

Committee of Public Property and Public Works
December 3, 2019

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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PUBLIC WORKS

Room 400, City Hall
1400 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107
Tuesday, December 3, 2019
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE, CO-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

BILLS: 190436, 190892, 190896, 190942

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2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
3 morning, everybody and hopefully
4 everybody enjoyed the holidays. We
5 will now start our hearing with the
6 Committee of Public Property and Public
7 Works. For the record, we will be
8 holding Bill No. 190940. To my left, a
9 quorum is -- we have a quorum that is
10 present. And to my left is
11 Councilwoman Gym, Councilman Greenlee.
12 To my right, Councilman Domb. Clerk,
13 would you please read the titles of the
14 bills for today's Committee hearing.

15 THE CLERK: Bill No. 190436,
16 an Ordinance authorizing the
17 Commissioner of Public Property, on
18 behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to
19 grant to the Pennsylvania Department of
20 Transportation, a temporary
21 construction easement on a portion of
22 the parcel or parcels of land in and
23 about the area bounded by Girard
24 Avenue, North 34th and Zoological Drive
25 commonly known as 3400 West Girard

1 Avenue.

2 And Bill No. 190892, an
3 Ordinance authorizing the Commissioner
4 of Public Property, on behalf of the
5 City, to convey to the Philadelphia
6 Authority for Industrial Development
7 all or a portion of certain parcels of
8 land in and about the area bounded by
9 University Avenue, Civic Center
10 Boulevard, Hamilton Street and 34th
11 Street, for further conveyance; and
12 authorizing the Commissioner of Public
13 Property, on behalf of the City, to
14 enter into a lease agreement to lease
15 back a portion of the property to the
16 City, and an Ordinance authorizing the
17 Commissioner of Public Property, on
18 behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to
19 convey to the Philadelphia
20 Redevelopment Authority all or a
21 portion of a parcel or parcels of land
22 in and about the area bounded by South
23 50th Street, Pentridge Street, South
24 51st Street and Willows Avenue.

25 And Bill No. 190937, an

1 Ordinance officially naming and
2 designating the Cobbs Creek Community
3 Environmental Education located at 700
4 Cobbs Creek Parkway, in the City of
5 Philadelphia as "Carole Williams-Green
6 Community Environmental Education
7 Center." And Bill No. 190942, an
8 Ordinance authorizing the Commissioner
9 of Public Property on behalf of the
10 City, to enter into an amendment into a
11 lease agreement with St. Agnes MOB,
12 LLC, for use by the City of all or a
13 portion of the premises located at 1930
14 South Broad Street, under certain terms
15 and conditions.

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: We will
17 now hear testimony on our first bill.
18 It's Bill No. 190436. Somebody from
19 the Administration is here to testify.
20 You may state your name for the record
21 and proceed with your testimony.

22 (Witness approached
23 Witness Table.)

24 MS. CASIMIR: Thank you.
25 Good morning, Chairman Henon, and other

1 Members of the Committee of Public
2 Property. My name is Dominique
3 Casimir. I'm the Deputy Commissioner
4 of Public Property. I'm here to
5 testify in favor of Bill No. 190436,
6 authorizing the City to enter into a
7 temporary construction easement with
8 PennDOT for the parcel located at 3400
9 West Girard Avenue.

10 This property is needed to be
11 utilized for the next three years as
12 the construction staging area for
13 PennDOT work crews as they construct
14 improvements at the PennDOT-owned
15 bridge 34th Street and West Girard
16 Avenue. PennDOT has stated that these
17 improvements are necessary for the
18 safety of the public and this site will
19 avoid closures to other major areas and
20 roadways leading to the Philadelphia
21 Zoo.

22 The Department of Public
23 Property supports this measure, and
24 accordingly, I respectfully ask that
25 City Council approve Bill No. 190436.

1 I'm requesting a suspension of all
2 rules so as to allow for the first
3 reading at the next session of Council.
4 Thank you. Any questions? I'm happy
5 to answer them.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
7 for your testimony. Anyone on the
8 Committee wish to have any questions?
9 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
10 Blackwell.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
12 Thank you very much. I've had meetings
13 with the zoo, with Ken Woodson and the
14 president about this whole area of what
15 makes it safe and better for all
16 concerned, and we're happy to support
17 it. Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
19 Councilwoman. Is there anyone here
20 today that wishes to testify on Bill
21 No. 190436?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Being
24 none, we will now move to Bill No.
25 190892. Please state your name again

1 for the record regarding this bill and
2 proceed with your testimony.

3 MS. CASIMIR: Sure. Thank
4 you. Good morning, Chairman, and other
5 Members of the Committee. My name is
6 Dominique Casimir and I'm the Deputy
7 Commissioner of Real Estate for the
8 Department of Public Property. I'm
9 here to testify in support of Bill No.
10 190892. I am joined here today by
11 Beverly Woods, Assistant Managing
12 Director for Health and Human Services,
13 and Tom Dalfo, Senior Vice-president at
14 PIDC.

15 This bill authorizes the City
16 to convey two parcels located at 451
17 and 501 University Avenue to the
18 Philadelphia Authority of Industrial
19 Development, also known as PAID, for
20 further conveyance to the University of
21 Pennsylvania, which I will refer to as
22 Penn and the Children's Hospital of
23 Philadelphia which I will also refer to
24 as CHOP at fair market value.

25 These properties include the

1 Medical Examiner's Office, which I will
2 refer to as MEO, located at 501
3 University Avenue and a facility
4 located at 451 University Avenue used
5 by West Philadelphia Community Health
6 Consortium, also referred to as the
7 Consortium, a community-based
8 organization that provides medication-
9 assisted treatment for people
10 recovering from substance abuse
11 disorder.

12 The sale of these properties
13 will result in a series of
14 transactions. The MEO's site will be
15 subdivided into two parcels. One
16 portion of the MEO's site will be
17 conveyed to Penn and CHOP who will
18 construct an employee parking garage on
19 a portion of the MEO's site adjacent to
20 the existing Penn and CHOP garage.

21 Penn and CHOP will construct
22 a fully fitted out medication-assisted
23 treatment facility within the new
24 garage. The City will enter into a
25 29-year, 11-month lease of the

1 medication-assisted treatment at \$1 per
2 year rent. The City will also receive
3 10 parking spaces in the garage for use
4 by the medication-assisted treatment
5 provider's staff at no cost.

6 The City will have the option
7 to extend this lease for a total term
8 of nearly, approximately 90 years.

9 CHOP will acquire, remediate and
10 demolish the existing MEO building and
11 construct a new facility on it. While
12 this facility is yet to be designed, at
13 a minimum it will be equivalent to 75
14 percent of the maximum development
15 capacity of the site permitted by its
16 proposed zoning classification, CMX-4.

17 Penn will also acquire,
18 remediate and demolish the building the
19 Consortium currently occupies. The
20 site will be incorporated into Penn's
21 institutional district and is the case
22 with CHOP. The facility is yet to be
23 designed. It will at minimum be
24 equivalent to 75 percent of 400 percent
25 of the floor area ratio, FAR, for the

1 site consistent with Penn's
2 institutional district plan.

3 Both Penn and CHOP will enter
4 into economic opportunity plans for all
5 development that occurs on these sites
6 as a condition of the agreements
7 negotiated. As a recap, these
8 transactions will result in a
9 substantial financial benefit, a modern
10 medication-assisted treatment facility
11 and two parcels to support continued
12 investment and expansion of two
13 world-class medical research and
14 treatment institutions.

15 Let me end my testimony by
16 noting that this ordinance introduced
17 by Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell
18 represents the culmination of a four-
19 decade process to reposition the former
20 Philadelphia General Hospital and Civic
21 Center sites in West Philadelphia. In
22 1979, Councilman Lucien Blackwell
23 introduced the first piece of
24 legislation authorizing the sale of a
25 portion of the PGH to site PAID.

1 Today, on that site stands
2 CHOP's Abramson Research Center, the
3 Wood building, the Children's Seashore
4 House, and both Penn's Clinical
5 Research and Biomedical Research
6 Buildings. Over the intervening 40
7 years, the City, PIDC, Penn and CHOP
8 and Councilwoman Blackwell have carried
9 on that process started by Councilman
10 Blackwell to good effect.

