COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- - -

Monday, March 18, 2002
2 o'clock
Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, PA

- - -

FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

PRESENT: COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA, Chair
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN FRANK J. DICICCO
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER
COUNCILMAN ANGEL L. ORTIZ
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

- - -

VINCENT VARALLO ASSOCIATES, INC.
Registered Professional Reporters
Eleven Penn Center, Suite 600
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 561-2220

- - - - -

(Council proceedings now being stenographically recorded by Meghan Martella.)

- - - - -

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The budgets in this portion regards the witnesses.

I would just like to let everyone know it's my understanding that we have approximately 34 witnesses that would like to testify. In order to get everybody ample opportunity to do that, I am going to ask that each witness -- we will give you five minutes for each witness so that we will be hearing testimony this evening at 6:00. I would like those coming in at 6:00 to also have that same opportunity.

Mr. McPherson, would you please call the first witness?

MR. McPHERSON: Ranetta Slaughter.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And after Ranetta is --

MR. McPHERSON: Justin Armstrong.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: If Justin Armstrong is here, perhaps he could also come to

the witness table.

MS. SLAUGHTER: Good morning, Mayor, Chambers and Members of the Council Board Committee.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry, I didn't hear what you said.

MS. SLAUGHTER: Good morning.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon, thank you.

MS. SLAUGHTER: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I know you've been here since this morning.

MS. SLAUGHTER: Yes, I have.

My name is Ranetta Slaughter and I am a parent and a mother. I've been out in the city, I've been seeing all the stores, the water departments, the day cares, the places they're building as dealing with children and people and everything else, and I see that people on the street, I don't see where they're funding that for the homeless. I don't see where the food, I don't even see where all the money goes.

These people -- I talked to everybody that came in this door they still want

money. I know the City and the Councilpeople gave out money and the people that got the money are not giving it to the people. I see people out here crying, sleeping, because you all want more money. I just talked to somebody, they got a day care they got 500 children and want more money, want grants, but where's the children, where are the parents, where's the mother, you all still want money out here. And the people are on the street crying every day.

Open up your eyes and look. You always want money, guess what, you all shouldn't get no money from the City Councilmen because the water department, we pay our water bills and they get money. So why do they need money. The electric company, we pay our electric and they get money. We pay our telephone bills and they get money. We pay every bill in the household, they get money. We pay our water bill but they have to come to the Council and the board and get money.

No, they don't have no more grants; you took them all. I've been to the schools my whole life; I deal with these schools; I went to

the schools, you all haven't been here. They don't even have school books. They don't even have pencils, but you all still want money. Because I've been in them. Every school, you can ask every teacher and every principal, but you all want money.

I've been in day cares and all of that, welfares give you money and welfares give you day care and I've been in the day cares, but you all still want money. You have grants out for that, you have the Welfare grants for day care, and all of that. Then you come back and still want money, but there are people out here starving, the people that are on the street.

I'm talking to everybody individual. Everybody wants money. But guess what, I'm going to tell you now I know that there ain't no more money and you ain't got no more, and see how you live with this because I know they ain't none out here now.

Okay, now what they have to do is you all have water bills, everybody pays their bills, but we can't even get a grant to keep our bills on, so where is the money going. The

schools, I can't even take my kids to the day care. Where is the money going? Where is it going?

This is called a budget plan. Budget ain't for you all to keep coming and asking for money. So I think we have to put the money back in the community. Every place in here is called taxes. Pay 10 percent of every person pays.

Thank you, and have a nice day. I'm finished.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much.

MR. McPHERSON: Justin Armstrong.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon, sir.

MR. ARMSTRONG: Good afternoon, how are you?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Fine, thank you.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I have two specific requests today. I'm here to talk about recycling. My name is Justin Armstrong. I've been doing some community organizing and kind of

grass roots lobbying just to help the recycling in the city, help divert some of the material because I care about the issue. It's disgusting seeing all the garbage on the streets, but also just looking at the numbers, amount of garbage that we produce here in the city. And I think that we should be looking towards recycling.

The two requests that I have, have to do with two of the voluntary programs that I've helped to set up and have been running. One of them was with the stadium --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Sorry, stadium?

MR. ARMSTRONG: The first request I have is about the stadium recycling.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh, yes, I remember receiving a letter from you.

MR. ARMSTRONG: I appreciate your response on that.

It is an important place to be recycling, it's a lot of visibility, it's a lot of material that goes through the stadium. A lot of it is paper and plastic which are pretty easily recycled, and from my understanding, it

would be very easy to set up a recycling program at the stadium.

All the systems are in place including the compactor, including the people that know how to work the equipment to do the recycling, and also, including some companies that have been willing to help the stadium take the recycling away for a real minimal charge or even free. And all that would do is just cut down the amount of trash the city has to pay to take away. And for some reason or another it just hasn't happened for years and years.

I have, fortunately, gotten a good response from your office and I do appreciate that. I did get a response, the stadium said that they will be recycling starting April 5th, the home opener for the Phillies. And I would just like to request to City Council make sure it's not just lip service. Make sure that it does actually happen. Because I feel it's an important thing and it's a pretty good thing to do.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I want to thank you, Mr. Armstrong, for your interest and

I see that the Streets Commissioner is in the audience and his office is putting on quite a campaign for recycling.

And Commissioner, since we have the audience who I think will be extremely interested in what is being proposed, if you could just take a minute or so to explain, I think, Mr. Armstrong, you are going to be very happy with what you hear the Commissioner say.

(Commissioner Johnson comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Good afternoon, Madam President, Members of the Council. My name is William Johnson, Streets Commissioner.

With regards to the first question that was asked recycling at the stadium, we have been in contact with the Recreation Department and worked out a program to start recycling at Vets Stadium and that is going to start next month.

With regards to the exciting

recycling campaign, we held a press conference this morning with the secretary of the Department of Environment from the State and kicked off a massive media campaign to encourage people to participate in the recycling program. That campaign will include televisions spots, radio, print media and a very aggressive grass-roots effort to meet with community groups, to meet with men involved, the School District and educating, and arising the awareness of recycling throughout the City.

The state contributed about $2 million to help support this campaign and will continue with upgrading the campaign over the next three years. We are looking for a sustained program and our goal is to impact behavior in the City and raise the awareness of recycling issues throughout the City in order to get more people to participate in a recycling program.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And Commissioner, I think you had indicated that we would have pick-up for recyclables the same day as we have trash pick-up and that will be a

weekly basis?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, we are currently working on some conceptual plans to try to move the City towards at least getting recyclables picked up on the same day as trash.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I think that would be very successful, I really do. Because people don't remember for the most part what week they're supposed to put out the recyclables.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Right, the thing is that right now most of the city is every other week and we haven't reached any conclusion on whether we'll be able to increase the frequency, but we are in the process right now of rerouting to try to get at least on the every other week schedule, the recyclables picked up the same day as trash collection so that people won't have to remember different days of the week and that kind of thing to put their recyclables out, and make one trip to the curb and that's the same day that they put their trash out.

MR. ARMSTRONG: To support what's

going on the other thing that I wanted to speak about was a bin distribution program that I have in some of the grocery stores where I stand there and actually speak to people on an individual basis as I hand them a recyclable bin. And I see about, usually, 200 people a month, two grocery stores, and the three things that I always hear is one, I can't remember when my recycling day is because it's every other week or they skip weeks, the holidays. When is this --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I know people who have the same feeling you do about that.

MR. ARMSTRONG: The second thing is when are we going to get plastics picked up at the curb? That's a consistent question I get. And the third thing is people just asking me, you know, we just moved into town; why doesn't it seem like there's much recycling going on?

It seems to be an important issue with a lot of people and just kind of a quality-of-life issue. And I want to thank the program you're setting up, Commissioner.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen.

MR. COHEN: Thank you, Madam President.

Commissioner, I want to speak strongly in support of the proposal made by the president. I wasn't sure whether you said you were moving in that direction, would achieve it, or whether you were going to have every-other-week collection of recyclables?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Right now we will continue with every-other-week collection of recyclables, but we're trying to reroute the city, so that whenever you place your trash out that's also the same day that we'll collect your recyclables on that every-other-week schedule. Right now it's every other week, but in some areas, in many areas it's a different day than your trash collection day which only adds to the confusion. So we're moving towards trying to simplify the use of the program as much as possible.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I think there's some movement by what you're suggesting,

but I don't think it's going to deal with the problem until you get to the point, at least what the president spoke about, of having it at the same time so nobody has to wonder is it this week, last week, or next week.

And then I would like to hear something if possible, Commissioner, about having it collected efficiently at the same time. I think it would not only be the same day, but it ought to be the same vehicle and the same people involved in collecting it. To me that seems to be the economy of operations that we need that will help role back the cost of recycling.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Yes, Councilman, we have for the last six to seven months been testing a program where we were testing equipment that would purportedly allow us to do that. So we're coming to the end of that process and we have run into some issues with the type of equipment that's out there. Some of the equipment is not capable of allowing us to finish the routes, especially in areas where we have the highest participation rate.

So we are still evaluating the possibility of doing something like that, but at this point it doesn't appear that that's going to be successful.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, how about on the question of the same day, what's the problem on that? What is the problem with weekly rather than biweekly collections?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, we have to find enough efficiencies in the system to make the economics of a program like that. We have a number of ideas that we are evaluating right now and pursuing. Hopefully, we will be able to work something out, but if not, we will at least get the recycling on the same day as trash collection.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I have to say, I was the principle sponsor of the original recycling bill in the City Council many years ago. We were very proud. I think we were the first city in the nation at that time, and then finding that currently we're near the bottom of the major cities and our recycling effort is a great shock. And therefore, we welcome you with

open arms because we know it's your long-term commitment to recycling.

We would hope that one way or the other the program could be speeded up because while I welcome the PR Campaign, I think that what's needed is more than just PR. It isn't just education, it's a commitment which I think has been lacking until your coming aboard, a committent to recycling as an efficient, economical, useful, environmentally protecting method of dealing with waste and converting much of waste into useful objects again.

So we're looking to your administration to bring about basic change in how Philadelphians approach recycling.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, Councilman, as you know, recycling is expensive, it costs money. And what we're trying to do is find efficiencies to bring the cost of it down and to allow us to be able to do more to encourage people to participate on a more regular basis.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is your program being considered part of the Blight Program?

Because more than anything else, I think your department has the capacity to influence people's responses to the Blight Program.

It seems to me that one of the really bad blights in Philadelphia is the way in which we get complaints in the Council offices of the method of the trash collection; the apparent indifference of many people to letting some trash remain on the streets after it's collected; the way in which citizens seem to just throw things on the pavement because they don't think anybody really cares whether they do or not. And we're looking to see that some of those habits begin to change. And I think government has to be the leader in that effort. And that's why the recycling effort is vastly important of itself, but it also is a model for the kind of better quality of life and an end to blighted areas. I think it can be a very effective approach with that whole problem.

Thank you, Commissioner.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Armstrong, thank you, and keep up the good work.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Commissioner, just so I understand, there are some sections of the City northwest that recyclables are picked up every week?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So same day, like Fridays trash day, every Friday?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: That's correct, Councilman. That started as part of a Pilot Program to try to see what impact that would have on participation rates. And what we found is that on average in those communities where recycling was already high, we were able to increase the number of people participating as much as 40 percent.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Commissioner, a bit of confusion. I've gotten calls and I've observed where some people are very

conscientious how they put their trash out. They put it out carefully, they tie things just to make sure that it won't get away. When people put out bulk newspaper, like a week's worth or publications, sometimes they'll put them in a trash bag to stop them from blowing all over. And I guess it's difficult if it's in a clear bag that the people that do the recyclables realize that it's newspaper and they just leave it. Then you get the call they didn't pick up my recyclables.

How should the public deal with bulk newspaper on recycling day?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Well, quite often I see people put out their bulk newspapers and they'll tie them or bundle them. They will also put them in paper bags so that -- the open top paper bags, so that it's easier to see that it's recycle material, but if it's in a dark-colored trash bag it may be hard for the operator to know that that's recyclables and sometimes they may be picked up as trash by mistake.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But it will get

picked up?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Yes, it should get picked up.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: It seems as though the problem -- I don't know whether the trash -- is there a plan, does recyclable come before the trash?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Yes, often times the trash may be picked up before the recyclables, and my guess is that by the time the recycle truck comes by, perhaps the operator isn't aware that that material is actually recyclables. And it may be left behind by the recycle truck because it's in a dark trash bag and it looks like trash.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So the important thing is to put it out so that people can identify that it is something that they want the recycling truck to pick up versus the trash?

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Great. Good job, it's good to see this thing on track now because it was not for a lot of years. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President. I agree with all that has been said and we thank you for including us in the various programs you have and press announcements, even though we've been here tied to this budget. But it is an idea whose time has come and has been said over and over through the years, nobody remembers -- not nobody, some of us do not remember when it's not on the same day as trash day and that's going to make such a big difference. So we thank you for your leadership in this area, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Commissioner.

Are there any other questions from the members of the committee?

Our next witness is --

MR. McPHERSON: Jane Borgerhoff and

3/18/02 FYO3 Budget, Public Hearing

Other Victim Service Organizations.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.

MR. CERVONE: Good afternoon. I call Councilmember's attention to an envelope that was delivered to your desks and chambers with a packet of materials.

Good afternoon, I'm Frank Cervone. I serve as director of the Support Center for Child Advocates.

MS. SEYMORE: I'm Leslie Seymore. I'm the director of Northwest Victim Services.

MS. THOMAS: I'm Lorri Thomas. I'm director of Development for Women Against Abuse.

MR. CERVONE: With us today as well are the directors of the other remaining victim services --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me, is Jane here?

MS. THOMAS: No.

MR. CERVONE: Yes, she's in the back, but --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh, she's not going to testify?

MR. CERVONE: Right, she had just a communication difference.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please proceed.

MR. CERVONE: Thank you.

We come today as representing the 12 city-wide and Neighborhood Victim Service Organizations and ask for your continued support for our work. You know that you bear some portion of the costs that are small, in fact, small portion of the costs of our services to the community.

Our agencies are award-winning agencies with outstanding staff and a tremendous presence among people who are hurting. We are volunteer organizations and so we connect to a larger good both in involving the community in our work and in expanding or leveraging the dollars that you offer us. We are community-focused and community-based. We give back to the City about $2.8 million in staff time, in volunteer services and in recovery of crime victim compensation dollars. What we give back is more impressive in the real pay-back,

the wholeness we help to restore to children, to families, to neighborhoods. Certainly healing and recovery are priceless gifts to victims of crime and mistreatment.

Our referrals continue to rise. We are strained in our ability to provide services which so many clients need. For many of our agencies the courts move of preliminary hearings to the CJC has that increased cost. We're stretched by greater and more complex demands for our service. Health care and health insurance hurdles, the rising incidents of domestic violence and neighborhood crime, and certainly Welfare cut-backs which are hitting all of our communities so hard.

In summary, we need $743,000 and we've outlined by agency those costs. We have laid out for you as well, a history of your generous funding to us as well as, I think, a detailed accounting of the benefits we provide to this community.

We certainly would be glad to take questions from the Members of Council.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you

asking for an increase, and if so, how much?

MR. CERVONE: Yes, last year, Council, as you may recall our funding comes through the District Attorney budget --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We're aware of that.

MR. CERVONE: -- in a line item for Victim Services. And last year we received a total of 628,900. $628,900, our total request this year is for $743,900. Some of our agencies feel that we are able to get by with little or no increase. Other agencies bearing their particular costs have asked for higher allocations. We do not ask the member agencies to tow the line by any set rate. We ask them what their true costs are and we present those to you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Have you expressed to the District Attorney what your needs are?

MR. CERVONE: We will today.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh, you haven't spoken to her yet?

MR. CERVONE: Well, we've spoken to

her not on the dollar amount, but certainly in the level of services that we need. And we will communicate just as we have with you today with her office today.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And would you please let us know the outcome of that meeting?

MR. CERVONE: Certainly.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

I want to pursue this question of the preliminary hearings being moved from divisional courts to CJC. And I ask you what your experience is in terms of neighborhood folks and how this move affects them?

MS. THOMAS: I can tell you as a neighborhood-based victim service agency that we have lost all of our volunteers. Volunteers are no longer willing to come all the way down to Center City, there's no place to park, there's no place to get anything to eat and go back to

the hearings.

One of the issues surrounding this move to CJC is that Victim Service Agencies was never spoken to. We were never encouraged to participate in the process. All they did was decide that something was going to be done and then go ahead and do it without even coming to Victim Service Agencies and asking how this process could be made more efficient from our perspective.

So our volunteers are gone and for most of us we use volunteer time as a match for our other grants that we get, that we have to provide a certain amount of money back for these grants and we use volunteer time in order to do that. So we have lost all of our volunteers. The court advocate is there by themselves in the courtroom unless we can get another advocate to go there and assist them during the day.

One of the other issues is that for most of us, some of us only went two days a week, had preliminary hearings two days a week. My agency had preliminary hearings four days a week. So for agencies that were only scheduled

two days a week, they now have to provide coverage in the courtrooms five days a week. So that's more staff time used for that purpose. There's not enough time to do paperwork in your particular agency because they spend all of their time in the courtroom in CJC.

The court seems to be reluctant in working with us or listening to compromises to this move to CJC. And whether it's efficient for the court system and District Attorney, it has not been for victim services. And there are ways that we can help alleviate some of the overcrowding, some of the problems that goes on down there if anyone would bother to ask us for our input.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you so much. In fact, that is what we've been talking about. Well, you gave us the specific responses to an issue we've been talking about. We see the quality of life being threatened and we've been asking again and again to have a full discussion.

And in fact, we're going to have a day where we hope Judge Seamus McCaffrey will

come to talk to Council, because we believe ultimately it has to affect the budget.

An article in today's paper even indicates another million point eight just to implement this change and now I see where the costs are. As you mention having to staff someone downtown five days a week when it didn't exist. And overall, there's so many ways and there are so many tangents, so many issues that this whole move in so many ways impacts our system.

And let me say to Ms. Seymore from Northwest Victim Services, I know of your history and all the work you've done. We want to thank all of you and certainly my director in West and Southwest, Phyllis Gibson and her folks who are here and people across the city.

Madam President, this is a vital service, and during these days where we have so many victims, for them to offer everything from counseling to burial, they do an absolutely wonderful job.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Absolutely fabulous job.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And Mr. Cervone, when you meet with the District Attorney, I'm sure that this is one issue that you're going to take up with her?

MR. CERVONE: We will indeed.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair at this time recognizes Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon. This is one issue that really doesn't help the victims and it doesn't help those that are accused that might not have targets that are worthwhile bringing up a lot of poor people to be held over for trial if they cannot afford bail and so on to be incarcerated for months on end. And then when they go to trial at Common Pleas they're dismissed. The case is totally dismissed.

So it's creating hardships for the victims services that we have. It's also creating an incredible backlog that is going to hold up the fair acquisition of justice for people. It is going to incarcerate a lot of poor people that should not be incarcerated. So it's sort of like who thought of this thing. I mean whose idea was this, because obviously, there are no savings and there is pain that is distributed overall.

So we made this case and this situation when the District Attorney was here last week. And by the way, Mr. Cervone, the District Attorney gave us one-page testimony and she said they do not require any extra money for any of it. They're holding the line on everything. They did not require one extra cent for victim services, for more attorneys, for more individuals to go after the drug dealers and so on across the city. They did not request; are you aware of that?

MR. CERVONE: Councilman, I want to be fair to Ms. Abraham. Her staff requested more than a month ago that we advise them of our

needs --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Well, I understand that.

MR. CERVONE: -- and we plan to do so.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Well, the point is that she already has come before and said that they do not plan to request -- because we asked the question about victim services, both Councilwoman Blackwell, President Verna, myself and others. We asked the question about why is there no increase in several areas and she said this is the way we want to hold the line. So I wish you luck when you discuss this with her today.

MR. CERVONE: I'm glad for the heads-up for the forthcoming meeting and may we suggest that we come before her.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Could you tell me where we are at right now because we have gone through -- thank you, Mr. Nutter. Councilman Nutter just -- this is a testimony.

MR. CERVONE: Councilman, the District Attorney has been a friend of these

organizations and I certainly would be remiss if I didn't say that.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I'm not saying to you that this is what is requested of us here and presented to us.

We spent a lot of time trying to get coalition funded, established and running. It was my hope that this thing would have been going on in full flight by now. From your side could you give me why it isn't and what is going on?

MR. CERVONE: My understanding is that there have been several -- this is the issue, for Members of Council who are not familiar, this is the coalition of the various public agencies and one quasi-public entity, the Philadelphia Children's Alliance for the investigation of child sex abuse cases, and in particular, the interviewing of victims entrepreneurs?

At present, those interviews happen at three separate locations: at the Sex Crimes Unit, the Special Victims Unit of police of DHS and in West Philly. The notion is that they

would be collocated in one building. The present -- the latest proposal is that that facility be located on the grounds of the Old Episcopal Hospital.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Right, and we are close to a year ago.

MR. CERVONE: And you and I and others toured the building and found it to be most suitable. The architects have proceeded with preliminary drawings, unfortunately, there seems to be a major hurdle in the negotiation of the lease, lease terms between the City of Philadelphia and Temple University.

My understanding that DHS and the police both are committed to the idea of living together. Certainly from the child's point of view this is the state-of-the-art. The tensions of reinterview --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Do we have anybody from Public Property here to find out why the lease is not yet signed on this?

MR. CERVONE: There were issues of -- I don't --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is anyone

from Public Property here?

Apparently not.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: This has been over a year. I mean we toured this last January, right; not this January, but last January we toured Episcopal Hospital?

MR. CERVONE: It's been in process for a lot longer than that as you know.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. James, why don't you pull up a chair toward the table, please?

Identify yourself for the record.

MR. JONES: Good afternoon. My name is Joseph James, Deputy Commissioner for the Department of Public Property.

I have heard the discussion and in response to that, Councilman, and Council President, I am not involved in the lease negotiation. The Commissioner directly has been. This was brought up at our testimony hearing on the operating budget and he was aware of that. There was some particulars too that he was going to be investigating it back to, I believe yourself and to the Chair. Other than

that, I really don't have any other --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: We haven't gotten the answers yet.

MR. JAMES: I understand that. Since I don't have the specifics, I will take this particular issue back to the Commissioner and ask him to respond back to Council President and yourself.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I would appreciate it. I think we need to have police, DHS, all of the relevant agencies in one area that really can begin expediting this. And we labored hard to create these changes just to have the cultural change that took place in the Police Department alone; it was monumental. And I have to thank Mr. Cervone and the people that are here that participated in the hearings that we had because the process of negotiation with Commissioner Timoney and his hierarchy was very, very tough and not easy to change the psyche, the way of doing business as such.

And we managed to do that and now we can't implement this because we have a glitch

that cannot be resolved.

I mean we toured this. A glitch should not take over a year to resolve. One small little problem should not take that long and we talked about it last budget period. And here we are at this budget period and I imagine that -- and I would hope that we're not here next budget period still talking about this.

MR. JAMES: Well, Councilman, I would hope not either, and based on the discussion, at least in an operating budget testimony, the Commissioner said it had nothing to do with the agreement or the logistics of the operating departments and the Victim Services Unit to work together to allocate it. It was more along a lease issue of which I don't have the substantial details, but it didn't appear to be an issue that was immaterial or small in nature.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: But it's over a year since we've been discussing the lease of that area.

MR. JAMES: I understand.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: It should not

take a year to negotiate a lease. Even in its very material, either it becomes so material that we then seek out another place in that time or we resolve it, but it should not take a year to resolve a lease question, a contractual aspect. That to me is almost inconceivable that we are taking this long to resolve a matter of leasing with Temple Hospital.

MR. JAMES: Well, again, I can only apologize not having the specifics of it, but I will take this back to the Commissioner and we will respond back to the Chair and to yourself.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. Cervone, what did you say was the total budget of your agency?

MR. CERVONE: My own agency?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: What's that?

MR. CERVONE: My own agency?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Of this agency?

MR. CERVONE: These are 12 agencies. My own budget is 1.4. The combined budgets of our 12 agencies, I would very roughly estimate somewhere near the $5 to $10 million range.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: It just seems to be such a small sum of money for such a tremendous amount of work that has to be done.

MR. CERVONE: We appreciate that support, Councilman. This is indeed a burden on us for fund-raising, for volunteer service. All of our systems across our agencies are antiquated in their computer systems. We live in a stretched economic environment in our own shops. Some of these 12 agencies rely largely on these public dollars to survive. They don't have fund-raising staffs, they don't have the ability to reach into the legal community as I do. They need these dollars because they provide a public function. And you're right, in the overall order of City budget this is small fry. It makes a world of difference to these small agencies.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, we hear so frequently the mention of victims' rights. When

it comes to sentencing defendants, there's no limit to what is demanded of sentencing of defendants, but when it comes to the real dollars needed for support of victims it seems as if that public will get weakened suddenly. And I think we would like to hear from your agency, sort of coalition -- however you refer to it -- as to what we can do to bring about a whole different orientation.

