agreeable to all.

5 A moderate ten-year cycle would be
6 acceptable. Perhaps this middle course could be
7 given thoughtful consideration so that everyone can
8 walk away from the table feeling positive, rather
9 than skeptical about the district's ongoing and
10 future success.

11 I thank you very much.

12 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
13 for your testimony.

14 Councilman DiCicco.

15 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Miss Hamel, I
16 had a copy of your testimony last evening, and I
17 read it. And you just read it for the record
18 today.

19 The last paragraph on Page 3, you
20 have not heard any testimony or read any compelling
21 reasons for seeking a 20-year period prior to
22 reauthorization.

23 I assume that's still your opinion
24 today?

25 MS. HAMEL: Yes. Because I don't see

1 BILL 970275

2 any --

3 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: After having
4 heard some of the testimony you heard and the
5 professional witness, as I refer to Mr. Cohen, you
6 still believe that that --

7 MS. HAMEL: I still do. Because,
8 frankly, I feel that while the South Street
9 Headhouse District used the Center City District as
10 a model, it is a very excellent model, but it is
11 really a different kind of animal than the South
12 Street Headhouse District.

13 It is so much smaller, that I think
14 to look to the Center City District is a good thing,
15 and to try to emulate it is a good thing, but to try
16 to duplicate it is obviously impossible.

17 And I have not seen, even after
18 today's testimony, I have not heard any detailed
19 plans that truly justify, that truly justify, a
20 20-year interval.

21 And I think if there is enough
22 expressed interest in modifying 20 years, I think a
23 compromise would be something that truly everybody
24 could live with.

25 And even the fact of the cost, the

1 BILL 970275

2 costly process of public hearings, if you did it
3 half again, if you did every ten years, I think that
4 would be tolerable.

5 But every -- and I can sort of
6 understand five years as a cost problem. But I do
7 have a hard time believing that they -- I feel it
8 wouldn't be good for the entire community to wait 20
9 years, with a very skeptical eye.

10 I think it would be much more
11 positive to think in terms of ten-year intervals,
12 even after today's hearing.

13 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Do you have any
14 knowledge as to any of the other special services
15 districts in the city, what their time period is?
16 Because I don't.

17 MS. HAMEL: I know Center City is 20
18 years.

19 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Other than
20 Center City.

21 MS. HAMEL: No, I really don't.

22 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Germantown has a
23 special services district. They are forming one
24 along City Line Avenue. Old City is in the process
25 of doing one. And I believe Old City is looking to

1 BILL 970275

2 do 20 years, also.

3 And I am not suggesting that because
4 they are doing it, we should do it here. I am just
5 trying to see if there is some consistency.

6 David, can you help us on that?
7 Would you state your name again for the record.

8 MR. COHEN: Yes. It is David Cohen,
9 consultant to the South Street District.

10 I am not positive, but I believe with
11 some certainty that the other districts that have
12 been formed, or are in the process of being formed,
13 are also aiming at or do have a five-year period
14 initially.

15 And, again, there is no magic number,
16 in my opinion. I think it does vary by district.
17 The only requirement is it can be no more than 50
18 years; that's the only requirement legally that
19 exists.

20 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: So we are
21 already doing better than half. But it is five
22 years, basically, because they are new, they are
23 just starting up?

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That's correct.

25 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: So at the end of

1 BILL 970275

2 five years, they may come back and ask for a similar
3 type of thing. We don't know that, but they could
4 possibly come back and ask for a 20-year
5 reauthorization, too?

6 MR. COHEN: That's right.

7 Conceivably, they could either cease operations or
8 they could ask reauthorization for any period of
9 time up to 50 years.

10 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: You have to sit at
12 the microphone, because the stenographer won't be
13 able to hear you.

14 MR. BUCKMAN: I happen to have the
15 bill for the Old City District, and it would
16 authorize it for five years. It would terminate on
17 the fifth anniversary of the commencement date.

18 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: That's standard for
19 all new special service districts.

20 I guess the question is, what happens
21 when these districts come back for reauthorization
22 after five years.

23 And the testimony has been that the
24 Center City District has asked for and received 20
25 years.

1 BILL 970275

2 This organization is asking for 20
3 years, and we don't really know what other
4 reauthorizations have asked for at this point.

5 MR. BUCKMAN: I didn't know there
6 were any other reauthorizations at this point.

7 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Well, there are
8 other initials, and I guess they will be back in
9 five years or less to come back and reauthorize.

10 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Germantown
11 Special Services District, they have been around for
12 a couple of years, at least, I guess now. And they
13 will be coming back shortly for reauthorization.