11 In that time, Penn and CHOP
12 have invested nearly \$5 billion to
13 develop more than 6 million SF of some
14 of the world's pre-eminent medical
15 treatment and research facilities
16 creating more than 17,000 jobs in the
17 process. In 1979, no one could have
18 known that the yet-to-be medical
19 centers on these sites would one day
20 lead to breakthroughs, medical
21 treatments and pediatric care,
22 including cancer, immunotherapy, proton
23 therapy and most recently gene therapy
24 among many other advances that are
25 quite literally too numerous to

1 mention.

2 What they had was a vision of
3 what these transactions could yield not
4 only for the City of Philadelphia and
5 its citizens and I dare say the global
6 world, the global citizens. The
7 transactions presented today will
8 further that vision and create new
9 space where the medical breakthroughs
10 of tomorrows will be discovered.

11 I ask the Committee to
12 consider this bill favorably and that
13 the rules of Council be suspended to
14 permit first reading at the next
15 regularly scheduled meeting of Council.
16 I would also like to take a personal
17 moment to thank Councilwoman Blackwell,
18 PIDC, the Administration, Penn and CHOP
19 for really coming together in a
20 professional manner to make this
21 transaction come to fruition.

22 Thank you for the opportunity
23 to testify and Beverly, Tom and I are
24 happy to answer any questions you may
25 have regarding this ordinance.

1 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
2 for your testimony. I'd like to hear
3 from Mr. John White, if you can come
4 up.

5 (Witness approached
6 Witness Table.)

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: State your
8 name for the record and begin with your
9 testimony before we go into any
10 questions.

11 MR. WHITE: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman. Good morning,
13 Councilmembers, Councilwoman Blackwell.
14 I was taken aback a little bit when the
15 previous speaker said it was a 40-year
16 process. I'm not sure I'm aware of any
17 process that would take 40 years. But
18 the Consortium, once it was decided
19 that we were going to locate it from
20 Philadelphia General Hospital, the
21 Board and staff had maintained the
22 position that we should receive
23 ownership of the property.

24 Every administration that we
25 had engaged -- and I started ironically

1 December 3, 2001, so this will be my
2 18th anniversary, and from the
3 beginning, we began to try to work to
4 see if we could acquire the property
5 451 to use it as an asset to assist us
6 in our financial situation. We know
7 now that that's not a possibility.

8 But I want to congratulate
9 this Administration because you're the
10 first who thus far have kept their
11 word. I'm particularly grateful to
12 Ms. Woods and Mr. Tomar Jackson for
13 making sure that this Administration
14 stayed on point. They told us that we
15 would be moving into a brand new
16 state-of-the-art facility, that they
17 would give us assistance with respect
18 to our financial capabilities, so that
19 we could continue to grow.

20 What we do now at that
21 location at 451 University Avenue is
22 not only a treatment center for
23 medication-assisted treatment, but it's
24 also an outpatient clinic for those who
25 have suffered from any other types of

1 addiction. We supplemented that and I
2 think Council would be very interested
3 in that we now have a computer center
4 so we are able to provide computer
5 literacy to the members of 451.

6 We launched an inhouse
7 integrated care program where everyone
8 who comes through our doors is able to
9 have a physical exam and be referred to
10 their own physician, if they are any
11 undiagnosed diseases that we identify.
12 They're accompanied to the doctor by
13 buddies. Their buddies are also
14 members of our medication-assisted
15 treatment program.

16 So I think that you will see
17 that the Consortium by way of the
18 services that we provide and the
19 quality of services that we provide, as
20 was indicated it was vital to the City
21 for CHOP and for the University of
22 Pennsylvania for the research
23 capabilities.

24 I would also add that it is
25 vital for the Consortium to have a

1 facility that is going to be up to
2 standard and that will offer people a
3 real opportunity to secure their
4 addiction and to move on for the better
5 parts of their life. With me are Eric
6 Silverman who is my Vice-president for
7 Finance and Ms. Patricia Booker who is
8 the Vice-president for Operations.

9 A special thanks, however,
10 does go to Councilwoman Blackwell who
11 has stood by our side every step of the
12 way every day to try to make this
13 happen. The trust that we've been able
14 to build with this Administration is
15 unlike what we have experienced in
16 previous administrations.

17 I'd like to believe that when
18 someone gives their word, I'm old
19 school, that someone gives their word,
20 they mean it. And I can tell you that
21 the people who are joined here at this
22 table have done just that, and I would
23 hope their cooperation will continue to
24 be above board, honest and truthful
25 with us as well. I thank you,

1 Mr. Chairman, for your time.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.

3 Does anyone on the Committee have any
4 questions for the panelists here today?

5 The Chair recognizes Councilman Domb.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
7 Chairman Henon, and good morning and
8 thank you for your testimony. I have a
9 question, I guess, on your testimony
10 about the -- it says it will be
11 conveyed as fair market value
12 consideration. What's the definition
13 of that today?

14 MS. CASIMIR: I will say fair
15 market value, so we did receive
16 appraisals on the building --

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: That's
18 good.

19 MS. CASIMIR: -- two for each
20 site. And the combined value of the
21 sites came to \$46,525. The credits
22 that we are still negotiating upon,
23 obviously there's a lot of things
24 pending, is the construction and
25 fit-out of the medical-assisted

1 treatment space and also the estimated
2 remediation and demolition of the
3 building, so those are the things that
4 are still items on the table that may
5 be a credit against that value.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So
7 hopefully, when this transaction goes
8 through, the proceeds for this sale,
9 where do they wind up?

10 MS. CASIMIR: In the general
11 fund.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: General
13 fund, which is about in the range of
14 \$40 million or \$46 million we'll just
15 say at this point. Okay. Thank you
16 very much. Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 MS. CASIMIR: Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
20 Is there anyone else here today who
21 wish to testify on Bill No. 190892?
22 You may approach the bench.

23 (Witness approached
24 Witness Table.)

25 MR. O'DONNELL: Yes, Ed

1 O'Donnell and what I'm going to say
2 applies to all public properties,
3 including this one. But first, I and
4 millions of people in this city want to
5 thank Councilwoman Blackwell for her
6 dedication to helping the poor.

7 She's like Mother Teresa.
8 She gets up every day to serve. She
9 doesn't have to be mayor, governor and
10 she's been a tremendous inspiration to
11 the poor, the weak, the lonely and the
12 lost. Now, on public properties,
13 please help with this. I'm allergic to
14 secondhand cigarette smoke, as are many
15 people.

16 And a lot of them -- my
17 father was a doctor in Delaware, went
18 to Yale and Yale Med. He was a
19 pediatrician but double -- a lot of
20 people don't know they're allergic to
21 secondhand cigarette smoke. I get one
22 puff blown in my face, I get a migraine
23 headache. Please all public properties
24 and every other thing you do, try to
25 crack down on cigarette smoke.

1 The police will tell you it's
2 a gateway drug. People start with that
3 and alcohol. Then they move to the
4 harder drugs. The cost of it, \$7, \$8 a
5 pack. It bankrupts the people who
6 spend the money on it and then they
7 litter the countryside. It's just --
8 and secondhand cigarette smoke gives
9 you lung disease, emphysema, cancer,
10 death. So everything we can do, we
11 need to crack down on cigarette smoke.

12 The laws are not being
13 enforced. You're not supposed to smoke
14 at the bus station, but they don't
15 enforce it. So I get on the bus in the
16 summer, take a nice trip to the beach
17 for sun tan oil, sun, ocean, healing.
18 I got a horrible migraine headache for
19 the whole trip. So anything you can do
20 on public properties private
21 enforcement, please crack down on the
22 cigarette smoke.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
24 Thank you for joining us here today.

25 (Witness approached

1 Witness Table.)

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Please
3 state your name for the record, sir.

4 MR. ALI: Good morning. My
5 name is Jihad Ali. I'm here with South
6 Philadelphia District Services. Good
7 morning, Mr. Chairman and other Members
8 of the Board. I'd like to follow up on
9 the other speaker. I'd like to thank
10 the Councilwoman. And I would just
11 like to also add to his comments that
12 the Councilwoman is available to help
13 all people.

14 You know, there's a comment
15 of the hero Superman. When I came up,
16 they used to say with great power comes
17 great responsibility. And I've always
18 thought about that with the
19 Councilwoman because she's always taken
20 that responsibility and took care of
21 everyone. She never stopped anybody
22 from exercising their constitutional
23 rights, and that's exactly what I'm
24 here today to do.

25 I'm here today to talk about

1 this Bill 190892, knowing I'm very
2 familiar with Penn. And I also want to
3 acknowledge the former speaker Mr. John
4 White who's a legend in our community.
5 Who in the African-American community,
6 he was on the forefront.