I think you all do wonderful work. You get all the volunteers contributing and they're usually fairly low-income people who could better serve their own interests if they went out and got a paying job, but instead, they're dedicating themselves to improving the life of the community and helping victims. And yet, the public bodies, instead of giving full support, seem to squeeze them to the tiniest amount of dollars possible. We would like to reverse that.

And I would like to congratulate you. And the Council is very much interested in this problem. I clearly join with the President, with Councilwoman Blackwell, with

Councilman Ortiz and the others in Council who have expressed the feeling over time and we are stunned by the slowing delay such as that which Councilman Ortiz pointed out. Is it because children and women largely are involved as victims that there is this slowness of action? We think it deserves a much better response and we want to help you get that response.

MR. CERVONE: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

According to the sheet that we received from Mr. Cervone, it's a little more than $100,000.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: My calculation is $114,000, am I correct?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: $114,000 increase which doesn't seem to be an enormous amount of money. So I am hopeful that we can either receive a response to you, or else, that the D.A. will be available for call-back. Because certainly we are asking Judge Seamus

McCaffrey to call back anyway and we can work out --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I asked Mr. Cervone after his meeting with the District Attorney today to please get back to us so that we know exactly what the outcome was.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes, Councilman Cohen?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I wonder if anybody at the witness table or whether the president's office has found who is responsible for the change in hearing locations. I hear the name of Judge McCaffrey. Did he personally make the decision, do you know or -- I don't know whether Municipal Court has a board of judges like the Common Pleas Court has.

MR. CERVONE: As an attorney you practice before this Bench and I'd be reluctant to speak unkindly of the Bench. And I would advise my colleague directors similar caution.

There certainly is the Administrative Governing Board of the First

Judicial District which is comprised of the several President Judges and I believe the court administrator. I have to imagine that the Administrative Governing Board has responsibility for matters such as the location and scheduling of these proceedings.

The Municipal Court itself, of course, is an entity onto itself by state law. And Judge McCaffrey leads that court.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell who I think may have some knowledge on this.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes, I had talked with Judge McCaffrey personally with regard to this issue when I first heard about it. It is under his purview, although I am told that the Board of Judges has not formally voted on it. I've also contacted the President Judge and asked him to defer any decision that they might make until Council has at least had the opportunity to talk with the Judge as to how this affects our budget and how it affects the judicial district's budget that comes before us. And that it is one of the ways that we're

affected, I say to my colleague because, it will affect the budget.

We read everyday in the paper the amounts of money that it cost to implement this program and in a long-term that it will cost. I've seen figures as high as $17 million. And so we are absolutely upset about such an issue that it would so negatively impact neighborhoods.

There have already been articles in the paper about the difficulty for getting in CJC and it's because of this added pressure.

We've heard of many cases where victims are not heard or where judges have dismissed cases because victims can't get to the rooms, the courtroom, because they can't get in the building. And certainly, as we said last week, I received a response from the D.A. where she asks for a new entrance, but obviously in the short-term that will not help victims of crime and will not solve the problem.

So in answer to your question it was Judge Seamus McCaffrey, I've personally spoken with him and invited him to come before us to

deal with this issue. And we just hope, given the fact that there is so much overwhelming lack of support for this move that he will reconsider.

We've talked to the police Commissioner, we've talked to everyone concerned who supports our point of view with the exception of the D.A. herself. The police Commissioner, everyone else, realizes that this is just a nightmare for neighborhoods.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much. Thank you all very much.

Councilman Cohen?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. McPherson is a budget officer. Whether he has been able to locate anywhere in the forthcoming budget that we're considering the additional expenses in the First Judicial District that will result from this activity?

MR. McPHERSON: No, I have not.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I just think it's an urgent matter that we have to deal with. It's affecting in a very unfair way our whole society in the city. I'm really stunned when I

hear that maybe Judge McCaffrey -- because he's been the strongest advocate, I thought, of having hearings at the location where there are problems in the neighborhoods, at Vets Stadium and to suddenly find a reversal on his part, to believe in centralization of all hearings seems incomprehensible to me and I would certainly like to hear from him, but I don't think we can just wait, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: No, we're not going to wait. I think I said earlier, I think I said it on more than one occasion, since Mr. Cervone's been at the table. They are meeting with the District Attorney today, this afternoon. I ask that he report to us as to the outcome of that meeting. And whether the $114,000 will be additional monies will be addressed by the District Attorney's office. He will get back to us. And if she's not willing to do that, then we're going to have to do our own thing. He will let us know.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Madam President, we should bring her back to explain --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well,

she's going to come back anyway so that's why I want him to inform us of the outcome of this meeting today. So please make certain that you do that.

Thank you so much. We support you completely.

I just want to remind everyone we are already running behind schedule. Each group will be given five minutes to testify.

Our next witness is --

MR. McPHERSON: Alma Kappler.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is Ms. Kappler here?

MR McPHERSON: And the next panel will be Lauren Bornfriend, Beth Ounsworth and James Brown.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: If they will take a seat in front of the rail I would appreciate it.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon, and welcome. Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

Elma?

MS. KAPPLER: My name is Elma Kappler.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Elma, you're going to have to pull the microphone closer to you and talk into the microphone, please.

MS. KAPPLER: I'm here in regards to the police getting the decimal level meters. I'll start at the beginning.

I live in a row house and the people next door to me have something like surround sound or some kind of a system that they play on that low bass, high decibels. And these people are in their 60's or 70's, they're a little bit older than I am, I know the man is. I mean, I'm 63 years old and these people are not deaf, nor do they have any difficulty with their hearing ability.

We share a fire wall in an open staircase which really isn't another wall, it's an open staircase. And we share that back-to-back. And the noises and the vibrations that bounce off my walls, my ceilings, my

floors, even whenever I lay down on the bed. And I have spoken to these people about the noises and the vibrations, but they deny it's coming from their house. So I've called the police several times about this racket and vibration, but they say if they can't hear it of course they can't do anything about it, but they know exactly what I'm talking about.

You have to live in this kind of noise to relate to it and I've spoken to the City ordinances, L&I, City Council, police captains, et cetera, but they all keep passing the buck.

And that's all the symptoms that I suffer fearsomely from these terrible noises and vibrations. I mean it takes my heart completely out of rhythm. It causes my heart to beat erratically, makes my eyeballs quiver and the pressure go up in my eyeballs. It keeps my ears panting badly and clogged, feeling tight; and my stomach, it keeps it real tight and nervous, a loss of appetite, a sizable amount that I've lost, and forget sleep because I can't get any sleep.

Lately I've been experiencing awful heartburn daily because I've been exposed to this noise. It's every night, every day. My quality of life is ruined by that noise and that vibration.

What I'm asking is if you could please provide our police officers with the proper tools and the training they need to detect these noises and racket, especially when people play it at low bass, high volumes which is difficult to distinguish the sounds unless you live in it for some time.

The devices and tools I'm speaking about are called sound level meters, I believe, and after all, how can the police do their job without the proper tools. And not only that, like I said, they can't hear it so they say they can't do anything, but they know what I'm talking about. And I know a small county like Bensalem, P.A. has these tools and I can't understand why we can't have something to protect our hearing and our health, which is my hearing and my health.

I have wrote to City Council's

Office, I wrote to a Mr. Johnson, a Police Commissioner. I can't take this noise, I can't take it. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is there anyone from the administration here that could help Ms. Kappler? And maybe she could go to the side of the room and --

MS. KAPPLER: I did receive a reply from a gentleman in Mr. Rizzo's office and I remember Mr. Rizzo's dad.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Health Commissioner is standing. If you will see him, I'm sure he'd be more than happy to take all of the information and certainly try to address your problem. Thank you so much for coming in. I do hope we're able to help you.

MS. KAPPLER: Thank you, dear.

MR. McPHERSON: The next witnesses are Lauren Bornfriend, Beth Ounsworth and James Brown. And the next witness after this panel are the Friends of the Philadelphia Parks.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.

MS. BORNFRIEND: Good afternoon.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. BORNFRIEND: I am Lauren Bornfriend the Director of Friends of Philadelphia Parks.

MS. OUNSWORTH: I am Beth Ounsworth, President of the Board of Friends of Philadelphia Parks.

MR. BROWN: I am James L. Brown, the Director of Parks at Historic Preservation Corporation.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please proceed with your testimony.

MS. BORNFRIEND: Good afternoon, Council President Verna, Members of Council and guests.

We are here to ask you to increase the operating budgets of the Fairmount Park Commission and the Philadelphia Department of Recreation. And to talk to you about three agendas we believe must go hand-in-hand with increased budget allocations. These are the issues of visionary leadership and the

appointment of Fairmount Park Commissioners in June. The need for city-wide comprehensive strategic planning process for all of Philadelphia's parks and open space and new sources of revenue for Philadelphia's parks.

Park constituents are pleased that in Fiscal Year 2003, they city is planning to fund five volunteer coordinator positions and will contribute an additional 350,000 to ensure funding for 24 Fairmount Park Rangers. We thank Mayor Street, Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown and City Council for their support of these essential programs and we hope to build and sustain them in the coming years.

As these programs are important to Fairmount Park, Philadelphia's Department of Recreation Parks have essential maintenance needs of their own. We ask you to guarantee funding, wage increases and full-time year round status for Seasonal Maintenance Attendants or SMAs in the Department of Recreation Parks.

We remind you that in Peter Harnik's book "Inside City Parks" he shows in his comparison of park related expenditures per

resident by City that the average expenditure for the eight highest-density american cities, including Philadelphia, is $64, the average expenditure for the 25 largest American cities' is $80, and Philadelphia's expenditure in comparison is only $47.

In his comparison of 30 American cities park related expenditure, per acre by agency, Philadelphia's combined expenditure for the Commission and the Department of Recreation is $6,600, which is $3,000, 31 percent below the average.

Once again, we ask you to make a commitment to find a way to invest vision and dollars in Philadelphia's parks so that Philadelphia will not be left behind. Our extraordinary open space can play an essential role in making Philadelphia a first-class city.

In June 2002, the Fairmount Park Commissioners will be at the end of their terms. President Dixon and Commissioner Ballard will be completing their final terms after many years of dedicated service.

Friends of Philadelphia Parks along

with volunteer and professional stakeholders from across Philadelphia have been examining the issue of what citizens have a right to expect from their park leadership and from those who appoint them. In your copy of our testimony you will find a complete list of the criteria we have established for the appointment of Fairmount Park Commissioners. They include knowledge of and passion for our parks; a commitment to a comprehensive strategic planning process; to effective fund-raising and exploration of additional sources of park revenue; to acting as a spokesperson with an articulate vision for Philadelphia's parks; and to strategic collaboration with park stakeholders, city agencies and businesses.

Thank you.

The Friends of Philadelphia Parks would like to thank Councilwoman Reynolds Brown for her support in the strategic planning process. We would also like to thank Councilman Nutter for calling for an increase of $300,000 for City Council's Fiscal Year 2003 Operating Budget to fund the development of a strategic

master plan for Fairmount Park.

This is a good beginning. However, Friends of Philadelphia Parks and a growing coalition of parks constituents believe that any planning process that is undertaken must be comprehensive and city-wide and it must encompass all Philadelphia's parks and open space; that is, recreation parks, Fairmount Park and other green space. Most importantly, in order for this plan to be effective, key park's stakeholders must be integrally involved from the inception in the process.

The time is right for the city to retain a consultant to facilitate a city-wide strategic planning process for Philadelphia's parks and open space that re-brands and positions them as more than green space and recreational facilities.

The current climate presents a unique opportunity and a need for holistic and a broad-based plan that will incorporate the burgeoning role of citizen organizations; the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative; strong foundation, media, and growing corporate

interest; and the powerful parks movement throughout the United States.

This plan should address the issues of leadership, and capacity building, accountability, performance standards, organizational structure, governance, and sustainable revenue sources.

It should reflect the impact of urban parks on neighborhood stabilization, economic and community development and reinvestment, and health and well-being.

It should recognize the role of parks as sites for education, job training, creative expression, cultural events and tourism.

The plan should also recognize that our parks and green space are a regional asset and amenity with a wide range of users, meaningful in the attraction and retention of students, homeowners and businesses.

This plan must recognize the need to build on existing assets, those that are human, such as friends groups and users; those that are natural resources such as rivers and urban

forests; and cultural institutions such as museums and historic houses, and existing plans and studies. It must also provide a framework and rationale for fund-raising and resource-building.

Most importantly, this flexible planning process must address and balance the viewpoints, concerns, goals and objectives of various interest and user groups, stakeholders, experts, philanthropists, and city agencies, thereby creating a plan that is used and not put on the shelf.

Thank you.

MR. BROWN: I'm here today as a board member of Friends of Philadelphia Parks to ask for increased budget allocations for the Fairmount Commission and the Department of Recreation. I'm also here to say that in order for our city's parks to reach their potential and fulfill their role, new resources must supplement increased budget allocations.

Parks, and this is one of our recommendations, parks' assets must be used carefully to address revenue generated in parks

to support parks. Possible ways of doing this are: fees, concessions, sweat equity, public/private partnerships, corporate promotions, and dedicated funding streams, such as nuisance tax or parking revenues.

Improved relationships with corporations and foundations as well as communication, cooperation and alignment with city, state, and federal agencies can only strengthen and broaden opportunities for additional resources for Philadelphia's parks. In other words, the Park Commission will have any capacity to carry out events within the park and that money to stay within the Parks budget versus the City regular budget itself.

I'd like to give some examples of these ways in which other cities are generating revenue for their parks.

Automobile parking is the single biggest source of fee revenue for New York and Chicago, the largest fee generating park agencies in the United States.

The New York Department of Parks and Recreation owns Shea Stadium and gets revenue

from parking. Parking at Grant Park in Chicago grosses $18 million annually for parks.

Post Office Square in Boston is an example of a successful public/private partnership. The park is financed solely through the revenues generated by its underground parking garage. The city receives $1 million annually for the ownership interest and another million in annual fees. Post Office Square has transformed the business district, boosted property values, and significantly enhanced quality of life.

Corporate promotions are another source of revenue for parks. Disney's Company paid $1 million to the park department in New York to launch the film "Pocahontas" in Central Park.

Golf courses can be extremely lucrative. All of New York City's 13 gold courses are run by concessionaires, they net $13 million annually for the parks.

In a new era for Philadelphia parks, a goal of strategic planning process and a responsibility of park and city leadership must

be to identify existing revenue enhancement approaches from other cities that can be adapted here, and to create new and innovative revenue opportunities unique to Philadelphia.

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much, Mr. Brown.

Now, before I call on my colleague, Councilman Nutter, let me thank you for all the work that all of you do, but certainly to Jim Brown who is head of Parkside Historical Preservation Coalition. And many of you know that the newspaper has been running a series on East Parkside and talking about all the great things it is and that it can be, and that is because of Jim Brown and his leadership. And his is the picture you saw on the front page, but we say thank you for all that you and your family has done and are doing in East Parkside.

MR. BROWN: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I also would echo the comments of the Chair to Mr. Brown. It is quite a wonderful site to see the transformation that has already taken place on Parkside Avenue.

As you know, Councilwoman Blackwell and I share the benefit of your work. The physical buildings are in Councilwoman Blackwell's district as much as I try to get them -- try to convince you to put some of those buildings on a flatbed and move them across Belmont Avenue, you continue to refuse to do that, but I've enjoyed working with you over the many years. And you make our park and the neighborhood a wonderful place to be.

Ms. Ounsworth, I wanted to make one comment about your testimony. I thank all of you for your testimony. I appreciate your comments with regard to any work that I've done with the parks, but I do want to say that the overwhelming and alliance share of any recognition with regard to strategic planning process, and you did mention it, but I also want to comment upon it. And it really does go, Councilman Reynolds Brown.

As Chair of the committee with oversight for Fairmount Park and her, I would say laser-like focus on the issue of strategic planning has helped, I think, to bring that issue to a head. My suggestion, and whether it's helping Council to fund it or -- and I know that the councilwoman along with the park director and the managing director and others, maybe in the foundation community have been working down a particular path.

I think that if -- I'm left with the impression that they're not that far away from where they want to be down -- from where we all want to be down that particular path, and whether Council dollars are possibly used for a strategic plan, or there has also been a discussion about the need for a full facilities assessment of all of the various buildings and structures in the Fairmount Park system. I'm quite honestly less interested in so much which we fund as that we help to provide funding for some component of what goes on with Fairmount Park.

So if a foundation or the State can

assist us in getting the strategic plan done, that is certainly fine. We never mind spending other people's money. And at the same time if there are other needs for the park that need to get higher up on the radar screen, and if Council funding can support that then certainly that's okay as well.

So I want to thank you for all of your support for parks, the encouragement of raising the parks issue. The ideas and the testimony are many things that we should probably get additional information on, but I want to continue to encourage you to work with my colleague and certainly the rest of us will be supportive in those efforts.

I think getting the strategic plan done is important, getting an assessment of our buildings done is important, and also finding out what should be, I won't say the true funding level because all of us would certainly like more money to go to a whole host of facilities, but certainly an adequate and appropriate funding level for Fairmount Park, which I hope would come out of the strategic planning process

and possibly some other changes with regard to whether some dollars can be set aside.

Mr. Brown's testimony about golf courses, I mean we have golf courses that are part of the park system. Generally all the money from all the facilities kind of goes into a big pot and then gets redistributed. Not necessarily by way of parody or what you bring in going back out to you. Maybe we need to revisit some of those issues internally to figure out what is right and what is wrong.

I don't know whether the library gets to keep all of the many pennies from late fees or not, but I mean there are a number of agencies that might want to jump onto that bandwagon of well, I generate X amount of dollars so we should be able to keep them.

And you will potentially create a bit of a theftdom situation which we have to have some ability to direct dollars where they really should go and not have people trying to kind of hold onto them on the other hand, people that use the park often do pay some fairly serious money for the opportunity to use the

park and their use of the park creates a bit of a wear and tear, from particular events, on the park.

And so I think the legitimate question is whether or not some portion of funding for major events in the park system should in fact be targeted back to the park as a way of increasing revenue.

You ought to be commended for your efforts and I thank you.

MS. OUNSWORTH: Thank you.

And the planning process is that we would take a look at this and evaluate for different sources of funds for the parks, but also, I just wanted to point out that we would like not only Fairmount Park, but we think it's really necessary that this be a city-wide comprehensive plan also.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right.

MS. OUNSWORTH: And we do thank you. And definitely also thank Councilwoman Reynolds Brown for helping us push this plan.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And a number of other Councilmembers.

MS. OUNSWORTH: And a number of other Councilmembers.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Councilman.

Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon. Let me first underscore the remarks made by Council Chairman, Jannie Blackwell, and my colleague, Councilman Nutter, to first thank you for your work that you do. I need to assure you that we all believe, those of us on this side of the table and those of you who live and breathe park's issues assure you that it will be a collective process. I have learned from you and have worked with you and need you to help us be thoughtful and very circumspect as we move towards crafting a strategic plan.

And let me say, also, that I had been up to this point, and will continue to be,

a proponent of a public/private arrangement with government and park advocates. And as I said before, the business community has been mysteriously absent. So we need to find a way to embrace them and bring them to the table so that it is a comprehensive analytical process.

And finally, it will require, as Mr. Brown has pointed out, us being creative and innovative and thinking out of the box when it comes to finding out how we are going to maintain the kind of activities that go on in the park. So give us time to be thoughtful, but be assured that it will be a comprehensive opportunity for all of us. We will not leave anyone out who cares about parks. And I'll do what I can from where I sit to see that that happens.

And let me thank my Councilman colleague Michael Nutter for indicating that we have been working on this for a long time, for the 26 months that I've been here, and we are finally beginning to see -- with the work that they did prior to me coming here and the work that we've done since I've been here, seen some

tangible reality changes when it comes to the parks. So the work continues because of both Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller who's not here and cares a lot about the parks.

Councilman Clarke who actually sits on the Fairmount Park Commission and Councilman Nutter who knows how to do with a laser-like focus look at the numbers and move us to a place where we can see what's doable. So thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. It's very encouraging for the parks. Thank you Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon. I have a quick question, it kind of centers around this discussion in the strategic plan for the parks.

As you know, I represent the Parkway, which is actually a part of the park system. And I wanted to ask during that discussion among friends groups, is there any interaction or any discussion about the Parkway

itself?

There's been a number of proposals submitted for the Parkway. I heard Mr. Brown talking about parking. There are actually two proposals right now for underground parking on the Parkway, condominiums. I mean we've gotten all kinds of requests.

I was wondering, is there any discussion? Because I don't hear it as I talk to the residents in the surrounding areas, and as I talk to the Center City District, and as I talk to the Planning Commission, I don't really get a sense that the park -- the Friends of the park have a lot of interaction with those groups? I don't know who wants to answer that, I just want to get a sense if you are all in that discussion?

MS. OUNSWORTH: I think until this point the conversations have been very general about the organizational structure of the plan rather than focusing on particular sites, but we hope that people will step forward and that any relevant area will be considered or issue will be considered.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yes, I guess I'm asking you to get involved in that discussion, because I'd like to hear people who are more traditional park users as to people who are just simply interested because of the proximity of their community to it, or people who have a strategic plan related to Center City, or a plan because that's their job, working for the Planning Commission. But I would really like to get you all involved in that discussion because I like to hear all facets of that. That will be helpful to me.

MS. OUNSWORTH: We'd very much like to be involved in that. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Councilman.

Councilman Cohen?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes, in following up on the question of the strategic planning, does that include the coverage of all of these small little units that are run by Fairmount Park, administered by them; like for example,

Kemble Park in West Oak Lane, Wister Woods, which seems scattered over a number of sites in the West Oak Lane section. There's a number of other areas like that.

Does the strategic planning involve the questions of the best use of those kinds of parks? Because they seem to get very little attention on a day-to-day basis --

MS. OUNSWORTH: It's definitely --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: -- to get them cleaned or kept up to date. We have tremendous problems.

MS. OUNSWORTH: Yes, the strategic plan should definitely address all of those parks, all of the green space that we have in Philadelphia and come up with a good plan for -- that's also why we want to be sure to include all of the people -- as many people as we can who are parks -- what we call stakeholders, the people who live near the parks and the heads of the individual parks, Friends of Parks organizations. So that we can include all these people so that we know what the needs are when we evaluate it.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Because I think beyond the vast beauty of the whole park and the tremendous services it offers, the small areas of ground often in very crowded parks in the city really offer a tremendous need for the people of Philadelphia.

MS. OUNSWORTH: Definitely, and for the neighborhoods for sure, yes.

MS. BORNFRIEND: The folks from the neighborhood parks have been very involved in this discussion. So it's really -- "we" as an organization, are talking to stakeholders from around the city in both recreation parks, Fairmount Parks and even some independent green space.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And the Recreation Department really needs a tremendous face-lifting in the sense of additional employees, additional programs, additional care and attention to the basic facilities in which these programs are carried out. And we hope the strategic planning covers recreation as well as Fairmount Park.

MS. OUNSWORTH: Yes, it would.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Councilman.

Are there any other questions?

(No further questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

MR. McPHERSON: The next person is Peggy Amsterdam, Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. Then after her will be Amy Dougherty, Friends of the Free Library.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good afternoon. Please identify yourself for the record and begin.

MS. AMSTERDAM: Good afternoon, my name is Peggy Amsterdam. I am the Executive Director of the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance. The Alliance is a Regional Arts Advocacy Organization. I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of the Philadelphia Cultural Fund and our city's additional investments in arts and culture.

Philadelphia boasts a wealth of cultural organizations that are vital to our social and economic quality of life. Arts and culture is one of our leading industries annually generating $564 million in regional spending, attracting a wealth of visitors, and providing nearly $6.5 million in Philadelphia sales and wage taxes.

Cultural and historic sites are the lifeblood of our city's tourism industry, and entice businesses and residents to stay within our borders. In fact, a recent survey conducted by the Chamber of Commerce revealed that 69 percent of area business leaders view our cultural attractions as the top strengths of the region.

But beyond their substantial impact on our economy, the arts also revitalize Philadelphia's neighborhoods by creating a community where every person, regardless of his or her social, ethnic, or economic background, can contribute as an equal and succeed. I applaud the City for its current and past investments in the cultural sector, and urge

their continued growth through the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, and other arenas such as the City's and the Redevelopment Authority's Percent for Art Programs.

This year, the Cultural Fund saw a modest increase in its appropriations, which enabled it to support additional neighborhood arts organizations.

Yes, Philadelphia still ranks only 7th of the nation's ten largest cities in government's per-capita operating support for the arts.

