

Committee on Licenses and Inspections
October 7, 2015

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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON LICENSES AND INSPECTIONS

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, October 7, 2015
10:20 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ, CHAIR
COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON

BILL 150644 - An ordinance amending Section
9-1302 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled
"Home Inspection License," to add required
conduct for home inspectors...

- - -

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COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: We are going to call to order the Committee on Licenses and Inspections, and the Council President will appoint himself to the Committee for the purpose of a quorum.

A quorum has been established. To my right is Councilman Bill Greenlee. To my left, President Clarke. To my further left, Councilman Bobby Henon.

Will the Clerk read the title of the bill.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 150644, an ordinance amending Section 9-1302 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Home Inspection License," to add required conduct for home inspectors, all under certain terms and conditions.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you.

For the record, Bill No. 150650 will not be heard today. It has been held at the call of the sponsor.

Our witness this morning is our Water Commissioner, if he could proceed

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2 to the witness table.

3 (Witness approached witness
4 table.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Before
6 we start, I don't know if the bill
7 sponsor would like any opening comments
8 for the record.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Just real
10 quick, Madam Chair. Thank you. This is
11 basically a buyer beware bill. The issue
12 of private sewers oftentimes comes up. I
13 think we've all heard about it where
14 people are caught off guard when all the
15 sudden they're getting violations or
16 having problems with a private sewer and
17 they didn't even know they had one. So
18 this would just mandate that as far as
19 home inspectors, that they either
20 determine whether there's a private sewer
21 or give a written statement saying that
22 there was not a search done on that, so
23 at least the person is not surprised that
24 there is an issue of a private sewer.
25 It's basically that simple, and that's

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2 why myself, along with Councilman Squilla
3 and Councilwoman Bass, but I think it's
4 something that almost all Councilmembers
5 get involved with every now and then.

6 So I hope the Committee sees
7 fit to send this forward, and I
8 appreciate the Water Department's support
9 on this bill.

10 Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
12 you.

13 Our Water Commissioner, please
14 proceed.

15 COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: Good
16 morning, Councilwoman Sanchez and members
17 of the L&I Committee. I'm Howard
18 Neukrug, Water Commissioner. Thank you
19 for the opportunity to provide testimony
20 that is in support of Bill No. 150644,
21 introduced by Councilman Greenlee.

22 While Philadelphia Water owns
23 almost 7,000 miles of water and sewer
24 pipes in the City, there are also an
25 estimated 70-plus miles of privately

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owned pipe that serves two or more properties. Private pipe systems are not part of the City's inventoried pipe system for a number of reasons, which can include all or one of the following:

The material, the construction method, and/or the size of the pipe does not meet the City standards.

The pipe runs through a location not publicly owned or accessible, like a rear alley.

City Council did not approve an ordinance for the right-of-way and construction.

Unfortunately, like all good pipe, these private pipes can and do break, and that is often when a homeowner first learns of the financial responsibility to repair. Bill No. 150644 would inform potential home buyers about the existence of any private sewer or water main before purchasing the home. Including this information in the home inspection would allow potential buyers

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2 to make smart decisions and to
3 financially prepare if the private sewer
4 or water main fails in the future. That
5 is why we are happy to support this bill.

6 Thank you for the opportunity
7 to appear before you this morning. I'm
8 happy to answer any questions you may
9 have.

10 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Just to
11 clarify, because I believe this came up
12 yesterday, if the situations happen,
13 people are eligible for HELP with or
14 without a violation in these cases?

15 COMMISSIONER NEUKRUG: People
16 are eligible for a HELP loan to help pay
17 for the repair of the work, yes, and the
18 work is equally divided among all the
19 homeowners attached to the private
20 system.

21 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay.
22 Any questions on this bill?
23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Seeing
25 none, we will move to the meeting of the

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2 Committee on Licenses and Inspections.

3 I will ask Councilman Greenlee
4 for a motion on Bill 150644.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: First,
6 Madam Chair, there is a small amendment.

7 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Oh, I'm
8 sorry.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: The
10 amendment, just for information, adds the
11 term "private water main" along with
12 "private sewer." Private sewers I think
13 are much more prevalent, but there are
14 private water mains.

15 So, first, Madam Chair, I would
16 move the adoption of the amendment to
17 Bill No. 150644.

18 (Duly seconded.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: All in
20 favor?

21 (Aye.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Any
23 opposition?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Seeing

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2 none, the amendment is approved.

3 A motion with amendment for the
4 bill.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
6 you, Madam Chair. I move that Bill No.
7 150644, as amended, be reported out of
8 this Committee with a favorable
9 recommendation and that the rules of
10 Council be suspended to allow for first
11 reading at our next session of Council.

12 (Duly seconded.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: All in
14 favor?

15 (Aye.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Any
17 opposition?

18 (No response.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Seeing
20 none, Bill No. 150644, as amended, will
21 be reported out of this Committee with a
22 favorable recommendation and, further,
23 rules suspension to allow first reading
24 at our next public session.

25 Thank you very much for your

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1 10/7/15 - L&I - BILL 150644
2 efficiency.
3 (Committee on Licenses and
4 Inspections concluded at 10:30 a.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

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

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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