7 Since this bill is looking
8 into the future of 90 years, we need to
9 look back for the past 30 years to see
10 the kind of work that he did, Lucien
11 Blackwell did, Senator Williams did.
12 We just had so many great heroes back
13 in the day, and John White is one of
14 those heroes and I just wanted to
15 acknowledge that for the record.

16 I know about his good work
17 that he's done with the population he
18 services and I'm very familiar with
19 Penn. I'm very familiar with CHOP. I
20 think they're outstanding institutions.
21 I think they do a phenomenal job in the
22 city of Philadelphia. I think CHOP is
23 rolling out some new initiatives to do
24 some work with the asthma-related
25 population which is a killer in the

1 African-American community as well as
2 other communities, but it really takes
3 hold in the African-American community
4 because they don't have the resources
5 to remediate those causes, the triggers
6 of asthma. And CHOP has taken some
7 steps to do that and to date, they've
8 done an outstanding job.

9 Penn is doing phenomenal work
10 in the City. They have several
11 programs thanks to the Councilwoman.
12 They have the Penn First Program that
13 was initiated on the new bill, new
14 patient pavilion. They're trying to do
15 outstanding things in terms of the
16 building trades. So there's a lot of
17 accolades to go around for both of
18 these institutions in the work that
19 they do. But I want to talk about this
20 transaction and I'm just going to defer
21 to Councilman Domb because he's a lot
22 more experienced than me in terms of
23 development.

24 But I wanted to just look at
25 the transaction in my terms because

1 this process is designed to have you,
2 leaders of government, pass forth bills
3 and it also gives the opportunity for
4 citizens to come down and question
5 these bills. So if we look at this
6 transaction in terms of months, because
7 it's 29 years and 11 months and it's
8 just easier to round it -- to refer to
9 the months.

10 The first transaction is 359
11 months. Then there's two additional
12 leases for another 718 months. When we
13 add all of that together, we have 1,077
14 months. Divide that by 12, we have
15 89.5 years and that's why in that
16 comment Ms. -- I'm sorry?

17 MS. CASIMIR: Dominique
18 Casimir.

19 MR. ALI: Dominique mentioned
20 the 90 years. So just looking for the
21 90 years which is 2109, I'll be
22 optimistic and say God-willing I'll be
23 here in 2109, but I really want to
24 speak to the future. And the future,
25 because the future will be in these

1 words that I'm speaking today when
2 we're all long and gone. And I have
3 recently had a close date of death that
4 by God's grace I'm still here.

5 But if we look at 2109, I
6 want the record to reflect that we were
7 here talking about opportunities for
8 African-Americans and other minorities
9 in this city. Typically, the City has
10 economic opportunity plans and
11 Dominique when she spoke, she mentioned
12 that there's an EOP plan. I just want
13 to be sure it's going to be attached to
14 all the parcels.

15 And the other issue we have
16 with the EOP plan, the numbers is a
17 challenge for the institutions to
18 achieve these plans. So when you talk
19 to these institutions, whether it's
20 CHOP or Penn, they have the
21 willingness, they have the muscle, but
22 the problem, the roadblock that
23 they're coming into, and I'm saying
24 this respectfully, Councilman Henon, is
25 really the Building Trades, because the

1 Building Trades are unbudging of these
2 issues of diversity.

3 And I've asked countless
4 times if we look around the City, you
5 look at Council, you look at CHOP, you
6 look at Penn, we're going to see a
7 diverse population wherever we look.
8 We just don't see that when we look at
9 Building Trades. And one union, the
10 Carpenters Union is some of the ones
11 that don't really want to come to the
12 table. So we really would like to have
13 some push-back from leaders in
14 government. It's not the institutions
15 that are opposing us.

16 The institutions want what's
17 best. Like Dominique said, this is a
18 negotiation. The institution told you,
19 well, we're going to be doing -- we've
20 been working, we have 5 million -- we
21 have \$5 billion that we put in, 6
22 million square feet of space. Yet they
23 have benefit this city. But there's a
24 two-sided table. Both sides benefit,
25 the institution benefits and then the

1 City benefits. But we really want to
2 see the population benefit because
3 theoretically, what we're talking about
4 this EOP plan, unless there's something
5 else to come out in the future, we're
6 only talking about the construction
7 phase.

8 And if we look at the
9 institutions through the work of
10 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown,
11 she had the institution -- she had to
12 look at the diversity of the boards.
13 That step is missed in this process.
14 But when you look at the diversity of
15 the boards, when you look at Penn,
16 CHOP, you know, this is some of that
17 real talk, Councilman, that you know
18 that we've had over the years.

19 When you talk about real
20 talk, when I look, I don't see Black
21 people. I don't see Black males. I
22 don't see Black females on the
23 leadership. We see the lower level
24 guys, and it's not going to be until
25 government says make this happen. So

1 I'm here as I said to speak to the
2 record and to speak to the future so
3 when 90 years from now when somebody
4 looks back, these words will be true,
5 that we spoke truth to power to say
6 what about us. So that concludes my
7 comments today. And if you have
8 anything to say, I'm happy to answer.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: All right.
10 Thank you for your testimony. Before I
11 recognize Councilman Oh, I also want to
12 recognize the Committee is joined by
13 Councilman Oh and Councilman Squilla as
14 a part of our quorum. Now, Councilman
15 Oh?

16 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you
17 very much, Chairman. I just want to
18 make a point of information which I
19 think you do know this. But the
20 Council has already passed a bill, I'm
21 proud to have been the author of the
22 bill, that addresses in part what
23 you're saying, that under the law that
24 we have in Philadelphia, that if
25 there's a disparity study that shows

1 that there is an existing qualified
2 population of skilled workers who can
3 work on these construction projects
4 which there's an EOP plan on, if the
5 project does not have without excuse
6 the requisite number of workers, for
7 example, if there's a city-sponsored
8 project, there's an EOP plan and this
9 disparity study says that within this
10 region 37 percent of the population
11 African-American, Latino, whomever,
12 women are eligible, they're qualified
13 and skilled, that they have to be on
14 the job site.

15 And if they are not, that
16 anyone can come to the Council. The
17 Council can have a hearing to allow for
18 the information, due process, to be
19 brought forward. And if they're
20 failing, that the funding of that
21 project can be withheld, can be
22 stopped. The project can be stopped.
23 I do think that that is an important
24 law.

25 I believe if I'm not

1 mistaken, it passed unanimously within
2 the Council. But it is up to people
3 such as yourselves who are very
4 concerned about this issue to bring it
5 forward because it is a tool. The
6 question is whether the tool will have
7 an impact, but I think at least on my
8 part what you're saying is of great
9 concern.

10 And I think on behalf of the
11 whole Council it is a concern. But I
12 think we do have a way through this
13 mechanism to show that there is, in
14 fact, a tool to stop, to halt this
15 project. I know Councilman Blackwell
16 on her own separate and apart has put
17 together a tremendous program of having
18 qualified minorities on the job site.
19 It was to me an amazing thing that she
20 did.

21 It was something that was
22 done voluntarily. How she did it, you
23 know, my hats off to her. But I was
24 hoping that we would see more of that
25 as things would continue. So I just

1 wanted you and the public to know that
2 there's a tool. There's a willingness
3 on the part of our Council and our
4 government, but people have to use that
5 tool. Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
7 Councilman --

8 MR. ALI: Councilman, can I
9 just make a comment to that? Thank you
10 for pointing that out and I just would
11 like to remind you, I may be one of the
12 oldest guys in this room right now, but
13 there was a time we had a problem with
14 the Police Department, the
15 African-American community, and that
16 was police brutality.

17 And one of the things that
18 changed that was when Kevin --
19 Commissioner Tucker came in here, the
20 former CIA Director, he came -- person.
21 He came in here and he changed the
22 process and made a complaint process,
23 but he advertised that. And the fact
24 of the matter was so people knew that
25 there was a procedure that they could

1 file a complaint.

2 So what's missing from that
3 was the marketing of this complaint
4 procedure for that, because that would
5 empower not just people like me, but
6 individuals that's trying to support
7 their family. They would know that
8 there's a complaint process for me to
9 lodge with Council people. So I think
10 we should put more effort in getting
11 that word out there.

12 COUNCILMAN OH: I appreciate
13 that. I'll take a crack at the press.
14 I think they said the most important
15 thing I've ever done is do a resolution
16 apologizing for broken thumb of a
17 Terracotta warrior. If they don't
18 publish this stuff, if they don't tell
19 readers and the public, the more
20 important things that are done that are
21 impactful to them, then it's very hard
22 for us to educate the public about
23 their options.