City support of arts and culture is critical to ensuring that our cultural institutions from the Academy of Natural Sciences to the Village of Arts and Humanities can continue to serve Philadelphia's residents.

The Cultural Fund provides general operating support, the type of funds most difficult for nonprofits to raise. Yet, it is operating funds that enable organizations to survive while offering low- or no-cost programing that revitalizes neighborhoods and

provides safe and enriching after-school activities for our children.

Through the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, arts organizations can work with developers to revitalize buildings for community cultural activities, and to beautify vacant or abandoned properties throughout the City. The Percent for Art Programs, the first in the nation, enables developers in our region to give back to our City residents.

I applaud the Council for its unaminous passage of a recent resolution supporting this issue, and urge your continued vigilance as the trustees of our City's heritage.

I'd like to take a brief moment to thank Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown for introducing that resolution, and Councilman Nutter for his letters of support to the Redevelopment Authority. I'd also like to thank Councilman DiCicco for his support as the project in question is located in his district and he has long been a supporter of the Arts in

Philadelphia. Thank you all for your continued support.

On behalf of the Cultural Alliance's more than 230 member organizations, many of which receive City support, I thank Council for its past investments and respectfully ask: than you continue your committent by increasing the Cultural Funds FY03 appropriation to $2 million; that you establish the Fund's continued growth in the City's five-year plan to $5 million in FY07; that you incorporate arts and culture into the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, and that you uphold our Percent for Art Programs.

Cultural organizations invest heavily in their neighborhoods. We care. We want Philadelphia to be an exciting, interesting, healthy, and vibrant place to live and work. We hope that our City shares this vision. Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions?

Thank you.

MR. McPHERSON: The next person is

Amy Dougherty, Friends of the Free Library. And the next one after that will be Colleen McCauley, PCCA, on lead contamination.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good afternoon, we thank you for coming. And my good friend Jerry White, it's always a pleasure. We thank you.

Please identify yourself for the record and begin your testimony.

MR. WHITE: Jeremiah White, Jr., President of the Free Library.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Amy Dougherty, Executive Director of the Friends of the Free Library.

MR. WHITE: Madam Chair and Members of City Council, I'm pleased to be here again to testify on behalf of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

I've been involved in community development and human development in Philadelphia for a number of years, and as we rebuild our neighborhoods, reform education, create jobs and provide training, we must ensure that the knowledge enhancement tools such as the

Free Library and the experiences that the Free Library brings about remains easily accessible and free to the residents of the City.

I believe that a healthy and a real-time library system is required in order for us to achieve and maintain the quality of life that we all aspire.

And I just want to underscore the word "real-time". Real-time means that what we are doing today, that people have access to that information and those opportunities, but real-time also means that you have to invest in your future ability to provide real-time services to the residents of Philadelphia. And the library, probably more so than any other institution, except for the public schools, has to make a significant investment as technology and communications and the advancement of knowledge expands as a result of the Internet digitalization and communication.

The Friends of the Free Library has been a long-tern strategic supporter of City Council. We've come before you and we have provided you with information related to library

issues.

Sometimes our perspective agrees with the administration, sometimes our perspective agrees with the library, sometimes our perspective doesn't because we represent what people in their communities feel that are important, and sometimes those views do not necessarily coincide. But all-in-all, City Council has wrestled with some very difficult decisions, and over the years have been very supportive of making sure that quality library services remain in the district.

And the support that you've given at times when budgets were being cut in the library, you stepped forward and added money back into the budgets, and the Friends and your constituents are grateful. But also, I'd like to let you know that the Friends do our part as well.

There are over 3,000 active Friends members at 30 branches. And I was driving Midvale Avenue last weekend, and there's a branch in Falls Church, and I saw out in front of the library there were about between 15 to 20

people just picking up the trash and the paper and the leaves out in front of that library. And all across the City you see branch Friends doing that kind of work because they care about the library systems and the services it provides.

So today what I'd like to do is to raise three issues and also point out that we have some members that represent some branch libraries here. Loti Gottlieb from Walnut West; Marie Jones from George Institute; Lea Guttman and Cynthia Issman from Independence Branch, and others.

The first issue I'd like to raise to your attention has to do with the youth programs. The LEAP Program, which is a program that provides homework assistance, computer assistance and cultural enrichment, at each branch library five days a week, September to June. In addition to providing those services the library is able to hire students that act as role models for these children and provide views of opportunity that they can pursue as they engage in academic pursuit.

In 1988, my understanding is when this project started it was pretty much funded by private sources, but over the years as those private sources have waned, the City of Philadelphia has picked up those programs. And in fact, the City of Philadelphia has picked up 46 of those programs, which leaves six remaining programs to be funded. And our understanding is that within this current budget those six programs are not proposed to fund those.

The affected branches are the Wynnefield Branch, the Bushrod branch, South Philadelphia, the 1700 South Broad Street Branch, West Oak Lane, Haverford Avenue and Wyoming. And what is the impact of not funding these: 18 teen-agers will lose their jobs, but the reality, the bottom-line reality in addition to people losing their jobs, and the fact that there will not be any homework assistance provided, you will have thousands of children who will not have access to this important program. And we think that City Council should ensure that all the branches have this important program and make sure that the money is

restored.

The second issue I'd like to raise has to do with the Independence Branch, and I would like to thank Councilmembers for their support to open the Independence Branch. It was open at 7th and Market on February 28, 2000. It serves Chinatown, Society Hill, Queen Village, Old City and Washington Square West.

Within six months after opening, the branch has a consistently higher circulation of any branch in the City. The circulation was over 165,000 for the first 11 months and the branch has issued approximately 3,500 new library cards in the same period. So we have a really vital energized library branch happening there.

It has a very strong active Friends group. My understanding is the group has raised over $200,000 to ensure that the collections, the languages, and information is provided above and beyond what the City can provide, and it has the second largest gay and lesbian public library collection in the country. But as you can see as this grows they're outgrowing their

space. And we have been advised by the Friends group that the building that the library is in is up for sale.

And there are some creative people in this Friends group who understand finance, who understand business, and they believe that given what the City pays in lease payments, if that was creatively structured along with some creative financing, that the City could purchase this building, have room for expanding the space and engage in other kinds of economic development activity at that site. So we are encouraging the administration to look at the possibilities of saving money and avoiding a potentially more costly investment in the future.

Another facility that I'd like to raise your attention to is the George Institute. We have completed 50 of the renovations in 50 of the libraries. We have 54 including the Central Library. Remaining we have the George Institute, Weidner, Walnut West and the Central Library.

George Institute is located at 1461

North 52nd Street, and currently renovations are at a standstill. George has been closed since June 2, 2001 leaving this neighborhood without library services. This community is comprised of predominately low/moderate income African-American residents whose public schools do not have good operating libraries.

Bids were put out for the renovation of this library and it came in approximately 800,000 over budget. And there's some negotiations that are going on back and forth between the people who put the bid out of the City and the contractors so we could come to a reasonable cost for doing this renovation.

I've been informed that the people have been waiting for 30 years -- over 30 years to get this done and we're so close to getting this thing done that we would like as a Friends, overall Friends group, to put all of our support behind the City Council and administration to negotiate an appropriate amount of additional resources for this project so that Elliott and his staff can get this thing done.

We've done a very good job getting

our neighborhood libraries up and running and we just like to make sure that this one does not fall between the cracks.

The next point I'd like to raise has to do with staffing. We understand the rationale of the administration for imposing hiring freezes, but we think that you need to understand the impact of the hiring freezes on the library system.

During the first six months of this year a little over 3 million people visited the library system. It is our expectation that number will rise over the next six months and we will probably have about 7 million people who will have visited the libraries.

According to the Mayor's report on City services, when the library was rated in terms of consumer satisfaction, 81 percent of the people who interacted with the library system indicated that they received outstanding service. It is the highest level that the library's received in about 36 years.

Now, what we have are people coming in for service, service to get access to books,

CDs, information, et cetera, and they are walking out of the library feeling good about that experience. But the only way we achieve that is having a certain level of funding for staff with shutting down, hiring. What we have now are 13 library positions vacant, 13 full-time equivalent assistants vacant and also guard vacancies.

On a day-to-day basis what this means is, the flow of service and the constituence is either being diminished in terms of the amount of service or actually cut back all-in-all.

And the point I wanted to raise to City Council here today is that when the summer months click in we will have more people using the library and we will have more and more backlogs and more and more complaints from people in service.

And I think you really need to understand that the investment, the hundreds and millions of investments that we made in the library can -- if we don't pay attention to the staffing requirements -- can go down the drain.

The last point I'd like to make has to do with the Central Library. And I was pleased to learn that Councilman Clarke is turning the Central Library, the actual facility's 75th Anniversary celebration. Because it's important that we raise the level of understanding of the importance of the Central Library.

And the choice, Councilman Clarke, I think is a good one. The branch of the Free Library is absolutely 100 percent behind the complete renovation and expansion of the Central Library on the Parkway.

I have personally been involved in the discussions about the expansion, what's required, the programming and the cost.

I'm also fully aware of the issues related to the capital budget, related to capital expenditures, but we'd also like to say that the investment that we made in all these branches can only come to fruition if the Central Library's actually completed and we get the kind of technology and information in that Central Library that we need. Without it it's

like your body operating without a brain.

So in summary, what we would like to say is, we support Council's continued vigilance in making sure that we do not lose ground in terms of library services in the City. We think that as we move forward with the renovation of the Central Library and services, that Council continues with that vigilance and support to make sure that that happens. And on behalf of the Friends of the Free Library, I'd like to thank you for this opportunity.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

First I'd just like to say, Jerry, thanks for all the great work and your offer of assistance for various neighborhood projects. I also want to say you knew me before I was a Councilman so it's okay for you to call me Daryl.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

I likewise wanted to again thank them for the work they're doing and also to recognize Lottie Gottlieb from my area. Great to have you, Lottie.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I just want to make sure that as these freezes have taken place and other budgetary restrictions or contractions may take place, that we're kept informed as to -- we've spent a lot of time in this Council for over the last ten years making sure that library hours were extended and open, and that be available for school kids to go after school and spend a lot of time.

And Councilman Cohen and I actually won a couple of awards in several neighborhoods trying to prevent the closing of several libraries. And we want to make sure that those hours that we fought so hard for, and that even in those days in which the City was going through very dark days in terms of this budget, we understood that having the libraries open

after school, late, saved us money.

MR. WHITE: Right, absolutely.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Saved us money because it kept kids very busy during that period of time. And it was the first, really, afterschool program that was done really quite -- volunteered. So we want to be kept aware of any cuts in hours and closings of certain libraries and certain times, and so on, and I wish that you keep us informed of that.

MR. WHITE: Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Are there any other questions or comments?

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon. Let me underscore first, the comments of Councilman Ortiz. We do care about after-school programs. In a magnificent way, we are encouraged by the

tremendous increase, but we still know that there are still 100,000 young people in the City not in afterschool programs. So to see anything that wreaks of a decrease in programing activity would be bothersome.

You mention in your testimony the notion of leaning on economic development activities as a way of bolstering the Free Library activities. Shall we assume by that, that your board has embraced that concept or that notion that that's a reasonable way to go?

MR. WHITE: I think that -- depends on which board you mean. I think that it's been proven, not in other cities, that the library can function as an economic anchor in neighborhoods. And that the traffic can relate to retail, can relate to professional services, and that libraries can effect, be a magnet for economic development.

My comment, specifically related to the Independence Branch, is that if that particular building is in fact purchased with creative financing, that there's opportunities to create an economic base there that supports

the library as well, covers the expansion and provides for some economic development activity.

But I'm in agreement with what was said by the parks -- the Friends of the Parks. We need to allow the entrepreneurial people within that division to be creative. Now that doesn't mean they're not checked, but if we allow them to be creative, because we need those creative juices in times where you're cutting money, you're cutting budgets.

One other point, I think on the point around youth programing we definitely want to see the City pick up those additional six branches for funding and I think it's about between $28,000 and $30,000 -- $28,000 or $30,000 per project. But I think overall, what gets under-valued is the work that the library does as the place where a lot of kids go after school because they have no other place to go and that's your point.

And so when you have hiring freezes, what happens is, you see a gradual, slow decline in services. It's like a disease and it just starts a little bit, and all of a sudden, you

wake up and your face is -- your hair is falling out. And what we're saying is, don't let us get to the point that our hair is falling out. We don't have enough librarians, we don't have enough librarian assistants, and it's starting to cause backlogs and delays with customer service.

So if you wait another year, my feeling is you're going to have a serious problem. We'll have a serious problem. I'm part of this problem too. We'll have a serious problem.

COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Okay. With the independence example you presented has that been considered and/or discussed by your board?

MR. WHITE: Which board?

COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: The Friends of the Free Library?

MR. WHITE: Yes, right. But we have not brought back a specific proposal related to that. The ideas have been discussed, the vision has been discussed. Because we have branches that are very entrepreneurial. We have a

bookstore, they're always -- that we sell used books right above the Parkway. Books that come in from the library, and people denote books, we recycle them as a sales tool.

So what we're saying -- the point I'm making is that the entrepreneurial spirit that exists within the Friends groups to figure out how to raise money, how to pursue facilities, collections, expand libraries is something that we need to encourage rather than de-courage. Discourage, excuse me.

COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Very well. We would look to your leadership though.

MR. WHITE: We're here.

COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS BROWN: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just one question.

Mr. White, you heard over the last

couple of months we've had a substantial discussion about wage tax, decreases, number of bills, relating tools, wage tax discussions; understanding that depending on whose train of thoughts you follow it could impact somewhat on City services --

MR. WHITE: Correct.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: -- and it's always talked about. The libraries being first or within that first tear on the hit list. Has your organization gotten involved in this process or do you anticipate being involved in these discussions and the hearings that we will be having?

MR. WHITE: I think we have to get involved in those discussions. We haven't formally brought it up, but the idea of exploring economic policy in the City with the wage tax, the gross tax and all those other taxes, incentives for doing business, I think all those things, if Council has a full hearing and really looks at what our economic policy is in the City, I think that that has a direct bearing on what happens in places like the

library.

Because, you know, I've been involved in economic and business development for a long time. If we can straighten out the economic policy framework in the City, I think we can generate additional revenues to deal with some of these City services. And we can encourage more business development and revenues than we discourage. So I think that if what you're saying is you think we ought to definitely, it's on our agenda.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Very strong suggestion, because I am concerned. I mean there's so much money to go around, and when people look at potential cuts, traditionally people look at what they call some of the peripheral services, some people suggest that, but the basic services like police, fire, some of us politicians don't dare even discuss that. But some people look at libraries and some people look at rec centers and some people look at some of the other ancillary type of services. And I really encourage that you get in the forefront of this discussion.

MR. WHITE: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILWOMAN COHEN: I must confess, I get a little scared when I hear the emphasis on entrepreneurial development with respect to government services because I can picture the day when there will be a sign saying, "Budweiser's Free Library of Philadelphia", "Coors Philadelphia Stadium" or maybe "Coors City Hall."

I think we have to know that commercialization of public service ideas is very attractive to the private sector for good reason. Because it gives them a wonderful opportunity to do their advertising and influencing of people's minds where they can be most effective.

And I just want to express the concern that public services have to be unadulterated and pure so that we develop in youngsters the ability to an analyze, to think independently, to question before they come to

decisions. Because that is the heart of democratic functioning. So I just express that.

Book sales are wonderful, anything to get more books to the community, but if you expand to side methods or say that these cultural institutions or social service groups, like libraries, are not worthy of public expenditures of money, and therefore, they must go out and hunt for private sources of funding, I think you get into very dangerous territory.

I'm just urging upon you and the wonderful work you grouped out because in the battles to save the libraries during time that Councilman Ortiz conferred when the City was thought to have terrible financial problems, it's very important to have an educated support group like the Friends of Free Library. And they did a marvelous job then and I'm sure they're doing it now. But just a few words of caution on the entrepreneurial spurts.

MR. CLARKE: Right, a real brief comment on that.

I think that you are absolutely correct. And I think that there is -- in the

context of who owns it, who owns what we're doing, who owns the public mission, who owns the public purpose of what these things are for. I think you're absolutely correct, that we have to make sure that we don't slip in our integrity in that regard.

But I do think that in engaging and being able to maintain and grow that we have to encourage people to think out of the box, so to speak, and come up with some ideas that can be discussed publicly to encourage that.

Like I mentioned, the book sales, I agree with you. I think recycling books is absolutely what we need to do. I think that in the Friends we have people doing bake sales, we have people doing all kinds of things that are what I consider to be our entrepreneurial ways of supporting services. And it's local, it's grass roots and it's very clear. And that's where we're coming from.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: May I ask one other question? I visited a number of Philadelphia housing developments. Almost all of them are terribly in need of and openly

crying for libraries, local libraries where youngsters can begin to get hold of books and begin to read them.

And it appears that that's not a major concern of PHA. At least over the years there has been no evidence of any concentrated effort to build libraries, but I think that the public library could take on a tremendous program by making sure that each of the Philadelphia Housing Authority Developments have adequate libraries.

And I think we would do a great deal for the future membership of the free public libraries systems if you could develop maybe small branches to be operated, both by library employees, but by employees of PHA, and that could bring their youngsters in the direct contact of books at a very early age. I would just like to suggest that.

MR. CLARKE: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're welcome.

Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam

Chair.

David, Barnes & Noble's and the other great book store chains have become incredibly profitable because they sell more than books. They have pastry and coffee and people go in and use the books and stay and read a little bit. And maybe our libraries, different neighborhoods, not that you are going to open up a chain of Starbucks --

MR. CLARKE: It's not "Starbucks Library" in the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: But that can be run by the library. And going back, because we've gone through very hard times here in the City economically and we fought the battles to prevent the closing of libraries because Councilman Clarke said that some people consider the library and parks not as essential as police and fire. Well, I consider them as essential as police and fire. They're not peripheral.

Because if they're not functioning we are really going to need more police. We are really going to need an army to come in and take care of that. And the issue in terms of how it

is, I think the economic issues that are going to be discussed in this Council really go to the heart of where we maintain the status quo or we begin to generate more revenue like what you're talking about, and how do we generate more revenue and how we go about that, and how we maintain a certain budgetary in terms of the priorities that we have.

Because if we close the libraries that will give one more reason for people to leave the cities. And one of the things that we always have and we always have had in this City is a system of parts that have been unequal, but also of libraries that have been unequal across the Commonwealth.

So I believe that yes, we can discuss the economic issues, but just because we discuss the economic issues does not mean that we are going to be talking just about the cutting of services. We are going to be talking about generating more revenue.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're welcome.

Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, Mr. White. Is that Ms. Dougherty?

MR. WHITE: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: On Page 2 of your testimony, I was looking through the budget book, tell us a little bit more about the LEAP Program. And what I'm taking from the testimony is that there are presently 52 sites where LEAP is operating, but going forward it's only anticipated that 46 will operate?

MS. DOUGHERTY: LEAP is at every branch right now except for the George Institute which is closed. So every operating branch has a LEAP Program. There are six of these LEAP Programs that are currently funded by private funds which will not be true in the next Fiscal Year.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: What private funds are funding them? Was there a grant or something?

MR. WHITE: We can provide you the

3/18/02 FYO3 Budget, Public Hearing

information.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I'm sorry, I can't hear you.

MR. WHITE: We can provide you the sources of the funding board.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And do I also take from the testimony that when you say the 46 have been observed and funded, are you talking about by the City?

MR. WHITE: Yes.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Correct.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And how does that happen?

MR. WHITE: My understanding is that when the library system presented its budget in the line item for youth services, they included the services in that line item. And it was proved as part of the line item in the library's budget.

Elliott, is that correct?

Not lined that way, but it was in the City's budget.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, it would be helpful to understand, actually, where the

City funding is for the 46, because I didn't see a youth line in the library system. So I do actually need to know --

MR. WHITE: Okay, we will provide that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: -- what is the source of funding or who is funding it?

MR. WHITE: Okay, we'll provide you with that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, actually, I need to know from the government since it's the government's budget. Who decided that the six were not going to be funded?

MR. WHITE: What I would suggest, Madam Chair, is that since the question the Councilman is raising pretty much goes to the administration, maybe we could have one of the library's representatives come forward.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We see Mr. Elliott Shelkrot back there; we do say welcome. So many people love the free libraries and I am enternally grateful for West Work as you know, and for all the other branches where you work so hard and do a great job. So we are

happy to welcome you and have you respond.

Please identify yourself technically for the record.

MR. SHELKROT: Sure. I'm Elliott Shelkrot, President and Director of the Free Library.

Over the years the initial funding for the afterschool LEAP was privately funded through grants from various foundations. And those grants have been renewed for several years, but over the last, I believe it is six budget years, several of the programs, because of the unavailability of renewed grant funds, those afterschool programs have been adopted into and moved into the City's budget through various proposals and administration program.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mr. Shelkrot, where are they in this year's budget or where are they in last year's budget? What is the funding source?

MR. SHELKROT: Well, in the initial years -- every year that there were new branches moved into the budget it initially is made through a proposal that we make and then it is

adopted in the line items specifically related to staffing, so it's an increase in the Class 100. Sometimes some increases in 200 and 300 is where the books and materials come from. So it's an increase in those lines that incorporate the LEAP Programs.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, can you tell me or point me to what page in the library's budget in the budget book, would cover this particular item, or are you saying that it takes in LEAP and possibly a number of other services?

MR. SHELKROT: It's my belief that in the -- well, let me just check.

Most of the funding would be on what we have as Page 23-17, I'm assuming. And I just don't know whether yours is formatted in the same way that ours is formatted, but what I'd be happy to do to save time --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I have Page 23-17.

MR. SHELKROT: Okay. And you'll find that over the years as these programs have moved into the City budget, they have been

through expansions to this area. This is the division of the library extension service is what you see up near the top on the right and that's the branch and regional libraries where the vast majority of these programs are.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, tell me how have these libraries, when you say moved over into the City funding, how did that happen? Over what period of time? Who decided which branches were going and what happens with these last six?

MR. SHELKROT: What has happened is that we have proposed in the last several budget preparation times that the programs be moved in the City funding because of the increased difficulty in getting foundations and the organizations that initially fund them to continue it.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: All right, stop right there. In the FY03 budget, are there any libraries moving into the City system as a result of the FY03 budget?

MR. SHELKROT: No, there are no new LEAP Programs this year moving into the City's

budget.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So does it mean that at the end of this Fiscal Year the program will end at those six libraries?

MR. SHELKROT: What it means is that we will desperately try to find new sources, private money because there's no -- this year's budget cannot provide for additional programs.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, let me ask this question; in your testimony -- you were here last week, right?

MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: In your testimony from last week you talked about in FY02 the City funded 46 LEAP Programs. Your testimony says that private dollars are supporting seven additional programs so that LEAP is now offered five days a week in 53 libraries across the City. Then you go on to talk about how many kids served and the like.

Is there somewhere here in your testimony that I missed that mentions that the seven are not going to be funded after FY03?

MR. SHELKROT: There is nothing in that testimony that indicates that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Do you think that's something that we should know?

MR. SHELKROT: We will make every effort to find the money to continue those programs.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I appreciate your response, but that was not responsive to the question I asked.

You were here last week --

MR. SHELKROT: Yes, I understand.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: -- we had an extensive discussion about a wide variety of items. You put in your testimony that you have these programs going on, that 46 of them are being supported by the City, seven are being supported privately, leaving us with the impression that there would be 53 programs across the City, that is not true, correct?

MR. SHELKROT: Councilman, I only can say that I understand the concern that the Friends have because there is no guaranteed funding for those programs. I will do

everything I can to find new sources of private money to continue those programs.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mr. Shelkrot, I appreciate your concern about the Friends groups. You were not here with the Friends last week, you were here with us last week?

MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: What I'm trying to convey is if you come to a budget hearing and put testimony on the record that a certain number of programs are being supported, whether they are solely being supported by the City or solely being supported by foundations, you left the record with the impression that going forward there would still be 53 programs. That is now not the case, at least on the City's side, because it is crystal clear from the testimony today that those seven programs are not going to be funded by private sources and you have no new funding, nor, apparently by your own testimony earlier have you sought to include those six in the City funding has been the case in the past.

My question was: don't you think it

would have been appropriate to tell City Council that last week, because you leave us with the impression that we are having programs. The fact of the matter is that unless the list is incorrect and the list only has six, so you can tell me where the seventh one was, Wynnefield, Bushrod, South Philadelphia, West Oak Lane, Haverford Avenue and Wyoming, and I don't know what the seventh one is?

MR. SHELKROT: There is -- George is closed, at this time as you know.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand that, as I well know.

MR. SHELKROT: And I'm not sure whether the --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Would that be the seventh?

MR. SHELKROT: I believe that would be the seventh.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Well, you're not going to have a program in a place that's closed so let's talk about the sixth.