14 MR. BUCKMAN: If I may just say this,
15 there was no reason to limit them to five years in
16 the first place legally. They could have been set
17 up for 50. Council wanted to take a look at it.

18 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: It would make my
19 job easier. I wouldn't be here today.

20 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Just one question
21 on Miss Hamel's testimony.

22 Your testimony is confined to the
23 length of time requested for reauthorization, and
24 not to any other issue?

25 MS. HAMEL: Yes.

1 BILL 970275

2 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Okay. Thank you
3 very much.

4 Mr. Robinson. You have to use the
5 microphone and identify yourself for the
6 stenographer.

7 MR. IRWIN EDWARD ROBINSON: My name
8 is Irwin Edward Robinson officially, but otherwise
9 known as Eddie.

10 In a picture that I treasure that the
11 Mayor autographed he said, "Two Eds are better than
12 one." So here I am.

13 I live at 6 Blackwell Place, with my
14 pride and joy, to borrow a phrase from Stu
15 Bykofsky. And I have lived there for 20 years.

16 My roots in this neighborhood go back
17 to 1894, when my grandfather got off the boat from
18 Austria with my mother age 3. And I have
19 continuously been in this area, starting with as
20 long as I can remember.

21 In fact, I remember just recently
22 celebrating the Jewish holiday last week at Bnai
23 Abraham. And remembered when I was 6 years old, in
24 1933, I celebrated it at Kasher Israel at 3rd and
25 Lombard.

1 BILL 970275

2 Now to my testimony.

3 I think all the kudos are well
4 merited. But I think, to a certain extent, like
5 many things in this world, things are seldom what
6 they seem, and skim milk often masquerades for
7 cream.

8 And I tell you, insofar as the cream
9 is concerned, the cream is true cream, and it is
10 South Street Command, the police command which
11 exists because of the district, the mini district.

12 And I think true kudos are deserving
13 of Lieutenant McCarthy and his force, which keeps
14 sanity and safety alive Friday, Saturday, and Sunday
15 nights on South Street. I truly do.

16 And I think they are entitled to
17 every bit of support that they can be given by both
18 the businesspeople and by the residential people.

19 And I know that insofar as the
20 residential people are concerned, that Mel Buckman,
21 through the Society Hill Civic Association, has
22 continuously rendered support to McCarthy and his
23 folks.

24 And the old word back in World War II
25 for Merrill's Marauders was, the general said, "You

1 BILL 970275

2 take care of the troops, and they will take care of
3 you." And those troops truly take care of us who
4 live in Society Hill.

5 Another thing that I think is
6 deserving of kudos comes from the night court that
7 has been established in our area, and in which Judge
8 Seamus McCaffery and Judge Levin have been
9 front-runners in making it clear that any
10 lawlessness that goes on after dark, or any other
11 time, for that matter, over a weekend is going to be
12 swiftly dealt with at night court.

13 And I have gone to night court at
14 2:00 in the morning and seen what happens there.

15 And the invitation has gone out to
16 the neighbors to come and be there, and be seen
17 there. So that the people who get picked up for
18 lawlessness, such as under-aged drinking, such as
19 intoxication, such as motorcycle biking, clearly in
20 violation of the laws which this Council in its
21 infinite wisdom has passed, aren't violated. And,
22 if violated, are dealt with summarily.

23 Another kudo that I think comes under
24 the auspices of the district, and in large measure
25 is helped along by Miss Hamel, is the craft fair

1 BILL 970275

2 that exists Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through the
3 summer months, and then a longer period of time over
4 the Labor Day weekend.

5 And I think this year for the first
6 time they even went another month beyond Labor Day.

7 Is that correct?

8 MS. HAMEL: Yes, sir.

9 MR. ROBINSON: It is a true asset to
10 the community.

11 I have heard visitors from foreign
12 lands, from afar, from other states, who just wonder
13 in amazement at what is being done there by true
14 artists, not some hockey-pockeys who go to some
15 jobber and buy some craft stuff and put it up for
16 sale. But true art work that people can buy and
17 take home and remember Philadelphia for.

18 Now, let me talk about some of the
19 negative things that I see.

20 Particularly during the summer
21 months, crimes against persons, and including two
22 recent murders this summer. The guy who wanted a
23 parking spot, got the parking spot, but he lost his
24 life.

25 The guy who took umbrage to his

1 BILL 970275

2 friend being approached as they came out of the
3 Monte Carlo Dining Room by someone who suspected
4 they may have some money, and he lost his life at
5 127 Pine Street because he believed, albeit
6 erroneously, that that gun was a toy.