24 I do try. I put it on
25 Facebook, Twitter. I go to events. I

1 talk about it. It's like a drop in the
2 bucket, but with your network and your
3 access to some of our outstanding
4 groups, civil rights groups, workforce
5 groups, it would be super helpful. I
6 have the same problem with veteran
7 things that I do. We pass things that
8 help veterans, but there isn't an
9 ability to kind of get it out to the
10 public. But thank you for saying that
11 and I have hope that we will be able to
12 get this information out so people will
13 be able to participate in their
14 government. Thank you.

15 MR. ALI: Thank you,
16 Councilman.

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
18 Councilman. Is there anyone else here
19 for Bill No. 190892? Seeing --

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
21 Mr. Chairman?

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: Chair
23 recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
25 Thank you. Let me thank everyone for

1 the kind remarks they made about myself
2 and certainly the kind remarks they
3 made about my better half Lucien
4 Blackwell. And certainly, I support
5 all that has been said. It's amazing.
6 But as long as we still have
7 discrimination in this country, we
8 still have this battle.

9 We have to fight for it while
10 we try to work with everyone. I'm so
11 pleased to work with my institutions.
12 I was just honored by Penn just last
13 night and the president was there and
14 I've been honored by Drexel and the
15 Board of Trustees as well as USB.
16 We're overjoyed to work with them and I
17 thank everybody again for the kind
18 remarks. But we also understand that
19 the battle still wages. And certainly,
20 what Councilman Oh -- the battle, I'm
21 sorry I won't be here with you, but the
22 battle still wages and we have to still
23 try to make life equal for all. Thank
24 you.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,

1 Councilwoman. We will now move to Bill
2 No. 190896. Please state your name for
3 the record and proceed with your
4 testimony.

5 MR. CASIMIR: Sure. Good
6 morning, Chairman Henon, and other
7 Members on Public Property and Public
8 Works. My name is Dominique Casimir.
9 I'm the Deputy Commissioner of Real
10 Estate for Public Property. I'm here
11 to testify in favor of Bill No. 190896
12 authorizing the City to convey 724
13 South 50th Street to the Philadelphia
14 Redevelopment Authority for further
15 conveyance.

16 The property was conveyed to
17 the City in 1983 by the Philadelphia
18 Housing Development Corporation which
19 is now referred to as PHDC. PHDC
20 subsequently conveyed the property a
21 second time in 2011 to a private
22 individual. The second conveyance
23 created a cloud on that person's title
24 to the property.

25 The proposed nominal

1 conveyance would allow PRA to further
2 convey good and clear title to that
3 person. The Department of Public
4 Property supports this measure and
5 accordingly and respectfully asks the
6 City to approve the City Council Bill
7 No. 190896. I'm requesting a
8 suspension of all rules so as to follow
9 for the first reading at the next
10 session of Council. Thank you and I'm
11 happy to answer any questions you may
12 have.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
14 for your testimony. Anyone on the
15 Committee wish to ask any questions of
16 Bill No. 190896? Anyone else here
17 today wishes to testify on Bill No.
18 190896?

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
20 Mr. Chairman, we're happy to support
21 it.

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
23 Councilwoman. We will now move to Bill
24 No. 190937. Is somebody from the
25 Administration, Parks & Recreation that

1 wish to testify on Bill No. 190937?

2 (Witness approached

3 Witness Table.)

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
5 morning.

6 MS. PALANTINO: Good morning,
7 Chairman Henon, and Members of the
8 Committee on Public Property and Public
9 Works. My name is Aparna Palantino,
10 Philadelphia Parks & Recreation Deputy
11 Commissioner. I'm here today to
12 testify on Bill No. 190937, an
13 ordinance renaming and designating the
14 Cobbs Creek Community Environmental
15 Education Center located at 700 Cobbs
16 Creek Parkway in the City of
17 Philadelphia as the Carol Williams-
18 Green Community Environmental Education
19 Center.

20 While we agree that
21 Ms. Williams-Green should be honored
22 for her great work, the Department of
23 Parks & Recreation has a longstanding
24 policy for renaming facilities under
25 the jurisdiction of the Department.

1 This policy stipulates that a minimum
2 of 10 years need to pass following a
3 person's death before a facility within
4 the Parks & Recreation's system can be
5 named in their honor.

6 Therefore, we would be more
7 than willing to consider other viable
8 alternatives that will honor
9 Mrs. Williams-Green's longstanding
10 commitment to the Cobbs Creek
11 Environmental Center. I'm happy to
12 answer any questions you may have.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
15 for your testimony. Chair recognizes
16 Councilman Greenlee.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
18 you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning.

19 MS. PALANTINO: Good morning.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: At the
21 end of your testimony, you say about
22 willing to consider other viable
23 alternatives. Do you have any of the
24 alternatives at this point? Do you
25 have any suggestions about --

1 MS. PALANTINO: In other
2 facilities we've dedicated a portion of
3 the site, something that's most
4 significant to a person's legacy. So
5 we would work with the Councilwoman's
6 office and the community to designate
7 an appropriate amenity on site.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Can you
9 speak a little bit more into the
10 microphone? I'm getting old here.

11 MS. PALANTINO: Sorry. So we
12 would reach out to the Councilwoman's
13 office and the community and arrange
14 for a discussion to determine what
15 amenity on site would be most suitable
16 or perhaps in the community somewhere,
17 what type of recognition that would
18 be -- I apologize. I don't have an
19 answer today.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And
21 have you had conversations with the
22 Councilwoman or the community on this?

23 MS. PALANTINO: We have not
24 as yet, no.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No

1 offense, but wouldn't that have helped
2 as we sit here today?

3 MS. PALANTINO: Yes.

4 Unfortunately, this was introduced
5 without our knowledge originally.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

7 All right. Thank you. Thank you,
8 Mr. Chairman.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: Anyone
10 else on the Committee wish to speak on
11 Bill No. 190937? Chair recognizes
12 Councilwoman Gym.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So there's
14 no other facility that is named after a
15 living individual; is that correct?

16 MS. PALANTINO: Not an entire
17 site. There are portions of sites that
18 have been dedicated.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And that's
20 something that could be an option?

21 MS. PALANTINO: Yes,
22 absolutely.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. All
24 right. Thank you.

25 MS. PALANTINO: You're

1 welcome.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: I know
3 we're -- Councilwoman Blackwell is
4 here. Is there anything, Councilwoman,
5 that you would like to add to this or
6 is this something that you and the
7 Department and the community wish to
8 have dialogue and conversation on?

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
10 Frankly, I did not consider that,
11 didn't think about it, that the City's
12 policy is to do it with people have
13 passed away. Mrs. Carol T. Williams-
14 Green has been around for a long time.
15 Many of us know her. She was in here
16 fighting for money. I remember when
17 David Cowen, Head of Comcast now, was
18 standing at the fence and she went over
19 to him and talked about money for that
20 center. Oh, boy, she was one of those
21 folks. She would come up to anybody,
22 but I'm happy to always work with the
23 City. I don't know how the people
24 feel. I think there are four people
25 here to testify I've just been told,

1 and I would ask that the Committee hear
2 them and then maybe would ask them what
3 they think and go from there, if that's
4 okay.

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: Fair
6 enough.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: We can
10 revisit this towards the end of the
11 hearing and discuss future --

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: --
15 alternatives and conversations and
16 discussions with the community, Parks &
17 Recreation and yourself. I think
18 that's a good idea. Anyone else on the
19 Committee have any questions for the
20 Department of Parks & Recreation?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
23 for your testimony and if you could
24 hang around for --

25 MS. PALANTINO: Sure.

1 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- a
2 little bit longer, we would appreciate
3 it. I'm going to call the panelists to
4 come up. Victoria Atkerson,
5 representative, Ronald Waters and
6 Jarrad Gholston. Could you please
7 state your name for the record and you
8 may proceed when ready with your
9 testimony. And is Jackie Williams
10 avail -- very good.

11 (Panel approached
12 Witness Table.)

13 MS. ATKERSON: Good morning.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
15 morning.

16 MS. ATKERSON: My name is
17 Victoria Hargro Atkerson. I'm a writer
18 and an author, also a community
19 activist. I'm here to talk about a
20 project that I'm most passionate about
21 and that's the Cobbs Creek
22 Environmental Center. This past Sunday
23 I listened to CBS morning news talk
24 about how wonderful GPS was and how
25 absolutely fabulous it was, which it is

1 because it affects our lives every day.
2 But the one thing they did not say was
3 that a Black woman invented that
4 application that we use every day of
5 our lives, and that goes -- and also we
6 use it in our cars, but it's also used
7 on the Internet. It's also used on our
8 grid that allows us to have energy
9 every hour of the day unstopped.