MR. SHELKROT: Right.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: They're still

open, right?

MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Did you make a request this year for funding these programs at these six libraries, is that a part of your FY03 request?

MR. SHELKROT: During the initial discussions on our budget, it was my hope that we would be able to move those six programs into the City's budget. This year is an especially difficult year as we all know in the City operating budget. And this was not a year that those programs -- that additional programs could be moved into City funding. And for that reason it didn't show up in the documents that you have. We are, as I said --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand that, but before the documents get to us my question was: did you make the request? And I'm not sure that I completely understand your perspective that this year is so much more difficult than any other budget year?

MR. SHELKROT: Well, there's a variety of discussions that take place with the

budget office.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand that.

MR. SHELKROT: And initially, it was our proposal that those programs be moved into the City budget, the City operating budget, but it was crystal clear that that could not happen this year.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: What's the cost?

MR. SHELKROT: It's $25,000 to $30,000 per branch program, per LEAP Program. So that would be --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Twenty-five, 150?

MR. SHELKROT: 150.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: So you are saying for $150,000 we're not going to have -- it's called a LEAP Program, right?

MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: For teen employees and afterschool programs for kids for $150,000, six branches are not going to have service, is that your testimony today?

MR. SHELKROT: No, my testimony is

that I will be diligently searching for new private funding for those because the City's budget this year cannot accommodate it.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And that's what you were told?

MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: By the budget office?

MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: That's all I need to know.

Let me just say, Mr. Shelkrot, and I appreciate you giving all the information, if you have a situation where you're providing testimony about programs, please tell us not only about the ones that are going to happen, but also about the ones that may not happen.

I mean you're going to do your job as best you can, you're not alone here in the government. There are a lot of us that actually work here and would like to try to provide some assistance and support, but if we only find out about it at this stage it's that much more difficult. I mean you had a budget call, what,

back in November, December?

MR. SHELKROT: Yes, December.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And so now we're finding out about it in the course of the budget process?

MR. SHELKROT: You are correct, however, I must tell you there are a lot of things on our hopes and desires as we go into a budget process. And we understand that there are limits to the City's funding ability.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I understand that. We all have our various hopes and desires and dreams and aspirations. One day I'm hoping my hair is going to come back, but it's probably not going to happen.

I mean, far be it for me to spend much time quoting the President of the United States, we don't agree on very much, but I cannot be involved in a situation where we will literally leave some children behind.

I mean, who gets to make the decision about whether 46 get it and six don't? I mean, are the children in Wynnefield, or Castor Avenue, or South Broad Street, or

Washington Lane, or Haverford Avenue or East Wyoming Avenue, are they any less deserving of these kinds of services than the other 46 neighborhoods? I mean, who made that decision?

MR. SHELKROT: I assume that's a rhetorical question because -- of course not. They're all deserving.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Then I think we need to figure out a solution to this particular problem.

I'll be glad to work with you, and whether you go to a private route, or the public route, or some combination of the two, you've known me long enough to know that the bottom line on this one is these programs should exist in the other six neighborhoods and they should not be left behind. That's my only issue. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Are there any other questions?

Thank you.

We have a representative on Lead Paint Contamination. I understand there are a

panel of people here. Please come forward.

Good afternoon, we welcome you. Thank you for your patience. Please identify yourself and begin your testimony.

MS. CAMPBELL: Carla Campbell, pediatrician at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

McPHERSON: My name is Sheila McPherson.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We didn't hear you.

MS. McPHERSON: Sheila McPherson.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. McCAULEY: My name is Colleen McCauley from Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Oh, yes, I have your name. They told me Ms. McCauley, you would be here. Thank you.

MS. McCAULEY: I also want to take a moment, there's a woman that's with us today, but because of time constraints isn't able to testify. Ms. Margaret West is over here in the red sweat shirt.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT BLACKWELL: Welcome, Ms. West.

MS. McCAULEY: She's a grandmother and great-grandmother of three children who recently have been lead-poisoned. Again, because of time constraints she is not able to testify --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, again.

MS. McCAULEY: -- but she's here to show her support.

MR. ZACHER: Good afternoon. My name is Jules Zacher I'm a private attorney and represent a lot of children who have been poisoned by lead paint.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. CAMPBELL: Good afternoon, Councilwoman Blackwell and other Councilmembers, I thank the Council for the opportunity to testify in support of a proposed City-wide Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Coalition to request of Council additional funding to make homes of children with lead poisoning lead-safe.

My interest in this issue as the medical director of the Lead Poisoning and Toxicology Clinic at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in West Philadelphia, also as chairperson of the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention. I also serve as a pediatric consultant to the Philadelphia Public Health Department.

In my work with the National Committee I've developed a national perspective on this problem and I've realized that across the country colleagues are joining me in determining ways in which we can effect positive change for children and families impacted by lead poisoning both nationally and here in our home communities.

Lead poisoning is a major environmental health problem of children both nationally and here in Philadelphia. Over the years, research findings have suggested lower and lower blood lead levels at which there is concern for the adverse effects of lead exposure on children's development, ability to learn, and

nervous system function. This can be translated into how well children will function, be able to get an education, support themselves, seek gainful employment and become responsible and contributing members of society when they become adults.

There really is a payoff as a society for preventing this problem. The societal cost of lead exposure due mainly to decreased future productivity have been estimated $37,000 for each child having a blood lead level of ten or higher.

We have made great progress in our ability to detect children with elevated blood lead levels by doing blood tests and finding medicines that can take some of the lead out of their bodies and in following up with these children. However, by the time we detect an elevated blood lead level, damage may already have occurred.

The most difficult part of treating a lead-poisoned children is removing the lead hazards from their home. Therefore, this is as much a housing problem as a medical problem.

Without the de-leading of the child's home environment, the other maneuvers we do are not effective. The child will continue to be exposed to lead and may suffer more damage to the nervous system which is often subtle, sometimes not recognized until long after exposure, and which appears in most cases to be irreversible.

With environmental remediation of the child's home, the recognition of the elevated lead level and any medical treatment needed can be complemented by action that can prevent further harm to the child. This is really the most specific and most important treatment that a lead-poisoned child can receive.

In these situations we doctors may be very tempted to pull out a prescription pad and write a prescription for a lead safe home. And here I have a prescription "please dispense one lead-safe house; the instructions: use for safe daily living."

That's the kind of prescription we would like to give as physicians who are

treating children with lead poisoning to every lead-poisoned child. Unfortunately, it's not the kind of thing I can give to a parent and have them take to the local pharmacy. That would be very easy. And it makes it all the more difficult as we physicians and other medical providers try to treat children with lead poisoning. It just isn't as easy a problem as other medical issues.

Having the environmental remediation done expeditiously may make outpatient treatment of lead poisoning possible and will certainly aid in establishing a safe discharge environment for the child who needs to be admitted to the hospital for treatment. All too often that is hard to accomplish.

Expanded funding for environmental abatement is vital towards improving the environments of many Philadelphia children and would be an efficient use of funds to prevent further damage to these children. Therefore, I do request that we consider, number one, fixing the 1,400 homes that are in the backlog of properties identified with lead hazards and that

are housing lead-poisoned children; number two, that we also need to keep up with the lead hazard reduction work that will be needed each year in new children that are identified with elevated blood lead levels; and finally, if we act to protect pregnant women and newborn babies, we can effectively carry out primary prevention, that of preventing lead exposure from occurring in the first place, which is the wave of the future for lead poisoning prevention. And I must add, much more cost-effective in the long run.

I have seen countless children over the years who would have benefited from expeditious cleanup of their lead-contaminated environments, and many whose blood lead levels did not go down or actually shot up higher due to lack of environmental action. Now is the time to act, to improve our children's environments. If not, there will be more Philadelphia children in the future who may have problems with learning, development, behavior or intelligence due to the lead exposure that really could have been prevented by some simple

action on our part. Let's make the year 2002 the year in which we acted responsibly here in Philadelphia to protect our most cherished treasure for the future, our children.

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, very much.

MS. McPHERSON: Good afternoon, City Council. My name is Sheila McPherson. I'm a mother of a free preschool age children who have been lead poisoned.

Like most moms, I never thought that any of my kids would ever be lead-poisoned. I was about six months' pregnant with my third child when I found out that my two-year-old twins, Sharif and Shiquelle, had high levels of lead.

Sharif's lead level was 36 and Shiquelle's lead level was 44. Both were higher than just a little bit high. I cried and cried at the doctor's office that day. As a mother, I felt responsible for them being sick. I felt like I had let them down. I never thought the house I lived in would have a high amount of

lead in it.

I learned that lead was probably the reason that Sharif and Shiquelle acted uncontrollable. They screamed and hollered and had temper tantrums. They also bruised easily and didn't like anyone to touch them. They also had problems listening. They just looked at you as though they did not understand what you were saying to them.

While I was dealing with my twins, I learned that lead could also harm and hurt my unborn son and cause him to be born early and small. Makel did come three weeks early and weighed only four pounds and eight ounces. He weighed less than what my twins weighed when they were born. I had Makel tested for lead at six months old, which is earlier than children are usually tested. His first test was 22 and high enough to have the City come out and inspect my home for lead again.

I had to move four times in the last two years because the houses I lived in were infested with lead. Because I couldn't find a safe home for my kids, I am now living with a

family member. But the City recently tested this house and told me that it was also poisoned. In January, they came out to the house to do a "super-clean" to clean the walls and pick up the lead dust. They said that the house needed to be repainted, but then they said it might not really be worth spending $2,000 to have it pained because there were bigger problems with the house that would make more lead dust and that could harm and hurt my children and make them sicker.

I really don't have any other place to live. The family member was my last resort. I didn't have a lot of money to go from place to place. It's been hard for me to keep a job while I take care of my kids and their special needs. I regularly run to the doctor's every three months to have their blood checked for lead. The doctor also wanted to see my children between visits for check-ups. Most recently, my kids' doctors told me that they discovered that Sharif and Shiquelle have poor vision which may be caused from their lead poisoning.

As soon as I found out about the

twins being poisoned, I looked for programs for them. They were first involved with Childlink. But now they are older, they go to services in Elwyn at the elementary school where they go for preschool. Both of the children have speech problems that they get help with.

My two-year-old son, Makel, just started special instructions at Warren E. Smith. A staff member from Childlink also works with him twice a month.

I went through the Yellow Pages looking for help for housing. I found TAG, the Tenant's Action Group and I spoke with Ms. Jackie Dixon who is helping me now to find another place to live.

I want my children to be successful. I want them to learn the best. I want them to be confident and disciplined. I want my children to look up to me when they get older. I want to be able to work and have an income.

People should know that houses poison kids and that parents need to help to make their house safer.

I don't want another parent to have

to go through what I've gone through. My children are dying before they can live.

I am here to ask City Council to do the right thing and help parents like myself get lead paint out of their homes and help kids from ever being poisoned. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, and we are so sorry about all you have gone through. Thank you, thank you for having the courage to come out today, to care enough about other people as well. God bless you.

MS. McCAULEY: Good afternoon. My name is Colleen McCauley. I'm a health associate at Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth working on childhood lead poisoning prevention.

Certainly after listening to Ms. McPherson's experience, it is evident that the City must take the necessary actions to make Philadelphia a safer place for children by reducing the number of kids who are poisoned by lead.

We are here today to ask the City to take three steps to decrease the number of

children poisoned by lead. We want the City to: Number 1, prevent kids from ever being poisoned; Number 2, keep current with completing home hazard reduction work for poisoned children identified every day; and Number 3, wipe out the backlog of the 1,400 homes waiting for hazard reduction work.

Number 1; we want the City to take action to prevent babies from ever being injured by lead by supporting and expanding the home visiting program to pregnant women to identify measures that will protect babies from being poisoned.

Also, developing a separate fund of $1 million out of NTI, to conduct super-cleans and hazard reduction measures when the home-visiting programs identify poisoned homes. With these funds, the City could spare an estimated 800 newborns and their families from the devastating effects of lead poisoning next year.

Number 2; we want the City to keep up with lead hazard reduction work that needs to be completed on the homes of new poisoned

children who are identified every day.

To do this, the City must hire additional work teams to keep up with the demand for work on the approximately 600 new homes identified as containing lead each year. This action will prevent new homes from being added to the backlog as well.

The estimated cost of cleaning the newly identified poisoned houses in the City is $1.5 million, which would be used to hire an additional five work teams.

And Number 3; we want the City to wipe out the backlog.

There are more than 1,400 homes with an estimated 2,100 children living in them on the City's waiting list. The City must commit to wiping out the backlog. Within the next two years, the City must dedicate the funds, energy, and resources to stopping the continued poisoning of children.

$750,000 this Fiscal Year could wipe out half of the homes on the backlog and another $750,000 next year would put an end to the waiting.

It's time to protect the nearly 100,000 zero to five-year-old children at greatest risk in the City.

And it's time because in 2002, we know about the detrimental health and social consequences caused by lead. We know that lead poisoning can cause a reduction in intelligence, shortened attention span, hyperactivity, learning problems, and delinquent behavior.

It's time because we know it's less expensive to take measures to stop lead poisoning from ever occurring instead of treating the condition after it occurs. We can spend about $2,000 to take interim measures to protect one child from lead poisoning or spend about $135,000 to try to help the child get treated after he or she has been damaged.

It's time because we know that many pregnant women live in homes that will be dangerous to their children. Yet, we know how to prevent newborns from being poisoned; reduce lead contaminants in their homes.

It's time because the City has made a strong commitment to revitalize communities

through its Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. NTI can assist hundreds of property owners, rehabilitate old, deteriorated homes many of which contain lead.

It's time because this government has made a significant commitment to the children of Philadelphia. Reducing lead poisoning will dramatically strengthen these efforts and improve children's health and well-being.

Philadelphia can take a giant step and move from being one of the most dangerous cities for children to being one of the safest. We know what needs to be done, we just need to do it.

Philadelphia can be a leader in preventing children from being permanently injured by lead poisoning. Children in the families in the City need your commitment and support to make Philadelphia a safer place for them to grow, to thrive, and to reach their maximum potential.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you this afternoon about this serious

and pressing issue. PCCY and members of the City-wide Childhood Lead Paint Poisoning Prevention Coalition would look forward to working in partnership with City Council to make the City safer for children by taking these three major steps this year.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam President.

I think it's been very clear. I think the hearings we had with the Commissioner here, the history of lead poisoning in the City is one that is tragic because government after government, administration after administration, has known about the problem; has promised to put the personnel and the programs together. And usually other priorities always come into play that take precedence over the children.

Somebody used the word "peripheral" and the children have become peripheral in terms of this. If this was the first time that this problem was being mentioned here, it should be enough to spur us into action. And after all,

we have a budget over $3 billion. And what you're talking about is in essence $2,800,000, to really impact on the problem immediately, instead of the piece meal way and the hand-wringing way that we constantly do every year about this time. $2,800,000 shifted from certain areas of the City budget towards this struggle that we have ongoing, I don't think that's too much money to put into this budget this year.

We look at -- and Councilman Nutter was talking about eliminating six programs and six libraries at a cost of $150,000. That's chump change compared to what we gave Jeff Lurie and the Phillies. So I for one, I think, join some of my colleagues because I'm tired. I've been in this Council now for a long time and I've been talking about it. In fact, the first hearings I ever had in this Council was when I was chairing the Health Committee and it was about lead. And nothing really has changed. I mean administration promised programs and monies, we shifted the monies, they were not used. I think it's time that we do it. I think

it's time that at least this Council take it very seriously and that we really show the commitment because we cannot afford babies, Sharif and your other kids, to go through this thing. If it is preventable, and it is, $2,800,000 buys us preventing other tears from coming from other mothers. And I think this is a serious thing that I'm going to be looking at with my colleagues here to try to begin seeing where that money is in this budget, not just in NTI, but right where we can begin looking at it, that it is spent being.

So I think you have my commitment. I'm looking to see where the money is going to come from, and we'll debate it here on the floor of City Council.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. McPherson, thank you for your commitment to your children and for sharing with

us a small part of your life. Both your testimony, and more importantly your story, I think, helped to better focus us on in this issue.

As Councilman Ortiz said and may have said earlier, I think two weeks ago when the Health Department was in, we had a significant amount of discussions about this particular issue. I'm hoping that before the budget hearings close, I'm quite confident before they close, but even if we could possibly hear something today in terms of an update, many Councilmembers ask for a plan that would in fact take care of the backlog as well as the cases that we know. I think my recollection is that the money we have allocated for the upcoming year, I think will only deal with 100 of the 600 homes that will become a danger to children next year that we know of. And a lot of the discussion was around, if we already know that 500 more houses are going to add to the backlog, how do you ever get to the backlog if you just keep adding to it. I mean it's a cyclical, almost kind of madness that we often go through

here in the government.

I have the full confidence that Managing Director Richman and Health Commissioner Domzalski and others, will come up with a proposal that not only makes sense, but gets the results that we need to have happen.

The one question that I wanted to ask you was, I know from reading the testimony you're working now with TAG, and do I understand that you are in the process of moving?

MS. McPHERSON: No, it's not official yet, but we're on it with Ms. Jackson Dixon. Ms. Jackie Dixon, I'm sorry. I mean it's not for sure yet.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I understand.

And also, as your testimony that the place where you are now had been inspected, but even if the dollars were spent for the $2,000 clean, I know --

MS. McPHERSON: There's other stuff that's added on --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Many other things that are wrong with the property?

MS. McPHERSON: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: One, I certainly hope that you're able to find or nail down the place where you're trying to get; and two, obviously, to the extent that any preinspection could take place, to make sure that it also will not contribute to the problem with your kids would only make sense. And I'm sure that any of us who can be helpful in that, we'll do our best to help you out. And again, I do appreciate your --

MS. McPHERSON: I appreciate it too.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: -- testimony and your commitment to your children.

Let me just ask you one question. On Page 2 of the testimony you talk about -- it say's "it's time because we know that many pregnant women live in homes that will be dangerous to their children. Yet, we know how to prevent newborns from being poisoned, reduce lead contaminants in their homes," which naturally, is obvious.

What I wanted to ask you was the surveys that get done that the City does, I'm left with the impression that they come as a

result of -- Commissioner Domzalski took us through the process, maybe a child gets seen by their care provider, or a test is taken, then obviously, they have lead and we now know that that place is a problem. What I take from this portion of your testimony though is there needs to be a way to prevent the newborn, not wait until there's been -- I don't want to call it an infection, but a poisoning, and then find out and then try to treat it. So my question back to you I guess is: has either PCCY or anyone else given some thought to -- I mean is there some kind of either an early warning system, because I mean obviously, we don't know when someone is going to get pregnant. I mean generally, that's a pretty private matter, and that can happen at any time. And then the next thing you know you have this other situation in your house. I mean, do we need to at least talk about or think about some form of a city-wide assessment or some kind of lead certification?

We had some of this discussion a couple weeks ago with the house commissioner, which is really not their line of work, but in a

real estate transaction, for instance, we talked about whether or not, as a part of that sales transaction, some inspection and certification has to be provided as to what the condition of that property is. Again, that doesn't necessarily solve the problem if there's not a transaction, but I'm just trying to get to how do we, up front, prevent more and more of these situations from happening, whether someone in the household is getting pregnant or not, because you never know when that house is subsequently going to be sold to someone who -- maybe the pregnancy started in one place and they moved to another place and the baby comes home to a totally different place that they don't know what the circumstance or situation is. Do you have any thoughts about that?

MS. McCAULEY: Actually, I have some exciting news to report. And I know that Dr. Campbell wanted to respond as well. To start with, the dollars -- the funding that we are asking for is to expand something that already exists which is very exciting. We think that it's unique in fact to Philadelphia. The

Health Department is working with its home visiting programs, specifically Healthy Start and the Family Nurse Partnership. These are two prenatal home visiting programs. Healthy Start has been running for years. In the fall the home visitors were trained by the Health Department to test the homes of pregnant women for dangerous levels of lead. So it's after conception, but it's before the child gets into the home. So it's one way we can intervene preventatively.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Just walk me through the rest of that. Let's say the parent is in the second or third month, the home health person comes providing whatever service, they test the house, you're three months into a pregnancy and you find out that your house has lead poisoning, what are you going to do then?

MS. McCAULEY: Again, this is a very exciting pilot project and it's in its pilot stage, essentially since we just started in November, but at this point --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: It's in the conceptual stage?

MS. McCAULEY: Right. At this time the Health Department is following up at every home. They're sending their inspectors to every home that has tested as having dangerous levels of lead in the home. They're sending their staff in to do a more thorough assessment. And in fact, they have currently -- there are somewhere around 40 homes that have been tested by home visitors and about 10 percent of those homes inspectors have had the opportunity to get into, and those houses have in fact received -- have begun to receive super-cleans.

So again, the City -- the idea is that the City will treat them as they treat the homes of children who already are poisoned, but in fact, as I've stated, they don't have the capacity to add this new -- to do this on a larger scale. But it's a great idea.

MS. CAMPBELL: And I'd like to just respond as well, Councilman. I'm glad you asked the question. It's a great question: how do you prevent this problem from happening in the first place? And to date, really, the U.S. Public Health Service, most health departments, have

really looked at the problem from a secondary prevention standpoint. So we go in, we check the children's lead levels, age one, age two, et cetera, and by that time we're basically screening for a problem. We're not screening for the potential for exposure, we're trying to indicate children that have already been damaged to some extent.

There is now a focus in the country, it's growing slowly. This national committee that I made reference to is developing a document that we hope will be quite useful for cities like Philadelphia and cities all over the country to really move toward what we call "primary prevention." That is really looking at the housing, screening the housing, surveying the housing, looking for dangerous lead, hazardous housing, and doing something about it before you get a family, a child, family after family moving in. And I would be delighted as that work develops, in conjunction with the Center for Disease Control and HUD, be delighted to really look and make a study further about how Philadelphia can really even move further

along that reasoning. Because I think it's really vital for this City and many others, but we're here in the City and we have to deal with what's going on here. So thank you for your question.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I'm glad you're here. I guess my last comment on this is that in a more adult environment, work places, offices, other buildings, I mean virtually anywhere where adults are, and I'm sure even school age children -- I mean if someone says that there was -- if you find out that there's asbestos in a building, I mean the area is cordoned off, you have people running around in all kinds of suits and helmets. I mean you can't go in there, you are evacuated or a whole host of other substances. But somehow lead seems to not be that big a thing.

I mean part of this, I'm sure, is a big public education campaign, but I mean you really should not be able to either transact business or transfer a known health danger which is that building, that property. As lovely as the home may be, and people fall in love with

real estate all the time, it's wonderful, but if you just keep passing it on and passing it on and passing it on without someone stepping in and saying: Wait a minute, you wouldn't be able to do this with a whole host of other known toxic dangerous substances, why are you allowed to do it with lead, and in many instances with children around?

So I think that -- I mean we are going to have to be a lot tougher about it. There may be financial considerations for a whole host of people that are involved in it who are transacting property. But as you said, the cost in the back end, I mean, so far outweighs whatever you have to do up front that it really doesn't make much sense. But please keep up the good work. We are hoping that as you've shared good information and good news with us, that hopefully before the end of this Fiscal Year leading into next we will be able to share some good information with you.

MS. CAMPBELL: I just wanted to thank you for your consideration of all our comments.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: You're welcome. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you have written testimony?

MR. SAMPSON: We have some.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We really are running way behind in our time schedule. So I would ask the witnesses to please try to be as concise as possible.

MR. SAMPSON: Will do.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And if you have written testimony we will be more than happy to give it to the stenographer. She will transcribe it in full. And I would ask that you abbreviate. Thank you.

Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. SAMPSON: My name is Maurice Sampson. I am the director of Development for Citizens for Pennsylvania's Future, or PENNFUTURE.

I'm working here in collaboration with Clean Water Fund and the Clean Air Council. I had the opportunity to prepare a document

which was funded by the William Penn Foundation, Citizens for Recycling Collection in Philadelphia. That was done at the request of members of the Citizens Advisory -- I'm sorry, the Philadelphia Recycling Advisory Committee. For purposes of looking into the ideas and approaches for both trash and recycling that the new Streets Commissioner -- actually, I guess he's not new anymore, but the Commissioner, William Johnson, had proposed, to modernize the department and to implement a series of efficiency measures he presented to us that the City would perceive a host of benefits, experience double digit recycling rates.

After just a few brief comments here I wanted to share with you just some of the findings in that report.

Now, Philadelphia's had a recycling policy since the passage by Council in 1987. At the time it was the nations first mandatory recycling act passed by an urban municipality. And despite a lackluster performance, after 14 years recycling in Philadelphia is enormously popular as an expected constituent service.