7 Public urination and consumption of
8 alcoholic beverages off premises. I am, in addition
9 to being the Solicitor and a member of the Blackwell
10 Place Condo Association, which is 18 condos that lie
11 between 2nd and 3rd, between Pine and Stamper
12 Street, and the Solicitor for that organization,
13 albeit without compensation, and I am the Liquor
14 Control Chair for Society Hill Civic.

15 And I do my job assiduously. As a
16 matter of fact, some people think too assiduously.

17 And I have been accused of pretending
18 that I am from the LCB. I have never, ever told
19 anybody that I am from the LCB. I simply say I am
20 the Liquor Control Chair of Society Hill Civic.

21 If you hear LCB from what I say --
22 and I can assure you, Councilman Kenney, that as a
23 lawyer, I talk with some precision, and I don't say
24 LCB, when I'm not. I don't even think I'd want to
25 be an LCB person, in all truth.

1 BILL 970275

2 But be that as it may, that is one
3 way that I am intimidating. And, as a matter of
4 fact, letters have been written about me and about
5 my assiduous effort to enforce the Liquor Control
6 laws.

7 And the particular violators of those
8 laws in our neighborhood are Thank God It's Friday,
9 which had off-premises consumption of alcoholic
10 beverages over the Fourth of July Weekend, in clear
11 violation of their license, in clear violation of
12 their agreement with Society Hill Civic, and in
13 clear violation of their agreement with Blackwell
14 Place Condo. And they ignored it, with impunity.

15 And Dickens Inn, another clear
16 violator. People leaving and coming to that
17 premises with open containers of alcohol.

18 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Could I make a
19 suggestion? And not to interrupt your testimony.
20 Could you please give us your opinion on the issue
21 of Board configuration and membership and the length
22 of the proposed --

23 MR. ROBINSON: I think that it is
24 unquestionable that Board configuration should
25 include at least two dedicated seats from each one

1 BILL 970275

2 of the key civic associations.

3 And I think that at least one
4 dedicated seat should come from Blackwell Place
5 Condo Association. Not by virtue of the number of
6 residents that we have, but by virtue of the value
7 of the property that we have at stake here.

8 We have 18 houses, with values
9 upwards of \$450,000. Now, that's a big piece of
10 change to want to protect. And I'm here to say that
11 we feel that proper protection requires our presence
12 on their Board.

13 I have attended, and I did so
14 assiduously -- again using that word.

15 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: It is a nice word.

16 MR. ROBINSON: -- the Board meetings
17 of the South Street Headhouse District.

18 I was thoroughly ignored. As a
19 matter of fact, I was structured out of the
20 meeting.

21 No longer was I able to speak to any
22 issue as it came up during the course of the
23 meeting. But a new rule was passed -- and I
24 suggested it was the Robinson rule -- and I
25 suggested that rule provides that there will be

1 BILL 970275

2 nobody who is not a member of the Board who shall
3 speak, save and except at the end of the meeting, if
4 they ask for the privilege to do so, and that will
5 be ten minutes in the entirety, in the aggregate.

6 Well, guess what? I don't attend any
7 more meetings. Because it is obvious nobody wants
8 to hear what I have to say.

9 And, as a matter of fact, they
10 structured me out of being able to say anything.

11 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Do you have an
12 opinion, sir, on the length of term being asked for
13 for extension?

14 MR. ROBINSON: My opinion of the
15 length of term is that, before Council enacts that,
16 they should seek legal advice from the City
17 Solicitor's office or from their own counsel.

18 My familiarity with the length of
19 terms goes back to the time that I was a lawyer, a
20 very young one, in an office that represented the
21 Philadelphia Parking Authority, when an effort was
22 made to give a certain Mr. Scott a long-term
23 contract as the Executive Director of the
24 Philadelphia Parking Authority, that went beyond the
25 term of the people who were on the Board. The case

1 BILL 970275

2 is Scott versus the Parking Authority.

3 I think there is some learning in
4 that case. Not exactly on this issue per se, but
5 enough to say that these long-term contracts that go
6 beyond the term of the people who created it have an
7 inherent vice in them that should not be permitted.

8 And the suggestion of Miss Hamel, and
9 the suggestion of Mel Buckman and Miss Palmer that 5
10 years is plenty, and maybe a compromise of 10 years,
11 but certainly not 20.

12 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
13 much.

14 Are there any questions of
15 Mr. Robinson?

16 Thank you very much for your
17 testimony.

18 Mr. Hunter.

19 MS. ROBINSON: Excuse me. May I have
20 leave to file my remarks in writing, and to submit
21 with my remarks pictures that I have been taking
22 over the past several months dealing with the issues
23 of safety and cleanliness in the corridor?

24 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Yes, you may.

25 MS. ROBINSON: And how much time

1 BILL 970275

2 would I have to do that?