10 She is one of the most
11 important hidden figures in our
12 history. Today I'm here to talk about
13 Philadelphia's hidden figure which is
14 Carol Williams-Green. She has been an
15 inspiration to the Cobbs Creek
16 community for many years.

17 We have been working with the
18 City to try to establish an equal
19 partnership for the 501(c)(3) and the
20 charitable organization that we run
21 from that place. Carol Williams-Green
22 was responsible for initiating the idea
23 of this Environmental Center.

24 She walked those grounds with
25 her children for many years. She was a

1 resident of Cobbs Creek. She loved
2 that park. She was an educator in the
3 City. She loved science which she
4 taught in the Philadelphia school
5 system and became in charge of all the
6 science teachers in this city.

7 Our love of the environment,
8 her love of science inspired her to
9 contact her neighbors to bring them
10 together to work on the project to
11 build this center from the ruins that
12 were there in the park every day for
13 her and her children to see for many
14 years and other children. The place
15 was once used as a stable for the
16 Fairmount Park guards, and she took it
17 on herself to take that property which
18 was ruined and burned out and create
19 the best environmental center we have
20 here in Philadelphia and in many other
21 places that I've seen.

22 And if you haven't seen the
23 Environmental Center, I ask you to go
24 to each one of them. Then go to Cobbs
25 Creek and see the marvelous structure

1 there. See the fully equipped
2 laboratory that's there. Instead of
3 honoring this woman, we told her to go
4 away. We told her she was not needed
5 and not welcome in this place.

6 We asked her to remove all
7 the historical documents in the
8 building and all the pictures at her
9 own expense. I watched as she took
10 these items out of the building. We
11 owe her more than that. We owe her
12 legacy more than that. She encouraged
13 32 of her neighbors to join her in the
14 project of raising \$2.7 million to
15 build that facility. \$2.7 million and
16 it took them 10 years to do it. 10
17 years of hard work and dedication to do
18 that.

19 When she and her friends who
20 had organized this place worked so hard
21 to do that and they began to age out
22 and many of them died off, she came to
23 the City and asked for an equal
24 partnership to use that building to
25 create programs for Cobbs Creek and

1 this city. She wanted the entire area
2 of Cobbs Creek taken care of.

3 She included in that
4 environment the neighborhood that these
5 children lived in, that these families
6 lived in, because respecting the trees
7 and the plants and the animals, the
8 fish that lived in this creek, all of
9 that is wonderful. But she knew that
10 we had to honor the housing and the
11 neighborhoods of Cobbs Creek. Her
12 501(c)(3) which is a charitable
13 organization does that.

14 They provide programs for
15 families that will make them better
16 citizens, make them more conscious
17 about their environment. When I was
18 first asked to come on board by
19 Ms. Jackie Williams sitting next to me,
20 I had no idea how difficult this would
21 be and how frustrating this process
22 would be. She asked me to come on
23 board to help Carol maintain her
24 legacy, the legacy that she built,
25 inspired and I was happy to do it

1 because I'm an advocate for Black
2 History and anything pertaining to the
3 legacy of our people. I happily did
4 that, but little did I know how
5 difficult it was going to be.

6 The first thing I wanted to
7 do was get rid of the hostile
8 leadership on the board and to rebuild
9 that board which I began to do
10 immediately, and we have a brand new
11 board who took on some of the
12 challenges that we're facing. And the
13 main one of the main challenges we have
14 is to work out this agreement we have
15 with the City, to see that we can
16 operate that charitable organization in
17 that place that she created, because
18 she was told to hand over her keys and
19 don't come back.

20 We need to do what is fair
21 and what is right. This woman has
22 given much to this city. Not only did
23 she raise wonderful children, some of
24 whom still give back to the City and to
25 the state, but we need to honor her in

1 this way. The building that she built
2 to the tune of \$2.7 million, we're
3 asking that her name be placed on that
4 building. And that the way forward for
5 her and her charitable organization to
6 exist there on a permanent basis, so
7 that they do the work that's needed,
8 the work that's required without any
9 more inhibitions or restrictions.

10 We also ask that you honor
11 the 32 people by putting a plaque
12 somewhere on the premises saying that
13 these 32 neighbors in Cobbs Creek
14 helped to build that wonderful, amazing
15 facility. We owe her that. We owe
16 these 32 people that and their
17 families, because they should know the
18 contributions that their family members
19 made to this city.

20 I thank you for allowing me
21 to come to speak today and I ask you to
22 please consider this because it would
23 help us a great deal. It would also
24 help the many generations of children
25 that will walk those grounds. They

1 will know their heritage which is
2 absolutely necessary, so I ask you to
3 consider these things. And please, her
4 name should be on the building because
5 she deserves it and it's the right
6 thing to do.

7 I'm going to ask Ms. Jackie
8 Williams to give you a short synopsis
9 on the programs we designed through our
10 501(c)(3), and thank you so much. I
11 appreciate being here.

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
13 for your testimony. State your name
14 for the record and you may proceed.

15 MS. WILLIAMS: My name is
16 Jacqueline Williams and I'm a member of
17 the Board of Directors at Cobbs Creek
18 Community Environmental Education
19 Center. I will give you a brief
20 history of the programs that we have
21 initiated relating to the environment
22 in an urban community.

23 Through the years we've had
24 programs relating to the streams, the
25 watersheds and the wooded areas

1 surrounding the center. Programs such
2 as a Park Management program, a Junior
3 program, a Professional Development
4 program, a Senior Environment program,
5 a Revive the Pride program and more.
6 We have plans for programs for the
7 future.

8 The community is a part of
9 the people environment in an urban
10 society. Twenty years ago the Founders
11 Advisory Council, and I happen to be
12 Chairperson of that, was formed by a
13 group of dedicated professional
14 civic-minded women to support the
15 founder Carol Williams-Green.

16 This group implemented
17 programs dealing with utilities,
18 housing, finance, legal and health
19 issues. These conditions affect the
20 growth and development of the
21 community's lifestyle. Thus, these
22 circumstances affect the environment.

23 It was Carol Williams-Green
24 who was the visionary that initiated
25 the need to provide a facility in

1 Southwest Philadelphia to promote
2 education to help the community become
3 aware of environmental issues.

4 I'd like to thank Mrs. Jannie
5 Blackwell for the support she has
6 always given to this center. And at
7 this time we certainly appreciate it.
8 Thank you very much. I hope you
9 consider what Harriet offered this
10 morning in terms of support for having
11 the building have the name of Carol
12 Williams-Green on it because if it
13 wasn't for her, we wouldn't have had
14 that building there. It would have
15 just been an empty space because it was
16 a broken down horse stable that they
17 were about to tear down, and it's a
18 beautiful \$2.7 million building. Thank
19 you very much.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
21 Thank you for your testimony.
22 Representative Waters?

23 MR. WATERS: Thank you,
24 Councilman, and thank you to the
25 Committee for entertaining this vision

1 that we have for the Cobbs Creek
2 Community Education and Environmental
3 Center. Councilwoman, I appreciate you
4 all.

5 I am here to speak about this
6 briefly now because I think that you've
7 heard so much already about this
8 wonderful woman that is also a
9 visionary and how she saw an abandoned
10 piece of property in the Cobbs Creek
11 Park area which is a wonderful park, it
12 really is.

13 I moved from North
14 Philadelphia out of the projects to
15 West Philadelphia to 61st Street. And
16 when my family moved up here back in
17 the late '50s, I thought I had arrived.
18 I thought, wow, look at the
19 neighborhoods, the tree lining on the
20 streets and the wonderful parks.

21 My mother used to take me out
22 there and let me sit out there with a
23 basket of food and we would sit in the
24 park and just enjoy ourselves. We
25 didn't have a lot of money, but we had

1 a park in the neighborhood and we
2 really enjoyed that. I know you know
3 all about that, Councilman Oh. You're
4 from out that area too.

5 I did not know and I don't
6 think the Councilwoman knew either, and
7 I want to thank her for all and she's
8 been complimented time and time again
9 for her even entertaining this motion
10 to rename this facility. But I'm sure
11 she did not know about or was not aware
12 of this renaming, you can't rename a
13 facility while a person is still alive.