When you look across the country, recycling has become an American institution, from a few hundred programs in 1970 to more than 9,000, in every state in the nation, more than 139 million Americans participating. In the United States more people recycle than vote. And so popular is recycling in Philadelphia that every Saturday some city residents voluntarily deliver plastic containers, cardboard, materials that aren't collected curb side, to one of the number of city-run partner recycling programs operating two Saturdays per month for just four hours.

Now the sites that I visit in Mount Airy and Chestnut Hill, from the minute they open until they close there's a constant flow of traffic. And these residents are so committed to recycling as much as they can. They're willing to take the time to save and separate and transport materials that could just as easily been put out for trash.

Now during the Second World War, Philadelphians joined other Americans in recycling for their country. Today recycling

allows them to express that same commitment for the environment.

Now recycling has a host of other benefits I think it's important to remember. Of course it saves resources, energy, and because you're not using virgin materials, it has a rather dramatic impact on global warming. The 50 thousand tons that we have recycled in Fiscal Year '99, just over $2 million in reduced disposal fees. Recycling also supports jobs and business. A recent study released by the National Recycling Coalition, and announced with some fanfair by the Department of Environmental Protection, in Pennsylvania there's some 3,200 recycling and re-use establishments, employing just over 81,000 people, with a total annual payroll of nearly $2.9 9 billion. The total annual sales receipts for these industries in Pennsylvania were $18.4 billion. The employment payroll and sales numbers were more than any other state in the union. Specifically, Pennsylvania leads in glass, metals, plastic and rubber industries. In addition, Pennsylvania industries have an indirect effect on the

economy estimated at $1.8 billion and a direct impact on the tax base contributing $305 million.

Now, in Philadelphia one of those companies is Newman Paper Board. They're based on Tacony Avenue, lower Northeast. It's a company that has $200 million in gross receipts a year. The third generation has been making their product from recycled newspaper and office paper since 1917. They employ 200 people there, most of them from Philadelphia. They are also one of PGW's largest customers in terms of natural gas. So this is an item that actually is a strong point for the City. It's also important to know that very little of the newspaper they use at that plant comes from Philadelphia.

Now, despite its popularity and its benefits, recycling is at a very real cross-roads. As I studied the programs that models the kind of things the Commissioner wanted to do here, it really became clear that the cost of providing recycling service is a real issue everywhere.

Now, the Mayors of Washington, D.C. twice have cancelled recycling services, citing costs in the face of budget crisis.

Last year Mayor O'Malley of Baltimore proposed closing that City's budget gap by cancelling the City's recycling program.

In January, Mayor Bloomberg of New York City announced postponement of New York City's program, perhaps, never to return due to the severe budget problems following the September 11th tragedy.

Now at the same time that that's happening, there are other cities, among them are Milwaukee, Los Angeles and Oakland that have figured out not only how to maintain their recycling programs and have them stabilized, but in some cases they've even managed to reduce their waste cost. What's happening in other cities, and really I'm painting a broad picture here for what the Commissioner has been talking to us about, but what they were talking about is making their collection services more efficient. Essentially, doing recycling in solid waste. And I'm not talking about two separate things

here, but looking at this service and modernizing it. Doing what industry has done, treating it like a business, looking at where we can use technology to do more with less.

Now I've published a -- there's a report that was written on this. I'm not going to go into detail on it. It's been passed out to every Councilperson's office. I'm more than willing to come and sit down and talk to anyone about that. But there are several elements in there that I think are concepts that are easy for us to grasp and that sort of underpin what I see happening here in the City. Those two things are automation, and truly integrating recycling and trash as a single service.

Now, automation: if you think about it, the only real change in the way that we collect trash in the City since 1921 is that instead of a horse and buggy we have a truck. The men are still doing exactly like the horse and buggy did: they're picking up and they're tossing that material into a container. We have to end -- we have to come to an end of manual collection. We can look at it as a work or

safety issue. The length of a waste collector's career is really based on how long his body holds out. And the amount of injuries that people have, it was common across the country, in terms of arms and shoulders it's very high. And the idea of automating and providing a container that the truck can lift and empty it does a whole lot of things.

First of all, with the truck that lifts it, you can lift a whole lot more. Right now we have a limit of 50 pounds per container, you can put out five containers. So figure those that are following the letter of the regulation, means that the worker goes five times back and forth to that truck. Well now you roll the container out once, put it on the truck and empty it. Right away you can see the efficiencies of time and motion -- when it's done properly. You determine just how much waste we put out on average, what the resident puts out is what fits in that can. So that the lid on that can means that instead of our very unsightly trash in the City -- and I really recommend when you're visiting another city,

find out their trash day and just drive around and look, because we're so used to the way Philadelphia looks that we don't see this, but with the bags and the containers and four or five different kinds of stuff blowing up and down the street, with a container with a lid, when you look down the street -- and if you looked at any of the pilot areas that we did during the dual collection, they were like soldiers straight down in a row. Not a single piece of paper on the ground, because everything is in the container. It makes sense. You're talking about larger set-outs; we're talking about a cleaner looking City.

Now the idea of integrating, the other concept, you're talking about looking at trash recycling as one operation. When we talk about the cost of trash in this room -- and I've come for seven years and we debate about how much per ton that it costs. You know, when you buy a loaf of bread you don't price it based on the pound, not the weight of the flour to make the bread, we buy it based on what it cost per loaf of bread. It would be really interesting

for us to start to explore the cost per resident to deliver services and ask what are we getting for our money. I think, if we start to look at it that way, it changes the whole spectrum of how we talk about what are we getting at the door of every household, what are we paying.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry, I find your testimony extremely interesting, but I did indicate very early on that each witness would have five minutes. You are well over 12, so if you can conclude your testimony --

MR. SAMPSON: I can do that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: -- testimony I would appreciate it.

And I know the Street's Commissioner is in the audience. He is very, very eager to do something very positive. And I think that if you were -- I don't know if you've had the opportunity to sit down and talk to him about some of your ideas. If you haven't, I would suggest you do so, because as I said, he's very eager to go forward with a recycling program.

MR. SAMSPON: Give me just a minute to say this: I'm a fan of the Commissioner. It

isn't so much of my caring, my ideas with him, I'm learning from the Commissioner about how this is done. I believe that where we are right now is that it's important, while we have someone as talented as the Commissioner, to make sure that he gets the kind of support that he needs. There's not a lot of money in this system. I mean, quite frankly, after the last presentation there's no money in the system. But what this Commissioner talked about was if he has a budget that's fixed and he has time he can make this transformation it will just take longer.

If there's one thing that I would ask for City Council to look for is to see that the Streets Commissioner gets a budget that stays the same so that he can make his plans and we can see what the fruits of those things are. This is a very exciting time as far as I'm concerned. I've been pushing and playing this for 15 years. I really feel there's an opportunity to see this happen, but we all have to play different roles, and for my part and from my friends who are from the other activist

organizations, it's really time for us to start talking to the people in the City about what it is we all need to be doing in order to see this happen because we have a role and a responsibility. So I'll stop with that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much. Our next witness.

Please identify yourself for the record.

MS. COHEN: Good afternoon. I'm Laura Cohen and I'm a Policy Analyst from Clean Air Council. I also am co-coordinator with the Recycling Alliance of Philadelphia. And I will be brief.

I just wanted to say that Clean Air Council does welcome the efforts by the new Streets Commissioner, Johnson, and recycling coordinator, Robinson, to improve recycling in Philadelphia, but we do want to express concern over their use of an advertising campaign to get the message out about the recycling in Philadelphia.

We are worried that it's going to be viewed as a kind of magic bullet to improve

everything that is wrong with recycling in Philadelphia. What we need is improved services here. We need, as we stated earlier, weekly collection of recyclables on the curb side on trash day. We need enforcement of commercial recycling regulations and recycling in municipal buildings and we need a strong neighborhood based educational program. I lived in my house now in Bella Vista for over a year and have never received anything from the City on how to recycle.

Recycling keeps waste off of our City streets, it keeps them out of the landfills that are changing the landscape of Pennsylvania, and it keeps waste out of incinerator that are threatening the health of low income communities that so often have to deal with incinerators. So I would encourage City Council to keep the Streets Commissioner and the recycling coordinator, keep their feet to the fire and make sure that they are completing what they promised. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MS. KRALL: My name Julia Krall.

I'm a program organizer with Clean Water Action, and I echo all the sentiments made here this afternoon about recycling.

I'd like to thank the City Councilmembers that earlier made remarks in support of recycling. Obviously, as you can see from my written testimony we have a lot of the same concerns. I'd like to respond to one of the comments that the Commissioner made.

We can't wait until recycling is cost effective to make it easy for people to participate. What's going to make it cost effective is participation by people, so we want it to be easy. Weekly, same day as your trash day is the best way to go. The Streets Department and Recycling Office have done studies that show that. So it's a fact, it's not something that anybody is disputing, so we just have to move forward with that.

The one point that I would like to make in front of City Council this afternoon, is that we need to keep the pressure on the Streets Department to move forward. They have a lot of innovative ideas and they've set forth a

strategic plan, which I do believe you all received last week or two weeks ago when they were before City Council. I would really encourage City Council to request a presentation by the Streets Department about the strategic plan. There's a lot of really good information in here, there are a lot of really good goals and ideas, but unfortunately, the history of the Streets Department has been, we'll set a strategic plan and we'll set these goals and then they will never be attained. And right now they are already falling back on time lines that they've set for themselves. So we would like to keep and encourage City Council to hold the Streets Department and the Recycling Office accountable to the plans that they've made. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

I would say that it's a new day and I think that the Streets Commissioner as I said earlier, is very, very serious about the recycling plan. And I'm certain that next year this time -- Commissioner, we're looking at you, hopefully. As I said, it's a disgrace that at

this point in time I think we're recycling only 6 percent of our trash. That has to be improved immensely. And I know that hopefully next year this time we'll be here saying: well, we're collecting 25 or 35 percent.

MS. KRAL: That's wonderful.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Let's try to get it up to 50. But I have full confidence in the Commissioner and I know he is going to do a great job. Thank you so much.

The next witness.

MR. McPHERSON: Peg Robb.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is Peg Robb here?

MR. McPHERSON: Yes. And then next will be the Friends of the Dell East.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are the Friends of the Dell East here, if you would just raise your hand?

Friends of the Dell East?

Who would be next, Mr. McPherson?

MR. McPHERSON: After that would be Angie Logan, Childcare Matters and Paula Jackson.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are they here?

MR. McPHERSON: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Why don't you take a seat up front here.

Good afternoon, please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. ROBB: My name is Peg Robb. I just want to say that I've been here since 1:00 and I think this is one of the most edifying afternoons I've spent anywhere. And it just turned out that all the favorite things that I like, the Free Library and recycling and the park came up. And I also want to thank the Councilmembers for their concern for the City. Having said that, I'm going to make some observations.

The first one is who would work in conditions that I observed in my 12 years as a volunteer at the 6th Police District at 11th and Winter Streets. The conditions that I've noticed are, there's a tiny room with one window and there are six police officers at desks with

computers. One year they didn't have any air-conditioning, however, somebody from the City came and painted the sky-light above them in this room with six people at the desk with computers, and painted it black so that they would not get the intensity of the summer sun. In this room there's no privacy, and when one officer gets a cold it just goes around the room. The officers eat at their desks and when the officers that are outside working on the streets, when they come in and have their lunch they sit in a main room that has three desks lined up at something similar to this and that's where they eat their lunch. The officer's lockers are in the basement. The basement floods during rain storms.

Another thing I've noticed in these 12 years is that there's a lack of support from other agencies. I guess the first one would be, for several weeks there were three desks that the officers who are off-duty eat at. Well, they were taken up with used computers and used typewriters. And somebody from the City was supposed to come in and take them out to repair.

It was just several weeks this mess was there. One time it was around Christmas and I had a client, my volunteer work is connected with Youth Aid Panel, we deal with first offenders under 18-years-old, and I was trying to get a certificate to this youngster so that he could fill it in and return it to me. The officer in charge of my program said, I sent it out to be mailed. I said, Out to be mailed? Why not from here? She said, No, we send everything to the Round House. So I called the Round House and I spoke to the gentleman in charge. He said, No mail is going out from any of the police districts. I said, Why not? He said, Because we don't have any money for the meter. We will get money after the first of the year.

Now I just think that was -- I thought that was incredible.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How long ago was this?

MS. ROBB: I would say -- I can probably document it closer. I have an officer that I'm working with now. It's probably about six or seven years.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh.

MS. ROBB: Yes. See, I've been there for 12 years.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: God bless you. I think that's wonderful that you would volunteer your time like that. I think that's marvelous. We applaud you for that.

MS. ROBB: Thank you. It goes on all around the City. You know, there are about 25 stations that have people. I have six people that work on the committee that I'm on.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That's wonderful.

MS. ROBB: And I only go once a month now, the others go twice.

Then the last thing was that one time -- okay, in this 6th police district, the panel, we've come up with a survey that we want to send to our clients after they've completed their contract successfully, assessing the way they thought they were treated in the three months with the monitor and the interview and the work assignment that they had. So I ask the officer in charge would she send the letter out,

so I suggested that perhaps she put an envelope with a return stamp, because perhaps the client, which are youngsters under 18, would return the survey. And she said, Well, you know, I'll have to pay for -- this is the officer -- I'll have to pay for the envelope and the stamps. They don't give those envelops and stamps to us. Then we go and we sit at a table like this and we have chairs. They are the dirtiest and filthiest upholstered chairs I've ever laid my eyes on. They're rickety. Some of the chairs -- I mean, for example, the arm chairs are comfortable, but dirty. But then we have rickety wooden chairs. If you don't have a backache when you come in you have one when you've left.

I'm going to make a couple of suggestions: I'd like to see the officers that have protected me, my family and our home since 1971 have just a pleasant environment to work in as some of the Councilmen's offices that I've gone to. Or I had the mishap of going to the Water Bureau Office by mistake one time, it's just paradise there. I can't see how people who

are doing what our officers are doing live like that. I'd like to suggest not only in the 6th police district, but other offices, district offices, that the officers can have a room where they can go and relax; that they can sit and talk about the Phillies, they can eat their lunch in peace. Maybe there would be a microwave oven that they could heat up soup. And then do away with some of those machines that I see there, Cokes and peanuts and candy.

And then finally, I looked up in my book about the word "respect," and I think we really have to respect these people. Respect says, "to hold in high regard, to feel or show honor or esteem for." So often I've seen in the newspaper when an officer dies and a widow is weeping and the little children are holding onto the mother's skirt, I see some political person there, and I'm thinking if I were that widow, and I knew how my husband lived and worked, I just couldn't even bear to be with that.

That's all I have to say. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you

so much for coming in. I know that Councilman Rizzo has had his light on. If you don't mind waiting, I think the Councilman wants to be recognized.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Ms. Robb, the President of the United States was here last week and he suggested to all Americans volunteer for 1,000 hours over their lifetime. Sounds like you're going to double and triple the President's request.

MS. ROBB: Thank you very much.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: But, Madam Chair, I know we're running late, but it's interesting you bring this up. Last week I brought the same issue on the condition of our police facilities and it was explained when there's a capital project that there's new furniture. But, Madam President, I think that really this Council needs to do something because this is not just a lone voice. I'm hearing it from police commanders. Captains move in and out, they don't have an opportunity to really deal with

some of the issues, before they get their feet on the ground, they're moved on.

From what I understand -- and you heard Public Property say that the Police Department handles their own maintenance -- from what I'm hearing, and I try to visit as many police stations that I can, that they're dirty, that the chairs are in the condition that were described, that in many cases don't have chairs.

I don't know what this Council can do, but I would think that we need a really independent look at our public buildings, where I guess second to some of our Council offices, the work environment in the police stations is not the best. I say that in gest; the President knows what I'm referring to. We really need to figure out how to approach the police stations. And again, the majority of the people that go there aren't really looking for clean chairs and -- I'm talking about the prisoners taken there. Then there are folks like us that go and expect to see a little bit better environment. And I don't know how to approach this. The Police Department is on their own island. When it

comes to this, they claim they take care of their facilities. If they need a chair they have to ask, but I understand that those requests fall on deaf ears.

So, President Verna, I don't know what we can do to be helpful, but I think something has to be done, and I don't know the process to approach so maybe you can help me with that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We will discuss it before we vote on the budget, hopefully.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: That would be great.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much, Ms. Robb.

MS. ROBB: Thank you. Good night.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon. Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. LOGAN: Hi, yes. My name is Angie Logan.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Angie Logan and I'm the Assistant Child Care Director for Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth, the advocacy partner for the Child Care Matters Childhood Initiative. I am here today to urge your continued support for the City's Child Care Health and Safety Fund.

The Health and Safety Fund provides small grants to child care programs, to help them meet fire safety codes, improve playground safety and make accommodations to serve children with special needs. More than 5,000 of Philadelphia's children have benefited from this program.

Child care programs often lack resources to make even minor improvements to address basic health and safety standards. They rely on parent fees to operate, and more often than not, undercharge for these services. The choice often becomes delaying needed repairs or increasing costs to parents. The Fund is critical for helping resource-poor programs meet quality health and safety standards. Without

this fund, programs would have delayed making basic improvements to protect children's safety.

More than 44,000 Philadelphia children are in child care programs every day. The Health and Safety Fund is a cost effective way to ensure that these children are not at risk of injury or disease.

There have been many issues addressed by the Health and Safety Grant Program concerning the health and safety of children in day care. In my testimony, if you follow along, you will find photos of some of the stories I will tell you.

In Philadelphia, there are three departments whose job it is to inspect, regulate and watch over child care programs. The City Department of Health and the City Department of Licenses and Inspections and the State Department of Public Welfare. The City of Philadelphia has more stringent regulations than is found throughout the rest of the state. We are proud of the City's lead in ensuring children are safe while their parents are at work. However, programs need help to comply

with these often expensive city codes.

In every section of the city there are child care programs in such disrepair that they are borderline dangerous for children. On a visit to a West Philadelphia Child Care Center, a licensing representative was looking at their fire escape and he remarked to the child care provider, "That's dangerous, I wouldn't step on that". The provider did not receive a violation for this since she wasn't officially being inspected. In the event of a fire where the primary escape route was not an option, this fire escape would be the only option for children which could be potentially dangerous for them. The Health and Safety Fund will provide $8,000 to repair this fire escape. The $8,000 in this case actually covers the costs for replacing the fire escape. In most cases, however, the grant covers only a small portion. Grants are only $1,000 for family day care homes, $2,000 for groups and $5,000 for child care centers. Bigger programs can receive an additional $5,000 grant if they are using the funds for fire detection systems. In most

cases, however, the Health and Safety Fund does not cover the full costs of purchases or repairs. Child care providers often raise outstanding funds by soliciting donations, fund-raisers or bake sales.

Fire detection systems are a high priority when it comes to the children's safety in child care. For this reason, fire safety items are priority one in funding decisions. In this photo you can see an updated fire alarm system. This system can cost anywhere from $2,500 to $20,000 depending on the size and space of the programs and the sophistication of the detection system. Grants have also covered the costs of fire extinguishers, carbon monoxide and fire detectors, fire safety doors. Many items that neither you or I have in our own homes, but items that ensure that children are safe in the event of a fire.

Health standards such as an air filtration system for asthmatic children, accessible areas for staff and children to wash their hands, and proper food and storage facilities, are also addressed by this fund. If

you look at the pictures on the next page you will see a broken down toilet, a dingy sink, and an adult size urinal. These bathroom facilities are unacceptable and a health risk for children. This particular program was cited by the City's Health Department and received priority funding to fix the $2,500 broken toilets and sinks. When repairs are made, the Eastern Frankford Program will receive an additional $2,500 and some of its own funds to make this bathroom accessible for children with special needs.

Assuring this safety for our youngest children is one of the reasons why child care programs are inspected by City agencies. Many grants have been issued to programs to ensure safe environments so children can learn. Philadelphia has some of the oldest housing stock in the country. The Health and Safety Fund strives to make space appropriate for kids. Sometimes it means installing sturdy steps, radiator covers, a solid wall, a banister so children don't fall, a fire door, and in some facilities complete renovation is needed. In these photos you will see provider repaired

steps, installed radiator covers and added a banister for the children.

The photos on the next page show a child care center that received a violation because these steps were cracked with holes and has asbestos tiling. These steps are in such disrepair a child could easily be injured.

Indoor and outdoor safety surfaces are imperative in reducing injuries to our young children. Nationally, every two and a half minutes a child is injured on unsafe playground equipment. A National study on injuries and child care programs found that 87 percent of injuries in child care programs occurred because of unsafe playground equipment. Safe playground surfacing, however, is expensive and can cost anywhere from $4,000 to $17,000 depending on the size.

Child care programs have used Health and Safety grants to help pay for fencing outdoor space, fearing animals roaming the neighborhoods or fast moving cars on busy streets. Fencing outdoor space allows child care programs to safely let children play

outdoors, and the Department of Public Welfare regulations do mandate that children spend at least some time outdoors every day, weather permitting. As you can see from the photo on the next page, this program choose an aesthetically attractive fence so as not to stand out in their neighborhood.

I hesitate to think what these programs would have done without funding. These photos and stories illustrate how important this fund is in preventing injuries and protecting children. The Health and Safety Fund is a small grant program contracted out by the Child Care Resource Developers. Last year the program had $300,000 to spend. Applications came from every Councilmanic District in the City. In two years 204 programs received grants, now more than 5,000 children are in safer programs. Unfortunately, 61 percent of eligible applications were turned down. In every district more grants were declined than funded because money ran out. Currently, 289 applications requesting $834,000 were received, but there is only $176,000 available. 78

percent of the amount requested will not be funded in the grant cycle.

The Mayor and City Council have made children's issues a priority for the City. We ask that you invest $300,000, a small amount that goes a long way. Most child care programs serve the very youngest children, children who cannot be relied on to stay away from the dangers of exposed wires, faulty stairwells, dangerous playground equipment, burning hot radiators, busy streets, or numerous other potential health hazards. They rely on us and so do their parents. Investing $300,000 is not a lot to ask for when it comes to preventing injuries and making programs safer for our youngest children. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions?

Thank you.

Is Paula Jackson with you?

MS. LOGAN: She had to leave.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Did she leave her testimony?

MS. LOGAN: No, but I can provide it for you tomorrow.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That's fine. Thank you.

MR. McPHERSON: The next witness is Fred Maurer.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening, sir.

MR. MAURER: Good evening. My name is Fred Maurer. I'm going to make it very short. I have heard testimony and I'd rather give it to you and let the clerk enter it into the minutes and I'll distribute copies to several of the Councilmen that will have an opportunity --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is that for the stenographer?

MR. MAURER: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please proceed.

MR. MAURER: First, I want to thank Mayor Street for vetoing Bill 629. It gives me the privilege now to speak before City Council as a taxpayer, that's who I'm representing today

a taxpayer. My testimony is basically from a taxpayer's standpoint of view. I'll make it very short.

I attended the Friends of Philadelphia Parks conference when they talked about the conditions of parks, and I read Peter Harnik's book and I made my own policy declaration of how we should handle it. Every one is talking about strategic programming. The strategic program we have really was created by Fairmount Park in 1983 as a master plan. That 1983 plan is still relevant. The only problem with it, the section on funding was never addressed and we are paying for it by taxpayer volunteers. We pay $4.5 million of volunteer work to make the park. That means our park is unfunded by $4.5 million at least. There are ways we can solve our problem and I have outlined a strategic outline in it. I do not have a budget for it, but I have identified things that can create income for the park or at least divert park money. We need what's called dedicated funding, but for me I call it irrational tax policy. Our City must have a

rational tax policy to fund all parks. In my written testimony, I've outlined the needs and the opportunities that are there. Principally, I say that the City Planning Commission operates many facilities including Vet Stadium. Let's make these facilities work toward paying for our parks. We need a rational tax policy that funds all recreation, that includes Camp William Penn and things like the Atwater Kent Museum, all those things are taxable things. All we need to do is have our City adopt a rational policy where we no longer have to talk about funding. We change our system from a system of programming where we probably budgeted according to the programs -- Fairmount Park is a program. But we don't have that system, we have a mixed system now and we have to change the system into a rational tax policy. And I would recommend City Council consider my opportunity to speak here before you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I thank you so much for your patience, your interest in our City and we appreciate your testifying. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Maurer.

The next witness is --

MR. McPHERSON: The next group of witnesses are Mike McCrea, Feltonville Recreation Advisory Council; Jim Helman, Vare Recreation Center Advisory Council; Joyce Martinez, Rivera Recreation Center.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Ms. Martinez, are you going to speak first?

MS. MARTINEZ: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. MARTINEZ: Joyce Martinez, Rivera Recreation Center, 5th and Allegheny volunteer.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak here today and I just have a question for you. How many members of the Council are supposed to be here on the Committee?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Many of them are in their offices listening to the testimony.