3 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: How long would you
4 need?

5 MS. ROBINSON: Could you give me a
6 week?

7 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: We could always
8 keep the record open for additional submissions.

9 MS. ROBINSON: I will do it within
10 whatever time you give me.

11 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Again, the record
12 will remain open for additional submissions.

13 If you are asking for a delay in a
14 vote, that --

15 MS. ROBINSON: I have taken, with
16 pride, some excellent pictures of what goes on on
17 South Street from dusk to dawn.

18 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: And we would be
19 happy to have them submitted at your convenience.

20 MS. ROBINSON: I will submit them to
21 you, sir?

22 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Yes, sir. Thank
23 you.

24 MR. ALAN HUNTER: Thank you, Chairman
25 Kenney and members of City Council, for hearing my

1 BILL 970275

2 testimony.

3 My name is Alan Hunter, and I am
4 President of the Queen Village Neighbors
5 Association.

6 Queen Village is a residential area
7 of over 8500 and is bounded by the Delaware River to
8 the east, 6th Street to the west, and Washington
9 Avenue to the south.

10 The northern end of Queen Village
11 includes most of the South Street Headhouse
12 District.

13 I have been asked today to testify
14 relative to the 20-year extension of the South
15 Street Headhouse District.

16 Quite frankly, I am confused and
17 stumped as to a position to put forward. Although I
18 consider myself an informed and curious person, I
19 simply cannot get a handle of why I should be in
20 favor of this extension, nor am I secure enough to
21 say that we are against it.

22 Is it true that a 20-year extension
23 is the only way to secure bond financing for
24 long-term improvement? If so, it surely has not
25 been shown to me in a manner that is clear.

1 BILL 970275

2 Perhaps I, as President of the Queen
3 Village Neighbors Association, had the
4 responsibility to search out for myself why a
5 20-year extension is necessary.

6 Perhaps this business group, with
7 comfortable funding and a professional staff, has
8 the onus to communicate clearly its needs and the
9 benefits of this extension to the surrounding
10 community.

11 To me, the common enemy here is the
12 separateness that has developed between the business
13 community and the residential community.

14 This separateness keeps us focused on
15 mistrust and our differences, instead of powerfully
16 creating our common future.

17 It should be obvious to all that the
18 residents of the community and the business
19 interests of the community are both parts of the
20 same body, and only a true acknowledgment that we
21 are linked can bring about the future that is
22 possible.

23 The South Street business area cannot
24 survive without a thriving community surrounding it,
25 nor can the community prosper without a successful

1 BILL 970275

2 South Street.

3 To this end, I have a few
4 suggestions. First, an immediate outreach by this
5 district to my community that will allow us to fully
6 understand all facets of this extension, with a
7 clear understanding I could have been here today as
8 an escort instead of a confused witness.

9 Second, I suggest a new committee of
10 the South Street Headhouse Board whose mission would
11 be to merge the common interests of business and
12 residence, thus building trust and communication
13 between us in ways absent until now.

14 As some of you know, I am also
15 President of Urban Strategies. We are a strategic
16 planning firm that specializes in the combining of
17 multiple communities, business interests, and
18 government into a shared vision. This shared vision
19 is an extremely powerful tool in creating change.

20 Along with this testimony is an
21 application to serve on this committee, and to be
22 accepted as a new Board member of the district.

23 It is indeed time to put aside all
24 these past arguments, misconceptions, mistrusts, and
25 missteps, and to simply move forward toward that

1 BILL 970275

2 future.

3 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very much
4 for your testimony.

5 Are there any questions for
6 Mr. Hunter?

7 Mr. Hunter, this is not in any way to
8 suggest that this is sufficient from the panel
9 that's been testifying today, but out of curiosity,
10 the individuals that are listed as the current Board
11 of Directors living in Queen Village, do you know
12 whether or not they are in fact members of the
13 association, in addition?

14 MR. HUNTER: Chairman Kenney, I have
15 been President of Queen Village Neighbors for two
16 and a half years. And, in that period of time, I
17 have never had a visit from a member of that Board
18 that expressed, you know, a residential link.

19 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: I think there is a
20 different question.

21 There are listed five members of the
22 current -- I will read them to you, if they are not
23 up there. Mr. William Funk, Eric Blumenfeld, Fran
24 Holtzin, Bob Pierson, and Ray Kauffman all list
25 themselves as residents of Queen Village.

1 BILL 970275

2 For my curiosity sake are they, to
3 your knowledge, members of the Queen Village
4 Neighbors Association, any or all of them?

5 MR. HUNTER: The one that certainly
6 sticks out quickly for me is Bob Pierson, certainly
7 is a respected member of our community, and whose
8 opinions would be greatly, you know, acceptable to
9 us.