14 I think that's sad because
15 there's a lot of great people that we
16 can all think about that we wish that
17 they could enjoy the fruits of their
18 labor while they still have a chance to
19 see it for themselves. This is
20 something that we thought of when we --
21 that's why I'm here, to support this
22 woman, this visionary, this leader in
23 our community that saw that in the
24 underserved communities that we come
25 from, many of the people there can

1 benefit from the education that comes
2 with the science of the climate,
3 climate change.

4 Even though there is some
5 people that won't admit to it, but
6 science has already said there is a
7 change. Things are happening, things
8 that we've never heard of before and
9 it's a reason for it. And our
10 community needs to have an opportunity
11 to learn more and more about what these
12 changes are so they can be properly
13 educated and know how we can all get on
14 board to help this beautiful planet
15 that we live on. I just want to -- I
16 really want to thank Carol
17 Williams-Green for bringing that into
18 the 3rd Ward, into what used to be for
19 me as a state legislature, my
20 legislative district, 191st Legislative
21 District.

22 I remember when it opened in
23 2001 and I was there. And we
24 celebrated it. It took a lot for her
25 to do that. Ten years of labor it took

1 for her to get that project and those
2 doors open, so that's why we're here.
3 We believe that people who have to do
4 good work for the community and bring a
5 great resource like this to the
6 community deserve to be recognized. So
7 we want to recognize her. And I'm
8 hearing now and I've been through this
9 before, as a legislature I know there's
10 always compromise and there's how do we
11 get things done at the end of the day.

12 I watched how Council
13 operates and I want to commend you guys
14 for even taking on the challenge of
15 running for four more years of handling
16 the business of the city of
17 Philadelphia. I want to thank all of
18 you, because a lot of people might not
19 want to do it one time, but here you
20 guys did it time and time again, so I
21 thank you all.

22 But how we work this out I
23 believe now, because if there's a
24 policy in place that will totally
25 prohibit it, I don't know how we work

1 this out. But somewhere, somehow I'm
2 here to say that we have to recognize
3 this woman and the work that she has
4 done for our community. And based on
5 what I've heard from the Parks &
6 Recreation representative that is here
7 and there's a rule in place, unless
8 that rule is changed, right now your
9 hands are tied and I get that.

10 I know how -- I get that, but
11 we got to figure this thing out and we
12 got to recognize this leader, this
13 visionary and this wonderful woman that
14 has done so much in the area of the
15 Cobbs Creek portion of Philadelphia.
16 So I really would love to see this
17 building renamed in her honor. I
18 really would.

19 But I talked with the
20 Councilwoman and she's a fair person
21 and I know just like all of you up here
22 are fair people too, and I'm sure the
23 representative from the Parks &
24 Recreation is fair too. So I want to
25 see the building renamed after her.

1 That's going to the most optimistic
2 outcome that we can see today. But
3 based on the rules and regulations, I
4 don't know how that looks.

5 But I'm here to tell you that
6 I support that notion. I support that
7 idea. I support that plan. And Carol
8 Williams-Green did not put me up to say
9 this. I want you to know that. As a
10 matter of fact, she was not comfortable
11 with it because she's a humble person.
12 But our children in our neighborhood
13 need to know that you do get recognized
14 for doing good things, and I think this
15 would be a good way of sending a
16 positive message to the community. So
17 I thank you so much for allowing me to
18 speak here and giving me a chance to
19 express my heartfelt feelings about the
20 Cobbs Creek area, the 3rd Ward and
21 Carol Williams-Green. Thank you very
22 much.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
24 Thank you. Thank you for your
25 testimony, Representative. Chair

1 recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
3 you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you all.
4 Representative, good to see you again.

5 MR. WATERS: Good to see you
6 too.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:
8 Obviously, I think everybody is in
9 agreement from what you all said and
10 what we knew before about
11 Mrs. Williams-Green and the great work
12 she's doing, so we certainly all want
13 to recognize that. But as you heard
14 from Ms. Palatino, there is this
15 longstanding policy.

16 So we're just wondering if
17 there is a way and, Representative, you
18 touched on it, that there's a middle
19 ground here that we can certainly honor
20 the great work that she's done and we
21 also know all about the family and the
22 great work the family has done in the
23 community over the years.

24 Maybe, for example, a
25 community room, a program space,

1 something in that world and maybe there
2 can certainly be a discussion with
3 Councilwoman Blackwell, Parks &
4 Recreation and all of you to try to
5 work that out, because again this would
6 be a significant change in a policy,
7 and not that she doesn't deserve
8 recognition but this is a significant
9 change in a policy that's been standing
10 for a long time and it's been sort of
11 adhered to for a long time. So I'm
12 just throwing that out as a suggestion
13 or a question if you're open to that
14 kind of discussion.

15 MR. WATERS: I can't make the
16 call for the entire group. We are well
17 represented here today, and we all came
18 down here with hopes to get the
19 building renamed. We are all
20 blind-sided by this policy. I think I
21 speak well for everyone. We were all
22 blind-sided by this policy. I really
23 want with the assistance of our
24 Councilwoman Blackwell to be able to
25 leave here today knowing that we don't

1 have to revisit this again if we come
2 out of here hopefully with something
3 that we all can agree upon, that at
4 least as you handle it from the
5 perspective of your Committee, we would
6 know that we have an agreement in
7 place.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:

9 Mr. Chairman, if I could, I think it's
10 possible, I'm sorry, just to throw this
11 out, if there's some kind of agreement
12 worked out, I don't know if Council has
13 to pass anything for a community room.
14 That can just be agreed upon by
15 everybody I believe. I see
16 Ms. Palantino shaking her head yes.

17 MR. WATERS: It appears,
18 Councilman, I'm going to pass the mic
19 to the young lady to my left, but it
20 appears that we are moving forward
21 which is always good.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Right.

23 MR. WATERS: And I would now
24 refer further comments to this young
25 lady right here.

1 MS. ATKERSON: Okay. I'm
2 just hearing about this policy and I'm
3 greatly disturbed by it. I think a
4 policy should reflect the government of
5 the people. A policy should reflect
6 the needs of the community. If
7 changing a policy is necessary, I think
8 this is the perfect example as to why
9 it needs to be done.

10 This to me sounds like the
11 same opposition that we've been having
12 in getting the memorandum of
13 understanding done. It's very
14 difficult to deal with situations when
15 barriers are constantly placed in front
16 of you. Here is a stellar person who
17 has done everything any person could do
18 as a citizen of this city.

19 She built a wonderful science
20 facility, raised \$2.7 million to do it.
21 She also sits on the Board of Directors
22 of many of the museums in facilities
23 all around this city, including the
24 Academy of Natural Science, the
25 Franklin Institute. There is no limit

1 to her contribution to this city.

2 And I think as people,
3 because I'm not a politician, I don't
4 know the parameters or whatever, but I
5 do know this exception deserves to be
6 amended because this is a woman who
7 needs to be honored. She has been
8 embarrassed and shamed since she asked
9 the City to take over. They took her
10 keys away from her and told her not to
11 come back, go to Florida, stay there,
12 forget about the legacy that you have
13 created here. There's a message in
14 this, that you're saying not only to
15 Carol Williams-Green but all the
16 families that contributed to building
17 that place.

18 I thank you. I ask you to
19 look at that policy and make that
20 policy reflect the lives of the people
21 who lived in this city, because it
22 should be a living legacy. We
23 shouldn't have to wait for someone to
24 die to move on.

25 MS. WILLIAMS: I just want to

1 say a few more words. I didn't quite
2 understand what the policy was that was
3 introduced by the Parks & Rec person
4 that sat down here. I don't know what
5 the policy could be. If it's a policy
6 to make a difference, why wasn't it a
7 policy for a positive change in whether
8 they had originally thought? It sounds
9 like it's a negative thing in terms of
10 dealing with this policy. And why is a
11 policy such a negative factor in what
12 the plans are for Parks & Rec when all
13 we are thinking about is how can we
14 make this a viable community center for
15 the environmental -- to deal with
16 environmental issues.

17 We understand how we're
18 dealing with the natural part of the
19 area, the watersheds, the streams and
20 the wooded area. But we are concerned
21 about the people that live in this
22 urban society. So let's think about
23 that in terms of policy, how can we --
24 what do we want to do with whatever
25 policy change they were trying to make.

1 I didn't understand what it was all
2 about at this point because I'm
3 definitely not a politician.

4 But think about how we think
5 or trying to think about this center as
6 being a part of the community and how
7 can we make it a positive influence in
8 this Southwest area today. Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.