MS. MARTINEZ: Okay. Hello to those in the offices listening to this testimony. I would just like to say we are focused on our children. The Mayor has made a big opportunity, the child of the year program, there's a lot of things going on for children, different organizations receiving funds for children. So much is going on for our children, but our children are still suffering in Philadelphia. I would like to say on behalf of the Department of Recreation, we shouldn't have to come here and beg for money every year because we should be number one priority because the recreation centers are the safe-haven. I've been a volunteer in Philadelphia since 1965, a member of Councilman Ortiz's organization he organized in the '60s, Citizens in Action. I'm a young member of the recreation centers. I grew up in recreation centers so I know what they have to offer, what they can offer and what they need to offer. Number 1, our country is in a trauma time now. We're at war. And our recreation centers are not only for the youth and for children for recreation facilities, they're for

the safety of the people in our communities in time of tragedy. Our centers need to be well-kept, they need to be ready for people in the fact of fires and they have to come in. They have to sleep there in case of something happening like in New York happens in Philadelphia, which we hope it don't. Our centers need to be available to take in mass groups of people and they need to have proper water, proper plumbing, proper heat and whatever else is needed. Our facility grounds need to be safe for our children to play on the activity swings and things that they have in our area for them. And we know it's a problem with the pools, therefore, those that can't afford to have pools at this time, we need to have sprinklers placed in those centers on the ground so that the children will be able to cool off when the drought trauma passes over. And the budget is not much for what we offer.

As they were speaking on the lead we have those lead kids. Those kids have grown up into adults and they have given children -- passed on the lead, and the lead continues to

pass on through the brains of these kids. So basically, I'm not going to sugar coat it. We have a lot of nuts out here and these kids are becoming very violent. They don't hesitate to hurt anyone at any age, at any cost, and the recreation center is getting a lot of these kids coming in. We don't know what type of problems they have, but we offer services to them. And a lot of staff at the recreation centers are volunteers. And the volunteers need to be recognized. And the budget that they ask you for programs need to be set up in that budget for volunteers to help volunteers work better with the staff. And the children that we help to be able to work more in conjunction with Department of Human Services to understand and to help these problem children that we have.

That's all I'd like to say at this time. Thank you, and I hope -- actually, I'm not going to ask for the money, I demand that we do receive the money that we need because we do need it. Our priority of recreation should come first. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MR. HELMAN: I'm treasurer for the Vare Recreation Center Advisory Council.

I'm here today to testify for funding for the Department of Recreation. There are many areas that I could testify about. There's a number and variety of programs the department makes available to our community. These include sports programs, drama after-school, summer camps, gymnastics and tumbling, art, and many others. I could testify about how the department is struggling to continue their services and staffing in the area of maintenance. I could mention mandatory random drug testing or child abuse background investigations for volunteers. I could mention the more than 80 swimming pools the department operates during the hot summer months. I could talk about the Street Administration's plundering of the department's budget in the last two Fiscal Years and the impact that has had. I could mention the $22 million the Department of Human Services is getting next Fiscal Year for after-school programs, while the Department of Recreation gets no increase for

the 140 sites where they have been sponsoring after-school programs for years. I could recite a litany of facts and figures and statistics and enrollments. Any one of several of these areas would make compelling testimony, but I'm going to leave all of those subjects for others. I want to testify about something that doesn't get talked about often enough. I want to testify about how the Department of Recreation and the services it provides directly affects the lives in children and youth. I want to testify about what I call the "street value" of recreation. For example, I am reminded of one Grays Ferry youth whose life was headed in the wrong direction. His home life was much less than desirable. There were drugs and alcohol and whispers of past abuses that are too sordid to discuss in a public forum. Not surprisingly, this youth became truant and had run-ins with the police. Many in the community thought the youth was headed for the crimes statistics. One Christmas the only gift this youth received from his family was a paperback copy of a Harry Potter novel. One of our local recreation

professionals was so put out by this that he discussed it with his own children and they agreed to give the youth a gift certificate that they themselves had received for Christmas. The youth I speak of was so touched by this that he began spending more and more time at one of our local facilities. It was at that facility that he was exposed the quality adult influence and lessons about life that were not available at home. His school attendance improved dramatically. He enrolled in a drams program and appeared in four plays. His run-ins with the police slowed and then stopped. His marks improved, he moved away from his family and now lives with an aunt. He has made our recreation facility his home away from home. He enjoys helping to clean and run errands and doing whatever else needs to be done. He hopes to enroll in a lifeguard course and become a lifeguard on his 16th birthday.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is that the young man?

MR. HELMAN: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

Congratulations.

MR. HELMAN: I am reminded of another Grays Ferry youth whose life outside of school revolved around dance. This youth joined a fledgling dance group made up of other neighborhood youth. The group had a problem, there was nowhere for them to practice. The group went from house-to-house, but there was no permanence, there was no sense of direction. The youth became disgusted and so depressed that at one point, he mentioned to a teacher the thought of suicide. The Outreach Program intervened and solved the problem. The Outreach Program made the high school auditorium, with its full size stage, available to the dance group. The Outreach Program is sponsored by the Department of Recreation. Now each weekday night during the school year the dance group meets there, does homework, talks about issues that concern its members and practices and rehearses their routines. The group has gone on to win numerous city-wide and state-wide awards and performed at the United Nation's Founder's Day Ceremony. Today the youth I speak of is

happy and adjusted. He has developed his dance talents into the area of choreography and he is planning a career in the arts.

I could sit here for the next hour or more and tell you examples of the "street value" of recreation. I'm sure representatives from other communities could do the same. You know, there always seems to be so may examples to tell and so little time in which to tell them.

Now you won't read about these examples and others like them in the Mayor's five year plan. These examples won't be reflected as a line item in some budget and they won't even be included in some department report. And even if they were included, how exactly would the writer describe the impact of recreation on the life of those youths.

I will admit that these examples are not nearly as exciting as putting together a multimillion dollar funding package for new stadiums. These examples aren't as intriguing as political maneuvering to control neighborhood transformation funds. These examples will never

generate the avalanche of publicity that school reform will generate. But let's not make any mistake about it, failure to understand and appreciate the "street value" of recreation will risk the welfare and safety and future of many of our communities and our City.

Last December the Street Administration asked the department to submit a budget with yet another two and a half percent cut totaling some $500,000.

The budget department actually submitted, not only did not include that two and a half percent cut, but asked for $1.5 million more. This figure was described as the minimum amount the department needed to continue basic services.

We as citizens and you as the people's representatives, have a responsibility to see to it that the Department of Recreation is properly funded, so that the department can continue its efforts in scope and in practice.

When determining what is proper funding, it is important that we do not allow ourselves to be trapped in a mud-slide of real

and abstract funding figures. It is equally important that we do not become constrained by fancy business related phrases and philosophies that have little relevance at the street level.

Should City Council decide to provide the funding originally requested by the department, a loud and clear signal will be sent that Council does understand and appreciate the "street value" of recreation, even if the Street Administration does not. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

MR. McCREA: Thank you, Council President Verna. I'll try to make this brief also.

As President of the Philadelphia Recreation Advisory, I represent Mr. Helman and Ms. Martinez as well as 180 other groups who associate with the Department of Recreation, each representing different park playground recreation centers across the city. I deal with a lot of them with spending three or four hours a night, after working 40 hours a week, coming to their facility. That shows me that they

really realize the importance of those services to their families and their communities.

Now, as we look over this year's proposed budget, an updated five year plan, there are a few things worth pointing out. The Mayor talked about improving the ratio of children to adults, proposing 12 to one for children up to fourth grade and 15 to one for children in fifth grade and above. He also talks about the criminal and child abuse background checks as well as drug testing for new and current employees seasonal and full-time. We have advocated this position for many years and we have instituted background checks on a voluntary basis a number of years ago ourselves, so we wholeheartedly support the Mayor's position on this. However, if we look at the cost of implementing these initiatives the picture becomes a little blurry. Because to increase the child to adult ratios to those target levels, assuming the number of children in our after-school programs stay the same, and the pay scale doesn't increase, the cost will be a little over $300,000 a year. And to implement

the criminal and child abuse background check, the cost will be about $45,000 a year. To implement the drug testing the cost will be about $50,000 a year. And now if you also include a negotiated pay increase which is approximately $687,000 a year, the total cost of these items will be approximately $1,082,000. According to the proposed budget for FY02 to 03, the increase in the department's budget is only about $875,000. So it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see the picture is becoming a little more blurry. And this also does not include the replacement of existing employees that are going to retire this year filling the currently open positions that would allow us to meet our minimum staffing levels, expanding the number of youth access centers and teen centers brought up by Councilmembers Donna Miller and Michael Nutter, or any other items brought up in the five-year plan. Now the picture gets completely out of focus. These are all great things to talk about, but it's clear that the current proposed budget can't support all of these proposals. So the question has to be

asked how are we going to pay for this. While we consider all these proposals worthy, we also feel the administration should bear the additional costs. And we can't support any of them if it means taking anything away from our existing programs.

We, therefore, continue to wonder about the administration's priorities when the current budget allocates $152 a day to send a juvenile offender out of state, $98 to keep a juvenile offender in our own Youth Study Center, $6.00 a day to provide a drug addict free needles, condoms, heroin cookers and other drug paraphernalia, and less than $2.00 a day to offer a child a variety of recreational and crime prevention alternatives offered and delivered by the Department of Recreation. It's not really hard to see what's wrong with this picture and it does help to bring home a very important point. It's never been very difficult to find more money for prisons, police and other costs associated with crime, courts or incarceration, but it seems like every year we have to come here and almost beg for what

amounts to a very small percentage of that to invest in our young people who are just looking for alternatives to the negative images they are faced with in the street every day.

If you want to teach our children anything, we need to lead by example, raising the bar and providing more opportunities for them, not waiting until they fall into the trap, when no matter how much we seem to give them, their best is just treading water. When it's clear we spend more energy in resources on those that choose to do the wrong thing, it's no wonder why we continue to see children fall into that trap.

I think to further illustrate that point we only have to look back about 18 months ago when, discussing the stadium deals, and amendments sponsored by Councilman Kenney were introduced, proposing that the revenue from one luxury box in each of the new stadiums that we are building at this present time be donated to the Arts and Cultural Fund, generating approximately $350,000 a year.

While we continue to talk a lot

about finding more creative ways to fund some of these initiatives, that seems to me to be pretty creative. At that time I approached both the Phillies and the Eagles management and both were receptive to the idea of stating that it would no way be a deal breaker. Actions speak louder than words and only five out of 17 Councilmembers voted for that amendment and it was soundly defeated. I personally found it hard to understand what reason anyone would have for voting against it. I asked that question at last year's budget hearing. I have not yet received an answer. A comment was made by one member before that actual vote that it was not the right time for this. After more than $300 million of our City our money being committed to these stadium deals, it would seem to me to have been the perfect time for this.

Now, while listening to testimony from Commissioner Richard a few weeks ago, we heard him speak about the cost of goods. And while we appreciate his frankness and support his efforts, it needs to be made abundantly clear what the real cost is. And it's not

contained anywhere in this budget. To come up with true cost of goods you also need to include the support of the volunteers as well as the monies raised by each facility. Just as an example, some facilities took in and spent over $50,000 this past Fiscal Year in addition to the support they received from the Recreation Department. On top of that, you also need to include the cost of liability insurance we have to carry currently, a cost of over $17,000 a year city-wide. Then if you include the cost of the actual volunteer hours per facility you get a better idea, I think, of what the true cost of goods really is.

Now I'm sure there are other costs I may have not included, however, I hope you get the point. The additional support that occurs in each facility represents the difference between what the City provides and what our communities need, and that cost continues to increase for us every year. While census shows population in the City is declining somewhat, the needs for the services we provide is greater now than it ever was. As volunteers we have no

problem helping to bridge the gap between the levels of services the City can deliver and the needs of our community, but there continue to be times when we really feel like we're being taken advantage of. From our perspective, in a City this size it shouldn't be acceptable to turn any child away simply because it doesn't have the resources to accommodate them. That has always been and will always continue to be our line in the sand. Now to put this in perspective, our bottom line continues to be, providing these necessary services to our communities, even with our existing shortfall, the Department of Recreation continues to offer and deliver a vast array of services to every community across the City, at a cost of less than $2.00 a day. And I really don't think anywhere in this budget you get a better value for your dollar than right there. And to conclude, it's time for some of us to stop talking the talk and start walking the walk. As volunteers, we've been extremely active stake-holders in this process, continuing to share the burden with the Recreation Department, walking side-by-side. All we

continually ask is the administration walk along with us as partners to help us accomplish those goals that we all continue to talk about. None of us can do it alone, but together we stand a much better chance. And to be really honest, I don't think we can do a better job. I know we can. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

(Proceedings now being stenographically recorded by Josephine Cardillo, Registered Professional Reporter.)

- - -

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Miss Martinez, the pool at Fifth and Allegheny was closed a few years back.

MS. MARTINEZ: It's been a long time.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Right. And I've always been wondering how much it would cost to open that pool 'cause there isn't a pool close by that would take care of the neighborhood kids around there.

MS. MARTINEZ: Well, the Advisory Board at this time have voted not to support the opening of the swimming pool because of so much problems that's going on still in the community with drugs and violence, and we feel as though our community need to focus more on taking care of the streets where they live at, cleaning up, keeping 'em clean, and trying to take care of they alleyways, you know, to make it safer for the pool.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Right.

MS. MARTINEZ: Because the pool must be clean because of diseases and health problems that's going on in our community, we can't afford the risk of having diseases and people catching diseases from the swimming pool. That's why we recommended that we have sprinklers at our facility at this time.

But the sprinklers are so old and outdated that the water just comes out in drops and instead of sprays, that we have installed new sprinklers equivalent to the ones on 23rd and Diamond at the recreation center down at -- I think it's Lee Gathers Recreation Center, yeah, because they have installed new sprinklers there. Not only can children use the sprinklers, but the parents can actually come and sit out with they kids as a family time and use the sprinklers also, and it's a lot safer from accidents happening.

So that's why we have not supported the swimming pool at this time, but we are in need of the sprinklers, and we are in need of safer ground cushions for our recreational areas outside for our kids.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And the use of the

recreation centers, as you stated, in terms of the cultural aspects, bringing in the kids, it really has been curtailed throughout the years, and we haven't looked at a program and a vision to see how we can restore these programs back to where they should have been, and it's something that I believe that we have to start relooking at. Maybe this Council can begin pushing for that division that you're speaking about.

MS. MARTINEZ: Yeah, because we're really in support of what you would call family centers and our recreation centers, opposed to organizations coming in and using the facility, not actually giving any support to councils that's there, and we have a lot of private organizations that come use our facility, where if they had to go anywhere else to use a facility, they looking at paying 3 to 4 to 500 dollars in rent, and some of 'em don't even as much as offer a %50 or a $25 donation, but in order for them to work, we all have to work together.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Would you elaborate on what groups are coming in to use those facilities?

MS. MARTINEZ: Safe and Sound at our recreation center, we have health departments come in, we have congressional come in to our center. And, basically, whoever wants to come and use the center, they just come in, and if the supervisor say it's okay, it's okay, but they do not elaborate with the Advisory Board there where we can offer services on a wide range of opportunity for the community, because if they come in and talk with the Advisory Council, we think it work together and offer it more to the community by seeking out putting information out to let the people know just what services are there.

Our focus is definitely reaching the parents because that's where problem is, not so much with the youth, but with parents. We have a lot of teen pregnancy in our community, we have a lot of violence going on in our community, and our children definitely need to be reached some type of way.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I didn't mean to interrupt you, Councilman.

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Please continue.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: That's it. I think we have an example of great volunteers, I know each of them and they have -- especially in North Philadelphia, they do an incredible amount of work.

Thank you.

MS. MARTINEZ: Plus we travel with our kids. We have a kid going to Hungaria [sic] soon, we take our kids to Canada. As volunteers, we do a lot for our kids, and we deserve to have the respect as community volunteers from our community as well as from Council and the Department of Recreation also.

But, again, the main thing is reaching these parents, and that got to be done some way or somehow.

With this money these people are asking for, give 'em that money, and we can find ways to reach these parents.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: I see that the Recreation Commissioner is sitting in the back of the room. I'm sure he's been listening to your

testimony.

We certainly appreciate your coming in and taking the time to testify, and I know you've been here for hours, and we certainly appreciate your patience.

And we're very much interested in our recreation centers also and we applaud the work that you all do for our children. Thank you so much.

MR. McCREA: Thank you, Councilperson. I'm glad we could bring the kids.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. We applaud them.

Councilman? Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I got you on my turf now.

(Laughter.)

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: How you doing today?

MR. McCREA: Good.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I'd like to commend you all 'cause I've know some of you all personally and some of the great work that you do, and I wanted to thank you for doing what we sometimes in government cannot do.

I just also want to make a recommendation to talk to other members who work with the Advisory Council or are part of the Advisory Council, that we will be having some very important discussions next month on a tax policy and certain tax-reduction initiatives, and I want to make sure that all of our friends in Recreation are a part of that discussion because it could potentially impact on your ability to continue to run your facilities, and I want to make sure that you're a part of that discussion, and not just the business community.

MR. McCREA: All righty, terrific. Thank you, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. MARTINEZ: Re-Elect Joyce Martinez for State Committee.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

Our next witness?

MR. MCPHERSON: William Mackie?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I don't see him. Please call the next witness.

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

MR. MCPHERSON: It's a panel for the Mural Arts Program.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you representing Mr. Mackie?

UNIDENTIFIED PERSON: No, Mr. Williams.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please approach the table.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. WILLIAMS: Good afternoon, members of Council. My name is Neesa Williams. I am a resident of Grays Ferry and the President of the Vare Recreation Center Advisory Council.

For three years, the department of Mural Arts Program has been working with our community to bring beauty and a touch of culture to Grays Ferry. The Mural Arts Vare Big Picture Program has been teaching our youth to develop their art talent and has been exposing them to a world that is no longer available in public schools. The Big Picture Program has exposed our children and our community to mural arts, portraits, designs, planned art

shows, and host of other dimensions that has captured the imagination and participation. It has taught them what is possible for self-expression. This is what the Department of Recreation Mural Arts Program has brought to our community.

On behalf of myself, the Vare Advisory Council, and many, many residents of our community, I heartily endorse the Mural Arts Program and urge our City government to see to it that the program is properly funded so that they can continue to bring arts and all forms of beauty and culture to our community and our city.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. HARRIS: Good afternoon, members of Council. My name is Marguerite Harris. I'm a resident of Tasker Homes, I am Vice President of Tasker Tenant Improvement Council, and I am President of the Lanier Playground Advisory Council.

In 1996, the Mural Arts Program, during the Department of Recreation and now, has joined the Philadelphia Green to create a paved plaza on

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

the vacant lots with the help of the Vare Youth Big Picture Program. The main building in Grays Ferry is the Peace Wall, located at 29th and Wharton Street, and the mural at 34th and Wharton Street is a double-wall mural depicting colonial Grays Ferry on one wall, and the second wall is depicting Grays Ferry today while a young lady looks, wondering into the future. The mural is funded in part by the GMAC Corporation, and GMAC and MAB are planning to create a parklike setting in the vacant lot in front of the murals.

The 30th and Dickinson depicts people coming together, an important thing for a community like Grays Ferry.

The guardian angel mural at 32rd and Reed Street honors an important community leader and symbolizes the importance of interaction between older adults and children.

The mural at 28th and Wharton Street depicts a idealistic meadow scene and has beautifully added to the community.

This summer, a peace garden will be completed at 3038 Wharton Street by artist Ken Millington. The mural promises to contribute to

that neighborhood and will be the latest example of quality art in Grays Ferry.

A number of other murals has added to our community. There's the mural on the Stinger Square Park building and 32nd and Reed Street, the mural on the Vare Recreation Center building, and the Lanier Playground building and the Amoco Company wall at 26th and Moore Street.

The anti-drug, anti-violence mural titled "Johnny" at 22nd and Dickinson Street, a known drug corner, was painted by the Youth in the Vare Big Picture Program under the direction of artist Wade Williams.

This summer, the Big Picture Youth will paint another mural on a wall yet to be selected.

The MAP adds to the culture and programming of recreational facilities in our community and contribute to making Grays Ferry an attractive and stimulating community. Grays Ferry supports the Department of Recreation Mural Arts Program and wants to see the program properly funded.

Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness to testify?

MS. SMOLEN: I'm the next witness. My name's Barbara Smolen (ph), and before I sit down and speak, I'd like to bring you a couple of photos.

My name is Barbara Smolen, an artist with the Mural Arts Program of the City of Philadelphia. I'm here today to tell you about some of the murals which I have worked on and their value to both the citizens of Philadelphia and the communities for which they were created.

One mural I worked on, at Frankford and Susquehanna in Kensington, is called "Music City." I worked on it with Tina Davidson, a composer. She and I went to the 3rd-graders at Kensington Elementary School and taught classes in music and art. The kids composed music under Tina's guidance, and I taught them about drawing, painting, and we went out and did drawings of the Kensington landscape.

The kids helped paint the mural, and their musical notes were painted into an abstract

rendition of Kensington, with music flowing in and out through the windows in the picture. These children performed their song in front of the mural that they had helped create, and you can only imagine the pride they felt in the accomplishment and also the new-found pride with which they see that corner of their neighborhoods.

Art profoundly touches children's lives.

I painted another mural in Point Breeze on 23rd and Ellsworth, entitled "Garden Walk," and you have a picture of it there.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Beautiful.

MS. SMOLEN: It is a picture of a beautiful, formal garden, with flowers and a reflecting pool. As I was working on it, a woman stopped and she said to me, "God bless you and God bless your hands."

Art inspires the soul.

Another mural I worked on called "A Tribute to Atea," is at 17th and North Streets. It is a work of art about domestic violence. It illustrates the tragic story of the end of the life of Atea Rodriguez. Atea had a court order protecting her from her estranged boyfriend, but

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

she was a prisoner in her own home. Unfortunately, a court order can only provide legal protection but not physical safety.

One day, when she did go out, this man attacked her and brutally slashed her throat and left her dead in an alley near her home and near where the mural now stands.

In our painting, Atea is pictured in her home, looking out a window from behind bars at hills, fruit, flowers, mountains, sky, and birds soaring in the air. The landscape she gazes wistfully upon represents freedom and hope and a peaceful life she was not able to live. Across the top of the mural is a message in words: "Stop domestic violence."

Art can send a powerful message.

This mural has provided much solace to Atea's family and represents one way the City of Philadelphia responds to this rampant problem of domestic violence: With sympathy and strength.

I have done another mural, "The Families Are Victims Too," in Southwest Philadelphia, at 50th and Woodland, and you have some pictures of that mural in front of you.

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I have them; they're being circulated.

MS. SMOLEN: I painted portraits of 15 victims of violence in the City of Philadelphia. At one end is a tragic scene of a mother and a father crying out in a barren wilderness as they cradle the head of their slain child and an angel approaches to give mercy and comfort. Across the colonnade are the individual portraits of the victims of brutal, senseless murder; and beyond is a healing landscape with a beautiful dawn, representing time passing and hope for a more peaceful future.

The family members of the murder victims have turned the mural into a shrine and visit the mural at all times of year, bringing wreaths and flowers and even Christmas lights. It has given many disfranchised people a voice and a feeling that the City of Philadelphia has not forsaken them in their grief.

I have been to meetings of this organization run by Sandra Spicer and Garnette Spice and have seen the work that they do comforting the family members, assisting them in

making their court appointments, and comforting the bereaved.

The creation of this mural has had a truly healing affect, softening blows which these families are forced to endure over and over again, as they have had to identify their loved ones' bodies at the morgue, meet with detectives, listen and testify at murder trials.

There are two portraits that I have shown you. One of them is a young woman named Shantea Demorite (ph), who was standing in a line to buy Chinese food when two drug dealers got into a fight. One of them grabbed her and used her as a human shield, and that is how she was murdered.

Another one, Donald Burrows, was murder in his neighborhood by someone he had known since childhood, and his father still has to see the mother of the man who murdered him in the neighborhood. These are some of the stories behind this mural.

I am currently working with a poet, Trapeda B. Mason, on a second mural for Families Are Victims Too, and I want to read you the poem which she has composed for this mural.

"This violence, it attempts to strike us down, break our spirits, crack our souls, shatter our world.

"This violence, it twists and bends and pulls us under, sits us in the jaws of hell.

"We have been way down low, but we rise up, an army of regular folks fighting through the trenches, guarding the memories of our loved ones.

"Our voices are our weapons, our songs close wounds, our tongues bring forth rainbows, and we scream wide and loud for all to hear and see and remember."

These are only a few of the experiences I have had painting mural for the City all over the City. Through our art work, we bring pride, we bring hope, we bring healing, and we bring joy. I strongly urge you to support our program.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Do you want your photos back Barbara? They are absolutely beautiful. I was just telling Councilman Clarke I was looking at the hands on this angel and the face, which is beautiful. You're really quite talented. Thank you. I know,

it's magnificent.