10 But the others, you know, I really
11 have never connected them with members.

12 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Just my curiosity.
13 And, Mr. Buckman, the five members listed as Society
14 Hill residents, Mr. Lander, Mr. Lipken, Jose
15 Pumarada, Ann Verber, and Steve Kujolic, any or all
16 of them, to your knowledge, are members of the
17 Society Hill Civic Association formally?

18 MR. BUCKMAN: I don't know if they
19 are members. We have 660 members.

20 I have never seen any of these four
21 people, other than Mr. Lander, who is a
22 vice-president of our association, attend any
23 meeting of any kind that I have known.

24 Now, they may have been there, and I
25 don't know them.

1 BILL 970275

2 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Again, this is just
3 a knowledge question. I am not asking you.

4 MR. BUCKMAN: I don't know. I know
5 Mr. Lander is a member. And Mr. Lipken, Miss
6 Verber, and Mr. Kujolic are in the room. They could
7 answer it.

8 But I don't know about all the
9 membership in the association. They haven't been
10 active.

11 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: I didn't mean to
12 put anybody on the spot. I was just curious.

13 I know Mr. Lander has been very
14 active, as you said. And I know Mr. Pierson for
15 Queen Village had been very active, as you had
16 mentioned. Just for my own curiosity sake.

17 MR. BUCKMAN: If I could just say
18 this, the fact that we have people on the Board of
19 the district that may, in my opinion, be more
20 interested in their own business than in the
21 community, is not to me an evil or bad thing, it is
22 just the way the world is.

23 And what we want are some people who
24 don't have that interest in the South Street
25 business community, who can only focus on the needs

1 BILL 970275

2 of the residential community, that I have been
3 striving to get on this Board.

4 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Councilman DiCicco
5 had a question.

6 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: I guess, going
7 in the direction that you are going, Mr. Buckman, I
8 mean, if someone were to be appointed to the Board
9 of Directors of South Street Headhouse from Society
10 Hill Civic, as an example, who does not own a
11 business today, but a year or two or three up the
12 road they get involved in a business on South
13 Street, are you suggesting that that person should
14 be removed from the Board because they now have two
15 hats, as opposed to one?

16 I mean, there is no guarantee that
17 someone at some point in the future won't become a
18 businessperson.

19 MR. BUCKMAN: Mr. DiCicco, it is
20 always difficult to forecast the future. It is like
21 I once asked somebody, a client, "Do you think you
22 made the right decision?" And she said, "What would
23 I do if I was 17 again?" We just don't know.

24 I think that that person might not be
25 the person that the Civic association would continue

1 BILL 970275

2 as its representative on the Board.

3 Now, we have, within our own
4 organization, dedicated representatives of the large
5 communities, such as Society Hill Towers and
6 Independence Place, and they select their own
7 representative. And we have nothing to do with the
8 procedures by which they select their
9 representatives.

10 If somebody comes over and says,
11 "Here are my credentials. I represent Independence
12 Place," that person is a member of our Board. And
13 we leave it to that organization to decide whether
14 there is some reason that that person should no
15 longer be its representative.

16 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Thank you.

17 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Mr. Robinson,
18 please.

19 MS. ROBINSON: You mentioned Eric
20 Blumenfeld. I happen to know Eric quite well. Eric
21 was a classmate of my son's at the Friend Select
22 School.

23 Eric's dad was one of the creators of
24 Abbott's Square. And Eric, until they ran into
25 financial difficulties, was one of the principals in

1 BILL 970275

2 the operation there. He lived there. I think he
3 still lives there. He doesn't live in Queen
4 Village.

5 Moreover, he fits a description of
6 somebody whose interests are not anything other than
7 the business interests of Abbott's Square.

8 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
9 much.

10 Miss Palmer.

11 MS. PALMER: I would particularly
12 like to second what Mr. Hunter said in his testimony
13 about, we are all one body, and there are different
14 parts of the body.

15 And until that body unites and
16 realizes that it is one, we are losing the potential
17 strength that we really do have.

18 I would also like to address what has
19 been called the Robinson rule. For, I guess it's
20 been, including the years that I attended the
21 meetings before the district was actually formed, I
22 guess it has been six or seven years.

23 And up until that rule, I attended
24 every meeting of the district for the four and a
25 half years, anyway, I'm sure it's been, since the

1 BILL 970275

2 district was actually empowered.

3 And the reason I stopped was this
4 rule that said, you cannot participate during the
5 course of the meeting unless you are a Board
6 member.