10 If I may ask Deputy Commissioner
11 Palantino, can you please approach?

12 (Witness approached
13 Witness Table.)

14 MS. PALANTINO: So in
15 listening to the testimony, we are
16 absolutely in agreement with everyone
17 here that Mrs. Williams-Green's legacy
18 should absolutely be honored. With
19 some discussions with some members and
20 the Councilwoman, we are more than
21 happy to perhaps dedicate the community
22 room and rename that in her honor, and
23 I think that can be done just through
24 agreement with Councilwoman's office
25 and Parks & Recreation, if that's

1 acceptable to the Committee and the
2 Councilwoman and the community.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Chair
4 recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
6 you, Mr. Chairman. Just for
7 perspective for the people that are
8 here, and, Ms. Palantino, I think you
9 can comment it on this and so can
10 Councilwoman, I think it was just a
11 couple weeks ago we named the Johnny
12 Sample -- what was that, Johnny
13 Sample --

14 MR. WATERS: Rec Center.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Rec
16 Center, right. And I know -- and that
17 was consistent with the policy that you
18 alluded to earlier, right,
19 Ms. Palantino?

20 MS. PALANTINO: Yes.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And I
22 know the family waited a long time to
23 get that. But I think again, that's
24 why we were trying to be -- I brought
25 up the consistency of the policy. And

1 again, no denying Mrs. Williams-Green
2 deserves recognition. There's no
3 dispute anywhere on that. It's just
4 that again it seems to me if we can
5 attempt to be consistent, but also do
6 the honoring that she certainly
7 deserves and I'm glad you went on
8 record saying it. And that can be done
9 right away, right? You don't even have
10 to have any kind of --

11 MS. PALANTINO: Absolutely.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: --
13 ordinance or we don't have any time
14 issue here or anything like that,
15 correct?

16 MS. PALANTINO: Correct.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
18 All right. Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: I'd like
20 to recognize Councilwoman Gym.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
22 much, Mr. Chair. And to be clear,
23 first of all, I want to say thank you
24 to the three of you, Ms. Williams,
25 Ms. Atkerson and of course

1 Representative Waters, thank you so
2 much, one, uplifting our stories and
3 our history, two, for reminding people,
4 especially young people, things don't
5 happen by accident. People have to
6 fight for these things to come back to
7 life. And especially in communities
8 that are long marginalized and
9 neglected, they don't come back to life
10 through institutional powers. They
11 come back to life through the people
12 who make them real, and they have to
13 live and we have to remind people of
14 that.

15 But I also want to ask -- so
16 I want to thank you, first of all, for
17 telling a story about a community,
18 about ordinary heroes, local heroes and
19 then the story of Philadelphia. This
20 is not just the story of Cobbs Creek
21 Parkway. This is actually the stories
22 about how communities and our
23 neighborhoods and our people come back
24 to life and remind our young people in
25 generations further, this is not an

1 accident. Every step that you took had
2 to be fought for, reclaimed and then
3 restarted up again in order for us to
4 go forward.

5 If we just think things are
6 on autopilot, it's a different path.
7 People have to fight to be in the
8 center of things, and that's what we
9 want. For Ms. Palan -- and I want to
10 thank you especially for bringing that
11 here and bringing that conversation
12 back to us and taking the moment in a
13 busy City Council session to tell a
14 story, to tell a story of our city
15 that's so different from ones we
16 normally hear.

17 So the second thing I want to
18 ask, Ms. Palantino, to be clear
19 Mrs. Williams-Green's name is actually
20 going to be on the Cobbs Creek Parkway.
21 This is not erasing her or anything?
22 There's a renaming ceremony. There can
23 be a plaque, a formalized process; is
24 that correct?

25 MS. PALANTINO: Absolutely.

1 However, in agreement with the
2 Councilwoman's office, however they
3 feel is the most appropriate memento to
4 do that with. The room itself of
5 course will have her name. There can
6 certainly be a ceremony around
7 placement of a plaque or whatever
8 actual physical structure that is.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And we
10 will certainly leave that in our
11 wonderful Councilmembers' hands, so
12 thank you. I also want to acknowledge
13 and thank Councilwoman Blackwell for
14 continuing to tell the history and make
15 our sites reflective of the city of
16 Philadelphia and I just always
17 appreciate you for that. But per
18 Ms. Atkerson's comments earlier, is it
19 possible for Parks & Rec to also give
20 us an inventory of the named rec
21 centers and parks?

22 MS. PALANTINO: Absolutely.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: It will
24 help us understand whether there is a
25 level of diversity, how women are

1 represented, how Black, Latinx
2 communities are represented in our
3 city. What is the actual
4 representation and is that something
5 that you can help us understand so that
6 we are very clear and that we are being
7 conscious as we seek to rename or give
8 naming rights, that we want to make
9 sure they're reflective of our
10 communities?

11 MS. PALANTINO: Absolutely.
12 We have that list and we have the
13 history behind each of those names as
14 well. As Councilman Greenlee
15 mentioned, we were here just two weeks
16 ago. And coincidentally, in
17 Councilwoman Blackwell's District a
18 park was renamed Lucien Blackwell Park
19 and then the Johnny Sample which was
20 the Cobbs Creek Recreation Center.

21 COUNCILMAN GYM: Wonderful.
22 Thank you very much.

23 MS. WILLIAMS: I would also
24 like to say am I hearing that they're
25 thinking of providing a room in her

1 name. We're not thinking of a room in
2 her name. We're thinking of a building
3 with her name on it, not just a room
4 with her name on it in the building.

5 MS. PALANTINO: The community
6 room at the center would be dedicated
7 in her honor.

8 MS. WILLIAMS: Well, we want
9 more than that. We want the building
10 in her name. The signage of this
11 building, we want her name included in
12 that.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
14 Chair recognizes Councilman Oh.

15 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you
16 very much. I actually would say I have
17 a different opinion. My opinion is
18 that I don't see why the policy has to
19 continue. I mean I think the policy is
20 there for a good reason and that is
21 probably so that there isn't a lot of
22 lobbying to dedicate things to people
23 who are alive, probably wealthy and
24 powerful people who want to see their
25 name on the side of the building. It's

1 probably like an anti-corruption thing.

2 I think that's important.

3 I will note that there was a
4 community center that was named after
5 State Representative John Perzel who
6 was the Speaker of the House while he
7 was alive. And, in fact, many
8 buildings that are not government
9 buildings are named after wealthy
10 donors. They're all over University of
11 Penn and Drexel University. If you're
12 rich enough to make a donation, you get
13 a big building named after you, which
14 I'm not belittling it because it is
15 wonderful because people of wealth will
16 give their money to support medical
17 institutions, law schools, all kinds of
18 things, and they name the building
19 after them in their honor.

20 I do think there is an issue
21 about this policy because there are
22 circumstances which you've just kind of
23 articulated to me about someone who's
24 done things really kind of on her own
25 to put this entire building and project

1 together. That is very impactful for
2 its community. And I would just say
3 perhaps a way to do it would be to
4 identify the geographic location of
5 that community and have a petition
6 process that if you could get a certain
7 percentage of the entire population to
8 sign that petition, that that may be a
9 way of getting a building named after a
10 person while they're alive, being that
11 they're deserving of it.

12 Anyway, I do think that while
13 I agree this is an extraordinary person
14 of the community, the public would want
15 to want know that their politicians are
16 not just doing things randomly,
17 haphazardly or being influenced by
18 their own particular constituent group,
19 so I think it is important to put some
20 kind of process in place which
21 challenges or I shouldn't say
22 challenge, but which shows the public
23 in a transparent way that really a very
24 large number of people within that
25 geographic area wants in their

1 community this building to be named
2 after a person. And in that process,
3 you're spreading the story of how this
4 building came to be. Quite frankly, I
5 never heard of this before until you
6 said so. And as the representative
7 said, I lived in the neighborhood my
8 entire life and I didn't know that, so
9 I appreciate the education. I really
10 want to go visit. But as the
11 representative said, in Cobbs Creek it
12 is so important that people of the
13 community be recognized.

14 So I'll ask the Councilwoman
15 of the District, Councilwoman
16 Blackwell, do you think that's a
17 process that you would agree with? And
18 if so, is that something that you would
19 talk to the Administration about,
20 perhaps finding a way that we could
21 honor those who have done something
22 that are still alive?

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

24 That's good.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON:

1 Councilwoman --

2 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you.