Please identify yourself for the record.

MS. NORTHROP: Hi. My name is Ann Northrop, and I'm an artist for the Mural Arts Program, and I just want to say that it's been an amazing day hearing about all of the worthy projects that the City Council has to fund, and I know that every dollar really has to count.

What I want to say is that murals work. They do a lot for the City at a good price. It's a lot of bang for the buck, and the artists have gotten together and made signs about the ways that they work yesterday.

I personally participated in a mural in a neighborhood at Capital and Brown that was kind of a troubled neighborhood, and I saw it kind of pass through stages, and several years ago, I painted out graffiti in the same neighborhood, and it was really a very big problem. A friend of mine was living there.

And then I painted the mural and included portraits of a number of the people on the block, and they were so really taken with this, they were so touched by it, and they felt so good

to be immortalized in that way. And people were constantly coming by and telling me how proud they were to have the mural there. And it was wonderful for me and very touching also.

It brings the neighborhood together. It's a troubled neighborhood, they're still having trouble. The middle-class people and poor people are always at war, and the mural dedication will be a way that they can come together and be together as they are on the mural. On the mural, they look like a big, happy family, and I hope that's going to be the case.

So it's the neighborhood. Bringing the neighborhoods is one way that the murals work. Another way is bringing the tourists in because it creates a really interesting, fun thing that people want to see. Philadelphia's famous all over the country for having one of the best mural arts programs, and it really brings people in and all of their dollars. So I think we really are effective that way.

And then the effects of the lives on the children, the work that the mural artists do in the schools. The schools -- my children went to the

public schools of Philadelphia, and the arts programs were being cut back a lot; I guess it was funding and also the need to, you know, bring up the academic standards, but they were really neglected.

And I think that the arts are really important to kids. Not all of them are able to succeed academically, and the arts are another place where they can succeed, and it brings them hope, it brings their families hope.

Not only that, but the Mural Arts Program brings them up. I mean, it teaches them skills, it gives them jobs as they grow, and they become the mural artists of tomorrow.

So I hope that you will help this program to expand, because I think it's really a wonderful thing for the City.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness?

MS. PINKETT: Good afternoon, Madam President --

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.

MS. PINKETT: -- and other Councilmembers. My name is Teresa Pinkett, and I'm here today to speak in support of funding the Mural Arts Program.

As a staff member of Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller, I'm aware of the enormous work, fiscal challenges, and difficult choices that this body takes for the citizens of Philadelphia. While my reasons may appear somewhat based on self-interests, it is my belief that the spirit and remembrance and solemn tribute marked by the works of the Mural Arts Program goes far in enhancing the belief that our fair city is truly based inclusively on brotherly love.

My youngest song, Jamal Lawrence Pinkett, was born and raised in Philadelphia. His greatest wish was to stay and become a success in the town where he scraped his knees and learned how to be a man. Just as he was truly beginning to understand that one's greatest glory is not never falling down but rising after each fall, he was savagely murdered, and on the day, July 1, 2000, a

part of me laid mortally wounded on that corner with him.

Earlier that year, I had also lost my father, who lived with me. Coupled with the loss of my baby boy, the grief was unbearable. Joining the support group that I am now with, Families Are Victims Too, has strengthened and given me hope in this dismal point in my life.

When I was approached with the concept of having a mural done to honor Jamal, I was elated. The prospect of seeing this tribute come to reality has lifted an awesome weight of heaviness from my heart on many occasions.

I ask that you continue funding to enable this dream to come true for me and others who will never see their loved ones in the flesh but will forever be connected in their hearts and spirits.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. SLOWIK: I know there's a lot of us, so I'll be as be as brief as possible with what I

have. Once again, good afternoon, early evening. If you only pay attention to one of us, pay attention to me 'cause I'm going to tell you how to get a deal. This is a budget meeting.

So I could tell you there are countless ways that the Mural Arts has affected me and affected the lives of a lot of people.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry, you're going to have to identify yourself.

MR. SLOWIK: Oh, my name is Jason Slowik. I'm sorry. I've been painting with the program, and this will be my sixth year. I'm currently finishing up at Tyler School of Art in my studies.

What I'll do is, I'll go through three brief ways that the Mural Arts helps people in the City, and then I'll tell you how to get even more of that for a cheap price.

The first way, as a big group of people, I'd use the example of flag mural. I did a mural where it's the history of the flags. It's at Eighth and Washington Street. I did it a few years ago, and when we did it, at first, it brought together the street, but now in the light of

September 11th, I was talking to a lot of people who have seen the History of the Flags, and a mural like that really inspires people because it just reminds them of the history of our country and it brings everybody together.

So it's a big group of people and you get a lot of people inspired, and it gets them to care about the area around them.

On the guardian angels mural, which was mentioned before, it was a really great mural because we kind of set an example for what we thought we should see in the community. And then as we were painting it, we saw that actually happen in front of us. And that was incredible because you could really see how, you know, painting it got people going, and then once the painting was already there, it got people -- it kind of reinforced the idea to keep going and to keep helping kids, and it really got the adults motivated to help children in the area.

And then, finally, on an individual level, I did a mural at Vare Middle School, where I was working with children through the Big Picture Program. And there was one little girl, Julie, who

wasn't even supposed to be a part of the program, and I figured out a way to get her into it. And she had terrible problems, she wasn't able to show up for one week because they had to deal with things of her father being in jail, and she would come in and, you know, she'd get hit before she came in, and it was really nice to know that now she's doing well, she's doing art. And I took a girl out who was getting slapped in the face, and I gave her a pat on the back.

And that's really important thing that all of us do on a daily basis at our sites. And you get that on top of the mural that you're doing, on top of all of the inspiration. You get one individual that can be saved and that can have a better day and many better days for the rest of their lives because somebody just cares to go the extra mile.

So now, how does this all help you, because why should you guys give us more money, why shouldn't we just volunteer. Well, we have to pay bills, but what really helps you guys is that I'm young; I'm probably the youngest guy up here, and right now, I'm deciding what to do with my life,

and a lot of people I'm talking to are deciding what to do with their arts. Some people are waiting tables so they can paint their own art inside, whatever they want.

But a lot of people, every time I tell them what I just told you guys too, it inspires these people; it inspire me and inspires them to do work for it.

But the message to you today is that the Mural Arts Program is inspiring these artists and making the citizens' lives better. Any support for this program helps to enable these artists to help you. It helps to attract these artists, it helps to keep me here. Instead of going someplace else, it enables me to help these children. Let me help another kid like Julie next summer. Let these people inspire hundreds more people with every brush stroke they make.

Please, every little bit of support helps. Enable us to help you; we want to do it. Just be there for us.

Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness?

MR. STANSO: How you doing, everybody. My name is Paris Stanso (ph). I've been working with the Mural Arts Program for -- I think I painted my first mural in 1991 and have been painting murals off and on with since them now. Right now, I work with -- am permanently employed with the City, with the City's Recreation Department, you know, the Mural Arts Program.

And, you know, so I've seen the program develop over the years, and what it's come to mean to me is somewhat like a social program, you know. It's like a social service for the City. You know, we've expanded to working with, like, community programs such as Norris Square. We've worked with People's Emergency Center. We do a lot of community work with the schools. We work in recreation centers. We've started a Big Picture program that keeps kids from, like, four to six every day and on Saturdays.

So, you know, for me, you know, I've seen a lot of development. Just last month, I

started -- we started a program in the Philadelphia prison system and, you know, that's been pretty rewarding.

You know, not everybody's into sports, especially kids, you know, and when they don't have art, I don't know what else they have, you know. I don't know, maybe someone else can tell me. I was trying to think of that when I was thinking about what I wanted to say.

And, you know, I think it's important for people to have a creative outlet. I think it develops compassion, empathy, and, you know, a lot of positive things that, you know, that have more to do with humanity than, you know, a lot of tragedy that we see on the streets today, you know.

So, you know, that's all I have. And thanks for letting me speak.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is there anyone else to testify on the Mural Arts Program?

MR. McSHANE: Yes. My name is David McShane. I've been working with the Mural Arts

Program for seven years. I Painted the Jackie Robinson Bureau of North Broad Street, the Herman Rice mural in Mantua, and about 15 other murals throughout neighborhoods in the City.

Whenever I'm working on a mural, I always ask the neighborhood kids I meet if they have art in school, and I'm always surprise to do find out how many don't have art in school. For many kids throughout the City, the Mural Arts Program is the only exposure they have to learning about art and having creative outlets. This is an important reason for the Mural Arts Program's budget to be increased.

Philadelphia is known worldwide for cheese steaks, soft pretzels, the Liberty Bell, and now also for its murals. As an occasional tour guide for mural tours, I can testify that people are coming from all around the world to visit the world's largest outdoor art gallery that the Mural Arts Program has created.

And as we well know, tourism boosts or economy. This is an important reason also to increase Mural Arts Program budget.

The Mayor has just signed into law his

anti-blight initiative. Murals are one of the best ways to turn a blighted neighborhood around. One only needs to visit a neighborhood such as Norris Square to know that this is true, and this, again, is another important to increase MAPS funding.

But even if all this were not true, even if murals did not have an impact on young people or on tourism or on eradicating blight, there is still an extremely important reason to increase the Mural Arts Program's funding, and that is because artists need your support.

Artists provide a vital contribution to society by creating its cultural legacy. As we have seen, tragic events such as those of last September bring people together to seek answers to unanswerable questions. People often look to the arts as sources of meditation, reflection, and solace. It is a fact that in the months following September 11th, there was a sharp rise in Art Museum attendance throughout the nation.

Art, indeed, is not just mere decoration, but provides communities with cultural substance and identity.

But artists have a tough time surviving

financially in our society, and in particularly in this city. On the little money we do make, taxes are high, and benefits such as health or disability insurance are nonexistent. The amount of dedication and hard work it takes to paint the works of art of this enormous scale is substantial, and the amount of training and skill-honing needed to pull off such a feat is rarely compensated.

Community murals have become an extremely important part of neighborhood life in the City, but individuals and neighborhood groups don't have the resources to fund them on their own. It is the duty of the City to fund such projects and to continue the rich legacy that we have started so that not only future generations of neighbors, but also future generations of artists, can continue to thrive in our city.

Philadelphia has a reputation as a world-class city of the arts. The Mural Arts Program is making avenues of the arts out of every street in the City.

I respectfully request to each of the Councilmembers present to please do not decrease the funding of the Mural Arts Program. Such a

decrease would threaten the already meager survival of us artists. Instead, please the increase Mural Arts Program budget and help continue this important mission that we have all started.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you going testify, sir?

MR. SANTOLERIA: Hi. My name is Paul Santoleria (ph), and I'm also a painter; I've been working with the Mural Arts for a few years now and I'd like to say a few things on behalf of the Mural Arts project.

I just want to make a few points, and I won't be too long.

It's difficult to quantify the effect of a mural; it's not the same as quantifying the effect of paved streets of other parts of our city, but it's very -- you can see the effect in so many different ways. If you stood in our shoes for a second and you were a painter on a mural project in this city, you'd see, like David said, how much

work is done for very little pay and for actually so few people that ask for money for these projects.

There's so many people that are volunteering, and the whole idea of somebody volunteering to do something like this to improve their neighborhood is an immense thing in a city like ours.

And you'd also see how many times you've been stopped and you've been thanked, and I've been hugged, I've been kissed by the neighbors around me just to be doing what I'm doing. And I remember one guy who told me that this was the best thing that happened since they closed the state store on his street, which I think was kind of -- it's just telling on how powerful these things are.

Another thing is, like David said, the national and international notoriety that we've been receiving for these things. It's amazing. Articles have been written about murals, that I'm aware, of in Mexico and Sweden and Italy about these murals that we're doing. People have approached me, authors, photographers, journalists of all kinds have approached me and written down my

words about this project, and I think that stands for itself as far as the power of what's going on.

These things are hard to quantify, unless you know about them.

Let's see, I have a couple other things, but I just wanted to say that this is a -- this is probably the most powerful -- this is -- the reason that I'm in Philadelphia is because of the public art project that happens in this city and how much support there is for the arts. And I want you to consider that when you don't increase the budget of a company like the Mural Arts in this city, but you at the same time give them this wonderful building, the Aikens House to take care of. It's kind of like getting a cut in the budget. So I just want you to think about that.

But I appreciate your time.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify yourself for the record.

MS. LYONS: My name is Andrea Lyons, and I'm also a mural artist with the City. And as well, I teach art in the Philadelphia public schools.

I am very involved with children and as well as my art, and that's one of the things that I impresses me greatly is how wonderful it is for the children in the neighborhood to be part of the mural project. It gives them an education in the arts, it gives them something to look up to and something to do in the summertime when I'm painting.

This past summer, I did a mural at 49th and Reno, and on that particular street, there were three young men who died that summer, and after the mural was finished, there was a candle-lighting vigil outside of it, and I do feel that it gave the people in the street some hope. The mural was about looking upward; children were painted, depicted in the playground looking up to the sky. And I felt very good about doing it, and I look forward to doing more murals in the City. I enjoy doing them and I know that the people that I have touched with the murals seem very appreciative.

So I also would like to reiterate the talk about the -- Philadelphia being the mural capital of -- and I, you know, I agree that it would be a shame to cut the funding for the murals.

And that's it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We were looking at the budget just before you testified. We don't detect a cut at all.

Commissioner, are you aware of any cuts for the mural program? Because I don't see that in the budget that's been presented to us.

COMMISSIONER RICHARD: There are no cuts

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Could I just make one comment?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: We don't cut anything, this Council does not cut any project. We get a budget already with cuts; if anything, we add or we transfer or we move around, but we don't cut. We don't -- we may -- when we move around, we may decide that something is more important, but what -- the recommendations for cuts really in terms of these programs are not made in this Council; they're made somewhere else in the Administration.

So we are -- when you say don't cut this program, understand that.

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You say that we don't cut, but we can increase.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: That's right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I think the next question then will be: Are you going to offer an amendment to increase? Is that why the gentleman came up to the table? I think that's exactly what he was going to say.

MR. SLOWIK: You bet.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: There are certain programs that -- this program was born during the Wilson Goode first year with Tim and so on.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And at that time, no one -- no one really thought of this as much of an idea, but we had a lot of taggers out there that were tagging everything, and all of a sudden, it blossomed from just an anti-graffiti program to a real program of urban art, which has changed the face of Philadelphia. So it's something that has evolved over time and those of us who there at its birth do not want to see it cut at all.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We applaud your work. And I will speak for myself: I was

truly impressed with and touched by some of the stories that you related to us. I saw some of the paintings that you took up to us. They're absolutely beautiful, and I think it's a program that should certainly be ongoing and increased, but we will certainly not see it cut. If we can't increase it, it will not be cut, I assure you.

MS. LYONS: Thank you.

MR. SLOWIK: Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness?

MR. MCPHERSON: Our next witness was Edmund Spate, who left testimony.

The last witness from this morning's session is Vernard Johnson.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Vernard, you're a very patient man. Thank you so much. We appreciate your staying to testify.

(Witness comes forward.)

MR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Council President.

My name's Vernard Johnson, and I'm the Director of Healthy Family Healthy Life, and a

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

resident of Southwest Philadelphia.

I spent several days in Council over the last few weeks, listening to testimony from commissioners and their staff, and I wanted to respond to some of it, but before the people from the Mural Program leave, I want to say that I appreciate their art work, especially the art work that's at 50th and Woodland on the SEPTA terminal wall there.

I'd also like to say to the Streets Commissioner, while he's here, that the trash and filth that's surrounding that art work is a disgrace, and that part of Woodland Avenue must be one of the most dirtiest sections of this city along a commercial corridor. And I live at 49th and Greenway so I feel like I can say that about my neighborhood.

We've taken children, adults, we've tried everything to clean up Woodland Avenue from 47th Street to 52nd Street. It's an area that almost gets no Streets services along that corridor, and we would be pleased to work with the Commissioner, the Streets Commissioner, to come up with a program of how we could service that area

and return it to what I understand it was long before I moved there.

I wanted to also say to the DHS Commissioner, while she's here, is that my organization works in schools -- we're in about ten schools in the City, Mitchell Elementary School being one of them, where there's a family center attached to the school. And I want to say to her that a lot of our families that we service are also DHS families, and that many of those families receive what we consider to be uncoordinated services, that you may have a DHS workers, you may have a SCOH worker, there may be me, there may be someone else, but for sure, a DHS worker and a SCOH worker, and a lot of times, those two never even talk to each other, leaving families in a crisis for long periods of time.

The other night, I was in a home of a family who has a 4th-grader and a 3rd-grader. Both children have been sexually abused. The family has been in the charge of DHS for six months. The children have not received any treatment at all in terms of their abuse.

After -- before we got there, there was

a DHS worker who talked to the family about the responsibilities around housing and fire-escape plans and things of that sort, and then the DHS worker came the next night, the SCOH worker the following night, me the following night. The family still had not been referred to any treatment, the are children still untreated. And for us and the people that we serve, that's not an exception; it seems to be the normal practice.

I wanted to encourage the Office of Housing Emergency Services to quickly begin to work with DHS and the workers at DHS. So I think, you know, they have a hard job so I'm not -- I don't want my words to be mistaken, but it's the real world for us

Housing is a serious challenge for lots of families in the DHS system, and I think that they quickly need to work with Rob Hess and Lou Souder (ph) to develop a relationship that will result in those families receiving better service.

I'd also like to say to the Office of Housing Emergency Services that while they're cutting 10 percent of the shelters in the City, there are a lot of poor, working-class people who

are suffering from living in poor, dilapidated housing. Those folks don't know where to go for service, they haven't depended on the system for support, and I believe that the Office of Housing Emergency Services needs to do a better job of reaching out to those families and helping them to address their problems. We've had that conversation with Rob Hess and thought we just needed to make that position a public one.

The Health Department. Infant mortality is soaring in Kingsessing Pascal. The last report that I read that I went over with the Health Commissioner the other day when we met for several hours was that in the Kingsessing Pascal community, there are 20 deaths for every 1,000 live births; while in the same general neighborhood, the University of Pennsylvania area, same zip code, 6 deaths for every 1,000 live births. It seems to be, you know, a real serious problem there.

The rate of AIDS HIV is soaring in our communities.

The whole question around lead, and we've been in this Council with Councilman Ortiz and Councilwoman Blackwell -- she's not here now --

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

and Councilwoman Miller, we've been talking about this lead issue for years, now literally years, and now it's gone from the home to the school.

A new area live is lead in the dirt. We need to have -- and we intend to deliver to the Health Commissioner at the end of the week our plan for his review around community education. You cannot -- you cannot only talk about encapsulating the problem, correcting the problem, without talking about education, because as soon as the family goes back in and begins to push that chair against the wall or begins to push that bed against the wall, and that paint breaks, you've got the same problem with exposure of the lead.

So if we don't talk about education along with remediation, then we might be throwing $2,000 per house away.

So I was surprised not to hear the panel that was up here talk more about education. There are things that a homeowner can do, that a renter can do to self-abate the problem while it's sub-minimal. And we can show people and teach people how to do that, but if we don't make a career effort around education in that area, we're

just fooling ourselves.

The school question around blight removal, these houses that we're going to knock down. You can walk around this city, especially my neighborhood -- I'll talk about my neighborhood and not about anyone else's. You knock a house down, it stays on the ground for three, four days, five days, a week. Some other contractor comes along, picks through the bricks, gets the good brick out, sells the good used brick. Maybe two, three weeks later, the original contractor comes back and cleans it up.

Well, while it's laying there, guess who's playing in it? Little Kareem and Kareema. Guess who's tracking the dust in and out of the house? Little Kareem and Kareema.

So we would suggest to the City, to L&I, that before a contractor is secured to demolish a property, that it be included in their contract a clause that says that work has to be completed, you know, within a reasonable amount of time. And I can't sit here and like I know what a reasonable amount of time is for every building in the City, but as soon as this is knocked down and demolished,

within a short period of time, it should be cleaned up.

And also included in that is the remediation of the soil. Now, this is a special project, and I hope we have enough money, and it's the remediation of the soil, where you need to go down into the soil and remove the top layers of dirt and replace that with fresh top soil. They do not do that in our neighborhoods, and it's a requirement based on the City's code, and it is not happening. And we think that the Health Department and L&I should enforce the code.

We think that open-air spray painting from autobody shops should cease, should cease immediately. That paint is highly associated with the lead base, and you could ride through my neighborhood almost anytime, almost anytime, and I just told you where I lived, and you could find open-air spray-painting going on at anytime, day or night, from these body shops that are legal businesses in the community.

So I just wanted to bring those few issues to you and ask you, as you give your money away, or give our money away, that you follow the

money and make sure that the work is being done properly.

And while the Fire Commissioner is over there, I want to say to him that we have a junior fire patrol at Turner Middle School, where we had a workshop today for 6th-graders, who will share information about fire safety in their neighborhood. And I said to him privately, and I'll say it publicly, that those firefighters are to be commended.

Why am I saying all this? I'm saying all this to say that I think City Council needs to look at appropriating more dollars to education, that if we're only picking up recycling -- and I'm a recycling nut. If we're only picking up -- 'cause once you start, it's hard to stop. If we're only picking up 6 percent of recyclable goods in the City, we can do better than that, I think, with a good community-education program, so I will see the Streets Commissioner before I leave, but I would hope that this Council would consider making more dollars available to every one of these departments around education.

And I'll close by saying this, Council

President, and the Health Commissioner -- the Managing Director just left. 15 micrograms of lead, very little lead, a teeny amount of lead, and a deciliter of blood, very little blood, can cause permanent brain damage in a child, permanent. And we have got to do something about that immediately. And

I know Councilman Cohen sometimes cringes when we talk about private companies, but I think there's an opportunity here for government and private companies to come together, such as the managed-care companies, that have to pay for the health-care services of a child who is lead-poisoned. It seems to be in their best interests to come together with Council and to support a good public-private health education effort.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much, Vernard.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness is Laurie Ward and Gail Ober.

(Witness comes forward.)

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening.

MS. WARD: Good evening. I brought 30 copies. Thank you.

Good afternoon, Madam President and members of Council. I'm Laurie Ward, representing the Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services.

The Pennsylvania Council is a statewide membership organization that supports the work of private, nonprofit agencies serving dependent and delinquent children and their families. Through contracts with the Philadelphia Department of Human Services, over 70 of our members provide an array of critical services to Philadelphia's residents.

Most of our member agencies are located in Philadelphia. Approximately 82 percent of the Department's budget is allocated for purchased service provided through the private sector. Among the services we offer are abuse and neglect prevention programs, in-home family support services to allow children who are at risk of placement to remain at home, foster and kinship care, emergency shelters, group home, residential treatment services, and supervised independent

living.

Our agencies also assist children and families through parenting-education programs, after-school, youth development, and truancy-development programs, and behavioral-health services.

We welcome the opportunity to comment on the Department of Human Service's Fiscal Year 2003 Operating Budget. We support the Department's ambitious plan outlined in the Blueprint for Excellence, and we commend Commissioner Martinez's innovative vision for a system that is both more responsive and more accountable to Philadelphia's children and families.

As partners with the Philadelphia Department of Human Services in caring for our city's most vulnerable citizens, our member agencies are invited to work closely with DHS staff on a number of initiatives, including, but not limited to, the Mayor's Children Summit, the Adoption Task Force, Subsidized Permanent Legal Custodianship Planning and Pilot Project, the Medical Foster Parent Recruitment Initiative, the Multidisciplinary Team Review, the Medical Passport

Project, Forging Collaborative Partnerships, and Joint Staff and Foster Parent Training Efforts.

Through contractual arrangements, our members support DHS's efforts to maximize federal and state reimbursement through TANF and 4E funding by completing all the documentation that is required to draw down these dollars.

As Commissioner Martinez pointed out in her testimony, the success in drawing down federal and state dollars reduces the City's share of DHS's total budget to 8 percent.

While the Department has been able to reduce the City's portion of the human service budget by maximizing state and federal resources, it should be noted that the private sector has historically supplemented publicly-mandated services with private dollars.

The private sector has been able to bridge some of the gaps between actual and reimbursed costs by using private funding sources such as endowments and foundation grants. As fund-raising efforts for private dollars meet with stiff competition and costs increase, the safety net provided by private dollars can no longer be

stretched to fill the gaps.

A cost of care analysis prepared by the Pennsylvania Council shows that the difference between the actual costs for contracted services and DHS's reimbursement for services ranges from 6 to 50 percent. A copy of the analysis is attached.

The chronic underfunding of services results in experienced staff leaving for higher-paying jobs, the inability to attract qualified staff for vacant positions, and the inability to implement innovative programs and service.