7 Previous to that, I felt that I was
8 treated with respect, that my ideas, even though
9 they were not always the same as the Board members',
10 were listened to, and I had input. And I could
11 represent the fact that a vote, or something that
12 was brought up in front of the Board, may not be in
13 the best interests of all of us, and there may be
14 some community problems with this for X, Y, and Z
15 reasons.

16 Once the rule was enforced that says,
17 you cannot participate in this meeting until the
18 last ten minutes, at which time the vote is already
19 taken, why bother to hear myself? I already know
20 what I think.

21 And if my input and ideas, it is too
22 late to change the vote of the Board, why bother
23 coming? I read the meetings at the end of the
24 month.

25 I think that rule has discouraged a

1 BILL 970275

2 great deal of community participation, whether or
3 not we are members of the Board.

4 I have not actually spoken to
5 Mr. Kujolic about this, although I have spoken to
6 Mr. Ostrander about it. And I think that there have
7 to be other ways to control community participation,
8 perhaps by staying on the immediate subject, perhaps
9 giving a 30-second time, or whatever.

10 But I think that would also help to
11 bond the communities that are represented, the
12 business and the residents. Thank you.

13 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
14 much. And thank you very much for your testimony.

15 Is there anyone else in the room who
16 wishes to testify on this bill?

17 Mr. Kauffman. Okay.

18 MR. KAUFFMAN: Well --

19 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: We are finished
20 with your testimony. Thank you very much.

21 And, Mr. Kauffman, you have to
22 reidentify yourself.

23 MR. KAUFFMAN: Ray Kauffman.

24 I would just like to add something to
25 this, because it has been spoken of here.

1 BILL 970275

2 The meetings that are held by the
3 district, the regular Board meetings, which
4 everybody is invited to, we ran into a slight
5 problem this year in the beginning of these
6 meetings.

7 And the problem was that there are
8 people that have opinions about a lot of things that
9 go on in the district, because there are a lot of
10 things that go on in the district.

11 And, unfortunately, if every time a
12 point is brought up, we have somebody stand up for
13 15 minutes and go on about what they feel very
14 impassioned about, even though that's very nice, the
15 meeting would go on forever.

16 So in order to stop that, we allow
17 the Board to complete their business, and then ask
18 for any comments from anybody that had any on any
19 particular issue. And that's the reason for what
20 Mr. Robinson calls the Robinson act.

21 But primarily that's exactly what it
22 was all about. It wasn't to stifle anyone for any
23 particular reason, other than to be able to finish
24 the business or complete the business that that
25 meeting was called for.

1 BILL 970275

2 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
3 much.

4 MR. KAUFFMAN: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Is there anyone
6 else?

7 You have to come up to the
8 microphone.

9 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: While
10 Mrs. Robinson is coming up, I just would like to
11 thank everybody for testifying today.

12 And Alan, Mr. Hunter, I share your
13 confusion. I am going to have to make a decision
14 very shortly. But I do suggest to the South Street
15 Headhouse District that Mr. Hunter's second
16 suggestion, in particular, that a new committee be
17 formed whose mission would be to merge with the
18 community interests, et cetera, seriously be
19 considered.

20 And that maybe we can eliminate some
21 of the problems that were just expressed by
22 Mr. Kauffman about the Robinson law or Robinson act,
23 and have somebody from the community who represents
24 maybe the various Civic groups be the spokesperson
25 for the various community groups, and really have

1 BILL 970275

2 some input as to what is going on.

3 And I hear from everybody. I mean, I
4 am in a unique position. Applications come forward
5 all the time for bars, restaurants, other types of
6 businesses.

7 And sometimes the community group and
8 the business district obviously don't see eye to eye
9 on the application. So we try to find out if there
10 is some common ground there.

11 And I think that kind of activity is
12 something that should be encouraged, I am
13 encouraging.

14 And also I understand there are two
15 vacancies on the Board coming up. I made a
16 recommendation as late as yesterday afternoon, or as
17 recent as yesterday afternoon, to Mr. Ostrander
18 about one of the individuals who had expressed an
19 interest of being placed on the Board.

20 I don't want to be the person to
21 micro-manage the South Street Headhouse District,
22 nor any of the other civic associations, whether
23 they be in the South Street corridor or elsewhere in
24 my district.

25 But I will make recommendations from

1 BILL 970275

2 time to time based on what I think might be in the
3 best interests of all parties.

4 Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Mrs. Robinson, if
6 you would like to identify yourself and offer your
7 testimony.

8 MRS. DEBORAH ROBINSON: My name is
9 Deborah Robinson. I live at 6 Blackwell Place. And
10 I am a member of at least two of the key civic
11 associations who are here, as well as the Blackwell
12 Place Condominium Association. And I wish to speak
13 to what Mr. Kauffman just said.