3 Chairman?

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
5 for your testimony. Anyone else for
6 Bill No. 190937?

7 MR. WATERS: I just want to
8 again thank the Councilmembers for
9 allowing us to comment and entertaining
10 what we're saying and whatever change
11 in policies that could come out of
12 this, who knows, that could be a good
13 thing too. You never know where this
14 might go. But I thank you for your
15 time and attention and look forward to
16 working with you all.

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
18 sir.

19 MR. WATERS: Take care. I
20 look forward to your leadership.

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: We now
22 move to our last bill being heard here
23 today, Bill No. 190942. Please state
24 your name for the record and begin your
25 testimony.

1 (Witness approached
2 Witness Table.)

3 MS. CASIMIR: Sure. Good
4 morning again.

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
6 morning.

7 MS. CASIMIR: Good morning,
8 Chairman Henon, and other Members of
9 the Committee on Public Property and
10 Public Works. My name is Dominique
11 Casimir. I'm the Deputy Commissioner
12 of Public Property. I'm here to
13 testify in favor of Bill No. 190942,
14 authorizing the Department of Public
15 Property on behalf of the city of
16 Philadelphia, to amend the current
17 lease agreement with St. Agnes MOB, LLC
18 for additional office medical space at
19 1930 South Broad Street also known as
20 Constitutional Health Plaza.

21 Bill No. 1917 -- I'm sorry,
22 171000 was signed by the Mayor on
23 January 3, 2018 authorizing the
24 Department of Public Property to enter
25 into a 15-year lease for 19,312 square

1 feet of office space that is now being
2 utilized by the Department of Public
3 Health. Referred to as Health Center
4 1, the public health services provided
5 at this location include a walk-in
6 family planning clinic, ambulatory and
7 health services and food protection
8 services.

9 After opening in December
10 2018, the programs at Health Center 1
11 have been considered successful, and
12 Public Health wishes to expand its
13 presence in the building and the
14 community. Amending the current lease
15 would allow Public Health to take an
16 additional 21,715 square feet of
17 administrative and health space with
18 the same terms and conditions as the
19 current master lease.

20 With the conveyance of 500
21 South Broad Street and the ongoing
22 discussions regarding the future of the
23 Medical Examiner's Office, Public
24 Property and Public Health have been
25 concentrating on finding a new location

1 that allows consolidation and space
2 efficiency of health programs.

3 The proposed amendment would
4 give Public Health the opportunity to
5 lease a total of 41,027 square feet of
6 efficient build-to-suit space at a
7 premiere medical facility. The
8 proposed amendment would have the same
9 tenant renewal options and expiration
10 date as the master lease. Even though
11 I've stated, mentioned that we're
12 amending the same terms, we will
13 currently further negotiate the lease
14 terms to be more favorable to the city
15 of Philadelphia.

16 The Department of Public
17 Property supports this measure and
18 accordingly, I respectfully that the
19 City approve Bill No. 190942. I'm
20 requesting a suspension of all rules so
21 as to follow the first reading at the
22 next session of Council. Thank you and
23 I'll be happy to answer any questions
24 you may have.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you

1 for your testimony. Chair recognizes
2 Councilman Domb.

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

5 MS. CASIMIR: Hi, Councilman
6 Domb.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I just want
8 to put this on the record. Is there
9 any allowance for or needed, tentative
10 approval for this space or is it
11 already billed out?

12 MS. CASIMIR: Yes. No, the
13 allowance is 75.24 per square foot
14 which gives us \$1.6 billion. It's
15 actually \$1.6 million, \$333,836 that
16 will be invested into building out this
17 space to suit. And I know I stated
18 office space. It's more than office
19 because it's for medical-based
20 practices and facilities. A pharmacy
21 will go there, so it's not technically
22 office space in the traditional sense,
23 but it will be applicable to health.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Does that
25 cover our cost to build it out?

1 MS. CASIMIR: That is
2 correct. It will be turn-key space
3 ready to move in.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. And
5 then the other question, I just want
6 to --

7 MS. CASIMIR: That includes
8 furniture too.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.
10 Going forward, I just want to make sure
11 that our increases range about 2
12 percent a year. That's the market
13 today.

14 MS. CASIMIR: You are
15 correct. Like this, we will further
16 negotiate with the landlord --

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: But not
18 just this. Any other future leases
19 that --

20 MS. CASIMIR: That is
21 correct. We should be below market.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Right,
23 because we have great credit. All
24 right. Thank you very much.

25 MS. CASIMIR: Thank you.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
2 Mr. Chair.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
4 Councilman. Anyone else on the
5 Committee wish to ask any questions of
6 Bill No. 190942?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN HENON: Anyone
9 else here joining us that wish to
10 testify on Bill No. 190942?

11 (Witness approached
12 Witness Table.)

13 MR. ALI: Good morning,
14 Councilman, Council President and other
15 Members of the Committee. My name is
16 Jihad Ali. I'm here with Southwest
17 Philadelphia District Services. I just
18 have two quick questions. One was is
19 there any significance behind the name
20 of the LLC?

21 MS. CASIMIR: It is the
22 landlord.

23 MR. ALI: So does the MOB
24 stand for anything? You can just put
25 that in the record.

1 MS. CASIMIR: Can I respond?
2 Medical office building.

3 MR. ALI: Okay. The other
4 question is since this is a tenant -- a
5 turnkey project and it's going to be
6 turnkey, meaning what's your definition
7 of turnkey?

8 MS. CASIMIR: We walk into
9 the space and it's fully delivered to
10 us. We don't have to do any additional
11 fit-out.

12 MR. ALI: The construction
13 part of that, would that require EOP
14 plan for the turnkey part of that?

15 MS. CASIMIR: The EOP -- for
16 our leases because this is not a
17 building that we own, it's a building
18 that we lease, but the landlord is here
19 and he can speak to it. We do know
20 that he does have a high participation
21 rate. Actually, his actual staff that
22 does this is minority and women that
23 are lead, so we know of these. But it
24 is not mandated on all of our leases
25 that an EOP plan be in effect.

1 MS. ALI: Well, thank you,
2 Commissioner Dominique. To the Chair
3 and Members of the Committee, the EOP
4 plans that we have in the City say all
5 development, all funds, all revenue
6 that the City spends on behalf of
7 leases, anything authorized by Council,
8 anything of that nature should have an
9 EOP plan.

10 If we can just get the
11 landlord -- so the question for the
12 Committee is, is it required to have an
13 EOP plan? And because this is a
14 significant amount of money, can this
15 Council pass a regulation anything over
16 \$200,000, so we should have the EOP
17 plan because it's through the gradual
18 steps, step-by-step that we're going to
19 make a change in this situation.

20 And --

21 MS. CASIMIR: We --

22 MR. ALI: -- if the landlord
23 could come up. Thank you, Dominique,
24 for your testi --

25 MS. CASIMIR: With all due

1 respect even though it is not required,
2 we do obtain one anyway.

3 MR. ALI: Are we getting one
4 for this project?

5 MS. CASIMIR: Yes, we are,
6 sir.

7 MR. ALI: Okay. And is that
8 something that will be published --

9 MS. CASIMIR: It's on record,
10 sir.

11 MR. ALI: Okay. Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
13 Well, this concludes our hearing on
14 Public Property and Public Works. We
15 will now go into our meeting. Oh, for
16 the record, we are holding Bill Nos.
17 190940 as well as 190937 at the call of
18 the Chair for the sponsor of the bill
19 to another date.

20 We will now go into our
21 public meeting on the Committee of
22 Public Works and Public Property.
23 Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: We have
25 no amendments, right?

1 COUNCILMAN HENON: No

2 amendments.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I move that
5 the following bills be reported out of
6 this Committee with a favorable
7 recommendation and that the rules of
8 Council be suspended to allow for first
9 reading in our next session of Council,
10 Bill Nos. 190436, 190892, 190896 and
11 190942.

12 (Duly seconded.)

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: It has
14 been moved and properly seconded. All
15 those in favor signify by saying aye.

16 (Aye.)

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: Those
18 opposed?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: The ayes
21 have it. Bill Nos. 190436, 190892,
22 190896 and 190942 all reported out of
23 this Committee with a favorable
24 recommendation with a suspension of the
25 rules as to be heard at our next

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1 session of Council. This concludes our
2 Committee on Public Property and Public
3 Works. I want to thank you all for
4 attending. Thank you.

5 (Committee on Public Property
6 and Public Works concluded at
7 11:26 a.m.)

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

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

Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of
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