Ultimately, when agencies are not reimbursed at levels which reflect the true cost of service, children and families are not able to access needed services because they are not available.

Our current funding levels result in salaries that are lower than other comparable fields. A survey of our membership completed in 2001 showed that turnover for direct social service staff is over 30 percent annually. Experienced staff are not only leaving our agencies, they're also leaving the human-services field.

As Commissioner Martinez stated in her testimony to you, primary in our mission to ensure children's safety and permanence is maintaining a full complement of qualified staff. The private, nonprofit agencies must also have the resources to maintain a full complement of qualified staff. All parts of the system must be fully functioning to serve children and families.

Our member agencies were stung by the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's failure to include a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for purchased services in the counties, children, and youth budgets. DPW has, however, included an 8 percent increase to county children and youth agencies' base allocation.

We very much appreciate the willingness of Commissioner Martinez and all of her staff to include us in deliberations and consider private providers' needs not only in program but in continual matters. We strongly urge that City Council consider cost-of-living adjustments for purchased services in your budget. We recognize that the City cannot make up the entire difference between the reimbursement rate and actual cost for

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

services, nor should you be soley responsible for a Commonwealth obligation.

Therefore, we ask that you join with DHS and the private sector to urge your colleagues and implore our State representatives in Harrisburg to fulfill their financial obligations to the citizens of the Commonwealth and Philadelphia.

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much, Miss Ward, and thank you for all of the good work you do. We appreciate you out there in West. Thank you.

MS. WARD: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Nicole Hostetler, is that right?

MS. HOSTETLER: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Next is Dawn Moody for Philadelphia Unemployment Project. Is Dawn Moody here?

(No response.)

(Witness comes forward.)

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you for your patience. Good evening.

MS. HOSTETLER: Good evening.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good evening. Identify yourself for the record and begin your testimony.

MS. HOSTETLER: My name is Nicole Hostetler, and I'm a registered voter and a resident of Councilperson DiCicco's district.

There's been a lot of talk here tonight about children, and I currently mentor a high school at William Penn High School. She's very bright, and I worry about her future. I worry about her future because of the social and urban ailments that she's subject to, but I also worry about the environment, the larger environment that we all have to live in, and I'm very happy to see the Streets Commissioner here this evening to discuss -- I'd just like to talk a little bit about recycling.

I work and live in the City, I'm a taxpayer, and I don't have children, so I'm a Councilperson's dream. The waste that I produce every day at my home and in my job is

insurmountable. The City could be saving space and costs if they improved their recycling system, the landfill costs that are so high. Philadelphia has the opportunity here to stand out as a model environmental city. We need to be careful with our waste.

As a resident of a large apartment building, we need to step up enforcement at these large apartment buildings are doing their job as well as provide more drop-off centers that are more accessible.

I currently work in the Bourse Building. The Bourse Building is a historical commodity to the City. However, I cannot tell you how many huge trash bins of white paper we throw away every day. I've been in touch with the Kaiserman Group that owns the building, I've been in touch with the management that manages the building. I've been to many meetings, I've tried to get everything done. It's just not working. With the minimal $25 fines that they face and the lack of enforcement staff, it's just not enough.

I'm here tonight with one simple request: Please increase funding to the recycling

department for commercial and residential regulations. And I hope you consider the larger environment that's at stake here.

Thank you for your time.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much for being such a good citizen a and concerned Philadelphian

Dawn Moody, Philadelphia Unemployment Project.

Leslie Benoleel.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good evening. Please identify yourself for the record and begin your testimony.

Let me first thank all of the commissioners who are here. People don't realize -- I know it's grueling for you, but I see our Recreation Commissioner, Victor Richard, over there; the Health Commissioner John Domzalski; the Streets Commissioner, Commissioner Johnson; our

Fire Commissioner, who's always here somehow, and we thank you Commissioner Hairston, and all of the departments. There's Reilly Harrison, and they're always here, and they're always here all day.

It's not easy. It's hard when you're waiting to testify but when you know you have to -- and we have the head of OESS, and we thank you. I saw the DHS commissioners here and deputy commissioners and Commissioner Kishinchand, just all of you. We thank you. I know it's not easy sitting here. Thank God it's only once a year. That's all I can say by way of encouragement. Thank you

Miss Benoleel.

MS. BENOLEEL: Thank you. My name is Leslie Benoleel. Good evening. My name is Leslie Benoleel, and I'm the Executive Director of the Philadelphia Development Partnership.

The Philadelphia Development Partnership (or PDP) is a microenterprise-development agency. As a microenterprise-development agency, PDP supports public and private activities to expand neighborhood economies through microenterprise. Our clients are very small businesses that are

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

frequently shunned by formal banking and business-development service providers, and they're too small and inexperienced to qualify for investment and service offered by quasi-city agencies and small-business development centers.

Among the types of business PDP serves include day-care providers, janitorial-service providers, accountants, graphic designers, hair and nail stylists, soap makers, bakers, auto mechanics, caterers, seamstresses, and Website designers.

We know from our research and our experience that are thousands upon thousands of these enterprising individuals struggling to operate tiny businesses throughout the City. These businesses are the lifeblood of their neighborhoods' economies, providing much-needed goods and services, offering job opportunities, occupying retail space, and keeping hard-earned dollars circulating in our local economy.

I'm here this evening to encourage your approval of the Commerce Department's plan and budget for the coming year. The City's economic-development strategy, in which the Commerce Department is a key participant, includes support

for high-profile economic-development projects such as sports stadiums and riverfront development to expand the City's overall job creation and Main Street activity. This strategy also includes critical support for neighborhood economic development projects, projects such as PDP's that stimulate business growth, job creation, and job retention in neighborhoods where economic opportunities have eluded too many for too long.

With financial support from the Commerce Department, PDP provides small loans, starting at $500, up to $5,000, and business-development assistance to microenterprises.

Our target market differentiated from other well-known providers of business services such as the Philadelphia Commercial Development Corporation and the Enterprise Center.

PDP's clients are the smallest of businesses. We work with microenterprises that typically employ one or two people, including the owner. They generate less than $50,000 in annual sales and require less than $5,000 in capital to start up or expand their businesses.

These businesses require labor-intensive

technical assistance and training and generally don't qualify for loans or services from PCDC or the Enterprise Center due to their small size, limited operating histories, lack of collateral, poor credit records, and other constraints.

Both of these organizations play important roles in Philadelphia's economic-development service system, but they do not serve the same market. PDP's customers are primarily low- to moderate-income microenterprises, who, by choice or by necessity, are pursuing self-generated, income-producing activities to sustain themselves and their families in addition or instead of holding a job.

Generally, these business owners cannot access mainstream financial services due to poor credit histories or lack of collateral. Most work in isolation without the benefit of professional technical assistance and business-to-business networks struggling to make end meet for their families. For many, self employment is their only and often their best means for achieving their dreams, enhancing their family's quality of life, enabling them to supplement their household income

in times of need or generate an income that is consistent with their faith, life style, preferences, and personal constraints.

PDP's programs meet the microentrepreneurs where they are in terms of their phase of business, whether they're at idea-stage, start-up, or expansion. And the services are delivered at times and places that are convenient to our clients. At any given evening, PDP has groups of entrepreneurs meeting in places of worship, homes, store fronts, commercial corridors to discuss their businesses and go through training exercises, receive business counseling, or review loan applications.

PDP's service are specially tailored from all microenterprises from start-up to the more experienced business operators looking for growth. These services include everything from basic-skills training to assistance with obtaining a business license, exploring the feasibility of moving into commercial space, accessing bank credit, or securing contracting opportunities.

Let me share with you some statistics about our clients. Of the hundreds of

Philadelphia-based microentrepreneurs that have received loans or service from PDP during the last three years, more than two-thirds are women, six out of ten are low-income, half live in households with children, and 99 percent are minority. More than three-quarters operate their businesses part-time, often working a full-time or part-time job at the very same time.

These people are highly motivated and productive members of your constituencies, who are willing and, indeed, striving to bootstrap their way to economic self-sufficiency. With support from Commerce, PDP services can make their dreams into a reality.

After three years of providing high-quality and comprehensive services, we know firsthand how critical these services are to ensuring the success of microentrepreneurs. Not only do we increase the likelihood of their surviving, but also they've enabled many more to move into the mainstream economy. In the past year, several of our customers have moved their businesses from their homes to retail space. Many have reported an increased number of hours they

devote to business, and others report having hired employees, creating new jobs.

Philadelphia's neighborhood residents, and especially small-business owners, are facing even tougher times. We've been hearing more and more from those we serve that the economic slowdown has negatively affected our target market, perhaps even more than the general population. Slowing sales, reduced family incomes, layoffs, narrowing access to markets and credit have all impacted the microentrepreneurs that we serve.

During times such as these, economically disadvantaged and undercapitalized enterprises, the population that Commerce and PDP targets require even more support. In addition, with the weakening job market, both nationally and locally, more and more households face reduction in hours, stagnant wages, and unemployment. Many of these impacted individuals are forced to look at alternatives to make up for lost income, patching what they can with self-employment and home-based businesses.

So not only has the company created a greater need for the services to existing microentrepreneurs, it is also forcing more and

more low-income families to look at microenterprises as a way of replacing lost income, thus generating more interest in our service.

We have attached several articles from the Philadelphia Inquirer and the Philadelphia New Observer to be submitted to the record that profile some of our clients.

In closing, I urge your support for Commerce's budget and the neighborhood economic-development projects it supports. Thank you all for your time and your patience.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much. Are there any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Is Denise Perry here? Thank you.

While she's coming forward, let me -- Councilman Nutter would never forgive me if I forgot to mention that Rob Dubow's been here all day as well.

(Laughter.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: After Miss Perry, is there anyone else here who would

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

like to testify here tonight?

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. Identify yourself for the record.

MS. PERRY: Good evening. My name is Denise Perry, and I serve as Corporate Partnership Vice President and Director of Community Education for Lutheran Children and Family Service.

Good evening to all of the our honorable members of City Council and to others who are present as well. Lutheran Children and Family Service is a proud partner with the Department of Human Services as we seek to reduce abuse, strengthen families, and build communities in Philadelphia neighborhoods.

As we celebrate our 80th anniversary, I want you to know that we plan to return 100 foster children to their parents this year. We are hoping to create 125 adoptive homes as well. We will close cases on 100 families served in their own homes.

In Councilwoman President Verna's district, we operate an after-school program at Bartram High School for African teenagers. In

Councilman DiCicco's district, we administer to the South Eastern Philadelphia Collaborative for Children with major funding from William Penn, the 76ers, and the Houston Foundation grants.

In Councilwoman Tasco's district, we operate six after-school programs in public schools.

In Councilwoman Blackwell's district, we have resettled hundreds of refugees mostly from Africa.

In Councilman O'Neill's district, we will start up our Beacon School at George Washington High School on April 1st, in partnership with Safe and Sound.

I am telling you that OCFS is in the community, and we are a part of the community, and we love this great City of Philadelphia.

But we count on Philadelphia to provide adequate reimbursements so we can pay our staff members living wages, so that we can provide foster parents and children enough money to live. While we ourselves have been raising private dollars for these services, we can count on our partners and other agencies in the Philadelphia and the

Pennsylvania Council to have shown in great detail what it costs to do what we do for our children.

In child welfare services, the Commonwealth almost always passes along the cost-of-living increases to Philadelphia DHS. However, DHS has not passed along a cost-of-living increases to the deficits in our services to children-in-their-own-home programs. We cannot continue this service without rate increases. We need these increases in order to continue providing these quality services that LCFS is committed to.

We applaud the innovative approaches to serving children and families that Commissioner Martinez has supported, especially the neighborhood initiatives.

We know that the Beacon Schools and family centers are a wave of the future, giving us a way to help children and families achieve instead of fail.

We will be good partners with the City in seeking federal and state money to help these great programs survive.

Thank you for your attention. And we do ask that as you go through these budget hearings,

that you bear in mind there's a need for an increase in order for LCFS and its partners to continue the quality services that we provide to children and families in need.

Now you will hear from Pat Stanley.

MS. STANLEY: Hi. I'm Pat Stanley. I'm Program Director for in-home services at Lutheran Children and Family Service, and I want to thank the Department for the new, innovative programs in that new accountability and responsibility. It has challenged us all to get better than we've been, and we're learning from it.

But I also have to speak for the staff, and I am responsible for five programs, and among the five programs, we have thirty employees on staff. And some of them are the SCOH worker, and I have to say that my SCOH staff is not like the staff I heard about earlier, and I'm here to tell you about the people behind the appeal.

And to give you an example, I'm going to tell you about a phone call that I got from -- on the street today from one of our longest employees in these SCOH program, Mrs. Olivia Jefferson. Mrs. Jefferson is almost 67 years old and has been

serving families in Philadelphia for a very long time, and she's not going to give up.

She called to tell me about one of the families that she serves, and while the family is under a contract to get three hours of service direct face-to-face, she spends umpteen more hours. And this past weekend, with one of the children in crisis, she went out to support the mother. She was out all day Saturday, she was out today at Einstein, where the child was being evaluated to see if he'd be 302ed. She's going to get in the visits to the rest of her families; in fact, right now, she's at one of those families as I speak. She will get in all of the rest of her visits this week, and the rest of the staff does the same.

At the same time, Miss Jefferson is devoted to her community and to her family. She has a deaf grandchild she cares for.

She has been with us, as I said, for a long time. She certainly is vested in the pension fund, but cost-of-living increases would give her a better life, would give her grandson a better life, would help the niece that she's also raising, due to some of the devastation that has happened to her

family from the ills of the City, but she keeps going and she keeps serving.

Another one of the staff members I have is Mr. Tom Davis, and he's been with us for over five years, serving families, constantly going out at all hours to help reunify children with their families, assessing and recommending and testifying, when that's possible. And he's doing that. He has a family. He also donates time -- he used to play basketball for Delaware State and for the pro teams in Europe, and he's donating his time voluntarily, creating additional leagues for children throughout the City. He has taken in a nephew and his helping to raise him as well as his two daughters.

Cost-of-living increases are needed at a minimum to help them keep their families safe, healthy, and happy. And these are just two of the many staff members. And other agencies have staff members just like this that are devoted to the City, devoted to the children and families, supporting people who have had to deal with life's roughest challenges.

So anything that you can do to push that

along, encourage it, is greatly appreciated.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Yes, ma'am.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I just want to say something, and it's not a question, but it's -- my two babies went through the process of Lutheran Center, so it's a -- my children were adopted through their services, and you know who they are, those two guys, incredible individuals.

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We also note and we thank them for being here all day too, Commissioner Decker and Commissioner Gamble. We know it's a tough day. Thank you, thank you.

Please come forward. I saw one more individual. Is there anyone else whose name was passed over, who came in late, or who just came in and would like to testify? Thank you.

Is there anyone else? So we have one more individual after this.

Thank you very much.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please identify yourself for the record and welcome.

My name is Leslie Birch, and I'm a citizen here in Philadelphia, very proudly. I live in the Art Museum area. And I'm mainly here just to speak about those things environmental and educational, and I will try really hard to be brief.

Basically, there are those people in Philadelphia that -- you may not know them, but they are people that have taken something called an "eco team course," which is offered by the United Nations. Basically, a few people in a community may get together and choose to do this together. It's not an easy thing to do. Basically for a couple months, you're treated like a lab rat. Your whole house gets thoroughly investigated as far as, like, how long your showers are; how far you drive in the course of a day -- you know, the mileage, the gas you spend; how much heating you use; and

how your recycling/recycling skills are.

And you do this for a couple months in a row and, hopefully, by the end of everything, you learn how to improve yourself and those around you.

So I've basically undergone this, and I know other people have too, but it's sort of hard to come through a course like this and even to learn a lot more about environmental things. I mean, I've taken even other course work besides this. It has nothing to do with my line of work, I might add; I just feel like doing it. But it's really hard to put a lot of the things that you learn in place when you don't have the tools available to use.

So, first of all, I'm thanking Philadelphia majorly for putting in place a residential recycling program. I know in the Art Museum area, I see many people now driving to a playground to get rid of their goods and have them recycled.

I want to encourage everyone here to go further with that program and to add more funding. There is so much more education that needs to be done about this topic, even as far as precycling so

people have no need to take stuff to a recycling area to begin with.

And just also, to add more money will help to set up more locations. And I am sure that they are trying to hit major neighborhoods first, but there is a lot more to be done, and there are a lot of numbers, meaning, like, yogurt containers, which are probably, like, a number 5 -- I don't know if you guys are, like, up on your numbers on what's on the bottom of your containers, but there's a lot of things that I've really tried hard to get rid of in my life, but there's some I can't, and we don't recycle them here.

The closest place you can recycle these things is Pottstown, and I can tell you that Pottstown is a major haul to go to get that stuff there. I'm hoping some day, our recycling program can get it together that we can even have a truck that would collect goods to get up there. So that's my dream.

Secondary would be, along with someone else's statement here, that we also come down harder from a commercial standpoint. I agree; I have yet to work in a company that really recycled.

And I even have to say that some of them were faking recycling programs, and I think I'm even currently working in one, but luckily, that's in New Jersey, so you guys don't have to hear that story.

So, yes, please come down harder on them and force them to recycle and to follow rules.

The other issue would be composting. I'm hoping this ties in with recycling, and I've heard tell that there's a possibility that they will add composting as a possibility. I can say that I actually have a worm farm in my house, and I have this cute little condo that I'm renting and, believe me, nobody knows what's in my hall closet except for me, but there are worms in there, and I throw my kitchen debris in there,and those little red wriggler worms take care of that stuff. So there are possibilities.

But I still can't get rid of enough stuff, so I'm encouraging you to go ahead and add composting in a neighborhood fashion that we could do that.

And by doing all of this stuff, this helps to get stuff out of the mainstream and,

hopefully, even though there'd be a cost to set it up, it would also defray costs from having to get rid of it in landfills. That's sort of how I see it.

Also, I know that there is also education that needs to be done, and I just again want to make sure that we also, if any way possible, can add even more funding to Growing Greener -- I think that's the name of the program. I know Tim Schlitzer, and he and his crew do a great, kick-ass television show that people actually get to see, where they learn more about this stuff, and they see why it's important to do these programs. So continue with that.

Community-supported agriculture, yes, CSAs, yet another topic. Oh, my gosh, Philadelphia is actually getting organic produce, thanks to farmers that are in the area, and I want to make sure that we continue on that path and education for that as well. It's a very important thing; it helps people not travel so far, it helps not waste costs with bringing trucks in to deliver produce. It's just a very smart thing to do and it benefits everyone.

Let's see. Education about water. I know our water area near the Art Museum Water Works, I think it was called, is building a museum to help educate, so any funding that can go towards that, I'm all in favor of. Along with water, water is going to be one of the main topics all over this world, as far as environmental issues go.

I belong to something called "Pennsylvania Environmental Network," and I get e-mails daily, like all over, like, the East Coast and probably even further than that of what's going on, but water is going to be almost impossible to deal with soon for everyone, so I encourage Philadelphia to go in that direction, especially even with hazardous waste. Half the hazardous waste ends up in the water as well, so we have to watch what we're doing with that, so any education that Philadelphia can encourage, I also go with that.

Finally, in the "Land of Environmental," anything that the City of Philadelphia can do to encourage seeking green companies to do their work, that would be my above-all favorite thing; anything from building stadiums to you name it, anything we

can do to invest in those companies that are already taking the right steps and using the right materials that later we won't find out cause cancer or, like, anything from lumber to things that later will decay and get into the water or the soil, that's a great idea also.

And let's see, in the "Land of Education," I used to do educational theater in Philadelphia schools all over the place. Most of my issues were dealing with issues of race, things like HIV and AIDS, domestic violence, almost anything you name -- substance abuse, I've taught it. There are many kids that are getting wrong ideas coming from their parents, and it's not an easy thing to be a patient nowadays and try to raise your kid to do the right thing, but it's amazing how just a few times around with these kids, you could change them.

I'll never forget this kid that -- he was calling African-American names, like, all the time. Like, these were kids maybe, you know, about 12 years old, and they'd be saying stuff, and I think they would properly say "calling out each other." By the end of a session I had with this

one kid, I asked him, "So how do you feel about this kid now?" and the one kid said, "Well, actually, he's not so bad." And I'm, like, you know what I said, it's okay not to agree with your parents because sometimes they're not right and you have to make up your own mind.

So I guess what I'm saying is, I know that the teachers have it way hard out there because I was in their schools and I saw what was going on. The product that people are basically presenting with their children nowadays is a pretty difficult, one so I know schools is a hot topic right now anyway, but please, please, please, I beg you, anything that you can do to help those teachers to give them more resources and to help get these kids back on the right path, that's what I ask.

Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Councilman Rizzo. Did you have a question?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: No.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

much.

One other gentleman wanted to speak. Is there anyone else?

Thank you. I guess you will be last for the evening.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good evening. Thank you and welcome.

MR. AIRONE: My name is Al Airone. I'm a resident of your district, West Philadelphia. Good evening to you, good evening to other Councilmembers and my brother and sister Philadelphians.

I am also here to speak about recycling. I am a citizen of West Philadelphia, a member of several of the community organizations there. Most of the volunteers in charge of the partnership recycling site at 50th Street and Baltimore Avenue, which is one of several in the City, and I'm here representing Cedar Park neighbors, which is the sponsor of that site.

I had some prepared testimony. Much of what I wanted to say has already been said, so I'll try to make it brief and reiterate the important

points.

It really comes down to this: We do have a recycling program in the City, a citywide recycling program. I and all of the hundreds of people who contribute to our twice-monthly recycling center consider that to be a wonderful thing. It needs to be strengthened; I think everyone agrees on this.

I'm sure the Streets Commissioner has lots of things on his mind, but anything that can be done by City Council to increase the funding for the recycling program and, perhaps more importantly, to watch over it through their staffs to see that the program remains strong, that its leadership remains well staffed and effective, this would basically a big help.

A number of things have been mentioned by other people, and they were all right on the mark as to what needs to be done. A gentleman who lives only a few blocks from me a few speakers back mentioned education in his neighborhood on the greenway. Education could be -- the kind of education he's talking about, the education in the availability of recycling and how to go about it,

that could be extended throughout the City.

There are things that the City could do to make recycling easier, including more drop-off sites for the nice blue containers that everybody recognizes so well. That's a classic use of an icon that really will help spread the word about the program.

There are one or two other specific things that I know I'd like to mention. We'd like to see and -- but again, by "we," I mean everyone that I have ever spoken with in my activities would like to see the City move to a weekly recycling program. I think that this would help increase participation greatly by simplifying the program. I know I myself, with the current biweekly program, I consider myself a fairly avid and astute recycler, and I still find myself in front of the calendar, scratching my head, trying to figure out, Is this a recycling Tuesday or not?

If we move to a weekly program, we would remove that ambiguity. But I think, more importantly, it would enable more and more people to participate. And I think that's what has to happen with this program: It has to grow, it has

to recycle even more than the considerable amount that it's achieved so far.

I would also like to stress that recycling has at least the potential to provide a cash income to the City, either through lesser costs in recycling or through the value of the materials that it collects and hands over to commercial recyclers.

It all comes down to, again, we would like to see the program strengthened, increased, go to a weekly basis. We'd like to see more education and we would like to see more -- that the opportunities for recycling are spread throughout the City, as several of the speakers have mentioned.

I thank you for your patience. I know it's late, and I appreciate your attention to these matters. Thank you all.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you all.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Let me thank everyone for being here.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Madam Chair, Madam Chair?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes, Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Just one very quick announcement. As we were recognizing a variety of people, there are a couple other folks who work behind the scenes to actually make sure that all of this works for us.

We mentioned Mr. Dubow, who gets to give a lot of testimony and take a lot of Q and A, but no, I'm not mentioning him. But the person who works with him Sharon Kirschbaum, who actually gets our questions and then coordinates with Joan DePaul or sometimes Ann Kelly, they really make our lives a lot easier, and I wanted to recognize them.

And then everyone needs to recognize our good friend Josephine, who takes down everything that we say. No matter how inane, bizarre, or unusual, Josephine the stenographer takes down all of our information and gives us a great record for us to try to recreate and get something done around here, so I just wanted to recognize those folks as well.

3/18/02 FY '03 OPERATING BUDGET - PUBLIC TESTIMONY

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm glad you did. We needed that.

And let me say that this committee will stand in recess until Monday, April 8th, at 9:30 a.m. Again, thank you one and all.

(Applause.)

(Proceedings end at 7:26 p.m.)

- - -

CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing proceedings of the Council of the City of Philadelphia's meeting of the Committee of the Whole of Monday, March 18, 2002, are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

RE: Public Testimony on FY03 Operating Budget

_____,
Josephine Cardillo
Registered Professional Reporter
and Notary Public

_____,
Meghan Martella
Professional Reporter
and Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)