14 And that is, if I come to the meeting
15 to represent a point of view, it makes no difference
16 if I represent it, or if I am there, if I am not
17 allowed to make my point of view known until after
18 the meeting is over and everything has been voted
19 upon.

20 If you want to limit my time, or
21 anyone else's, in what I have to say, that's fine.
22 But do not effectively knock me out from having any
23 opportunity to put forth my opinion and possibly
24 sway some opinions on the Board.

25 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very

1 BILL 970275

2 much.

3 Ms. Verber.

4 MS. VERBER: I am Ann Verber, and I
5 am just asking to address one issue that was raised
6 by Mr. Hunter but is, I think, also a response to
7 Councilman DiCicco's concern.

8 We on the Board of the district have
9 asked and solicited more than once, and continue to
10 solicit, representatives from the residential and
11 civic associations to participate in our Board
12 meetings, if not on our committees. We want
13 everything, if we can.

14 I have had personal discussions just
15 at the end of 1996 with Mr. Hunter about the fact
16 that Queen Village, because I am on as an
17 individual, and not as a Queen Village resident, as
18 I was then, that Queen Village did not have formal
19 representation.

20 And I asked, I said, "Please come.
21 Come to the monthly meetings. See if there's
22 somebody in the group that would like to do that, if
23 you can't get to all of them."

24 And there was an appointment of a
25 Queen Village resident, John Lowell, whom I am sure

1 BILL 970275

2 most of you know, to be the official Queen Village
3 Neighbors Association delegate to the South Street
4 Headhouse District.

5 So he would come to the Board
6 meetings and interact with us and take whatever he
7 wanted back to the civic associations, bring their
8 concerns to us for consideration.

9 You know we keep attendance records.
10 We have for years. The ones I have here are just
11 for 1997 to date.

12 Mr. Lowell only came to three
13 meetings, January, February, and April. We have not
14 had a representative from Queen Village in his place
15 since then.

16 And they keep saying, "We want to sit
17 on your Board, but we don't want to just come to
18 your meetings."

19 And one of the reasons that we made
20 the decision we did early on, which is the same
21 decision the Center City District made, was to have
22 individuals who want to work on the Board.

23 Queen Village has given lip service
24 to, you know, good relations with the district, went
25 so far as to appoint someone, and then has never,

1 BILL 970275

2 ever followed through.

3 And I don't believe the district
4 should be held responsible for this. There is a
5 certain initiative that should come from the
6 communities.

7 Thank you very much.

8 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you.

9 Mr. Hunter, I think you have a right
10 to comment. But what I would like to do is, I don't
11 want to turn it into a debate. I think the purpose
12 of the hearing is to accept testimony for the
13 record.

14 But we're not going to make a
15 decision here who is right and who is wrong on this
16 particular issue.

17 And anyone else, if there is anyone
18 else to testify -- is there anyone else? Can I see
19 a hand? This will be the final witness.

20 MR. HUNTER: I would like to respond
21 to Miss Verber's remarks. It is true that John
22 Lowell was appointed by me, or asked by me, to begin
23 to attend these meetings.

24 John came back to me in very quick
25 order with, "Going to the meetings is like looking

1 BILL 970275

2 into a window in an event that you are not invited
3 to."

4 And certainly it was a different
5 level of him attending the meetings and sitting
6 around a room and being a participant in these
7 activities.

8 It wasn't long before we realized
9 that looking in the window of a group that is
10 calling the shots that may possibly affect the
11 future of Queen Village is certainly not very good
12 for us.

13 I would have loved to have a John
14 Lowell or someone like that be part of that. But
15 being part of something versus going and watching a
16 movie of what's happening is a far difference.

17 I have just handed to Miss Verber my
18 own application for membership upon the Board. I
19 understand there is a longstanding, quote,
20 requirement that people serve in some committee or
21 in some capacity to, quote, prove themselves.

22 I would offer that my service to
23 Queen Village, in making Queen Village a vibrant and
24 safe community for South Street to exist in, is
25 enough of an apprenticeship for anyone to deserve to

1 BILL 970275

2 sit at that table.

3 When I talk about President of the
4 Queen Village Neighbors being part of that
5 committee, I am talking about 4 percent of the
6 Board. Surely 4 percent of the Board, you know,
7 cannot be such a threat to this group that I could
8 not sit on that committee.

9 I think a perspective would certainly
10 be gained by that committee to be hearing my
11 viewpoints and the viewpoints of the community.

12 As I mentioned in my letter, if I
13 purely understood what 20 years means, if I could
14 understand all the business reasons for it, I should
15 be here as an escort for this. Because no one wants
16 South Street to thrive more than I.

17 But I do not accept as true, and I
18 would hope that this committee does not accept as
19 true, that we don't care and we don't have a
20 representative to go.

21 It became quite clear to us that, on
22 a honeymoon, the cousin of the bride is far
23 different than the husband.

24 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: In most families.

25 Just one second. The Chair

1 BILL 970275

2 recognizes Councilman DiCicco.

3 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman.

5 Because of the time constraints on
6 this legislation -- I believe we have to have it
7 done before the end of this year. Am I correct?

8 Somebody just can indicate that David
9 Cohen is nodding his head yes.

10 And the fact that this Council will
11 recess some time in the middle of December, I'm not
12 sure the exact date, some time around December 11 or
13 so, I'm going to make a motion on this bill.

14 But before I do that, I just want to
15 say one thing.

16 I share some of the confusion, as I
17 said, that Mr. Hunter and others have. While I
18 don't necessarily think that maybe 20 years is the
19 proper amount of time, I don't have a crystal ball,
20 I don't know what the magic number here is.

21 Knowing government the way I knew it
22 before I got here, and now finding out really how
23 government works, that I have been here for almost
24 two years, I certainly feel that five years is just
25 not enough time.

1 BILL 970275

2 The public toilet issue, as an
3 example, which I have been working on for almost two
4 years come this January, has not, in most people's
5 minds, really moved forward.

6 Although I think we are going to get
7 this thing done eventually, eventually could be
8 another three years.

9 So seeing how slow government works,
10 again, five years I am not comfortable with. I am
11 not totally comfortable with 20.

12 But given that there is really no
13 hard testimony or any reason for me to believe that
14 somewhere at 10 or 15 would be a more appropriate
15 number of years, I am going to make a motion that we
16 move forward on this legislation.

17 And understand that between now and
18 the time that the body votes on that, we still have
19 time for some discussion.

20 I would like to keep the dialogue
21 going. I would like to meet with the heads of the
22 South Street Headhouse District and maybe the heads
23 of the three civic associations that are here today,
24 to see if we can't come to some other agreements
25 that may make this work for all of us between now

1 BILL 970275

2 and the time that the vote is taken in Council.

3 But I don't want to just hold this up
4 today. Because by the time we get back here, I
5 don't want to jeopardize the district. I don't want
6 to throw out the baby with the bath water, as they
7 say.

8 I think we need to continue to move
9 forward. And we do have several weeks to discuss
10 some of the issues that were testified to here
11 today.

12 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Thank you very
13 much.

14 Councilwoman Verna.

15 COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Mr. Chairman,
16 the only thing that distresses me about this is that
17 people who go to the meetings, I am told, cannot be
18 heard, perhaps because of a time element.

19 I would suggest that perhaps as we go
20 through our budget hearings, and we have many, many
21 witnesses to testify, we use a timer.

22 And I think if it is made known from
23 the beginning of the meeting that people have, say,
24 five minutes to voice their opinion, and the timer
25 go on, then at least people will feel that they have

1 BILL 970275

2 been able to express themselves, and certainly want
3 to be a part of the entire community.

4 I just don't think it is fair for
5 people to go to a community meeting and certainly
6 not be heard.

7 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Any other comments
8 or questions?

9 That will conclude the business of
10 the Council Committee on Rules.

11 (Public Hearing adjourned.)

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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PUBLIC MEETING

of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES

- - -

Tuesday, October 28, 1997

- - -

Public Meeting conducted by the Committee
on Rules, held in Room 400, City Hall, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania, on the above date, to consider action
on the following:

BILL 970275

- - -

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY, Vice-Chair

COUNCILWOMAN ANNA CIBOTTI VERNA

COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO

COUNCILMAN RICHARD T. MARIANO

- - -

1 PUBLIC MEETING

2 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: We will now convene
3 a Public Meeting, and the Chair recognizes
4 Councilman DiCicco for a motion on Bill No. 970275.

5 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: I make a motion
6 that Bill No. 970275 be reported out of Committee
7 with a favorable recommendation.

8 (Duly seconded.)

9 CHAIRMAN KENNEY: Moved and
10 seconded.

11 All in favor.

12 There are none opposed.

13 Bill No. 970275 will be reported out
14 of this Committee with a favorable recommendation.

15 Bill No. 960696 is being held at the
16 request of the sponsor.

17 Thank you very much for your
18 attendance and participation.

19 (Public Meeting adjourned at 12:25
20 p.m.)

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

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia of Tuesday, October 28, 1997, were
reported fully and accurately by me, and that this
is a correct transcript of same.

RE: COMMITTEE ON RULES

DEBRA A. WHITEHEAD, RPR