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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

PUBLIC HEARING

4

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON STREETS AND SERVICES

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Room 400 City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, April 8, 1998
9:25 a.m.

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10 BILL 980203 - An ordinance authorizing the
11 revision of lines and grades on a portion of
12 City Plan No. 307 of an area bounded by
13 Market Street, Juniper Street, Filbert
14 Street, and 13th Street by relocating the
easterly curb line of Juniper Street from
Commerce Street to Filbert Street a variable
distance westwardly, under certain terms
conditions.

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PRESENT: COUNCILMAN FRANK DICICCO, Chairman
COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

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John Connors, Officer Brickstone Realty	6
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Paul Deegan, Senior Vice President Philadelphia Industrial Development Corp.	12

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203

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

3 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Good morning. The
4 Committee on Streets and Services will now come to
5 order.

6 With me this morning are other members
7 of the Streets and Services Committee. To my left
8 is Councilman David Cohen, to my right is
9 Councilwoman Miller, and standing behind me a few
10 feet is Councilman Rizzo.

11 The clerk will read the title of the
12 first bill, the first and only bill.

13 THE CLERK: Bill No. 980203, an
14 ordinance authorizing the revision of lines and
15 grades on a portion of City Plan No. 307 of an
16 area bounded by Market Street, Juniper Street,
17 Filbert Street, and 13th Street by relocating the
18 easterly curb line of Juniper Street from Commerce
19 Street to Filbert Street a variable distance
20 westwardly, under certain terms conditions.

21 (Paul Lonie comes forward.)

22 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Good morning,
23 please state your name for the record, and spell
24 your last name, please.

25 MR. LONIE: Good morning, Councilman

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203
2 DiCicco and members of the committee. My name is
3 Paul Lonie, L-O-N-I-E. I'm the Manager of the
4 Survey Bureau in the Department of Streets. And
5 the Streets Department would like to offer
6 testimony on Bill 980203.

7 This is not an administration ordinance
8 but an ordinance requested by Mr. John Connors,
9 Vice President of Brickstone Company. The purpose
10 of this ordinance is to grant the authority to
11 relocate the easterly curb line of Juniper Street
12 from Commerce Street to Filbert Street a variable
13 distance westwardly in connection with the
14 conversion of the City Hall annex to a 500-room
15 hotel by Marriott.

16 This ordinance is supported by the
17 Department of Streets, and it is recommended to
18 the committee for favorable action.

19 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Are there any
20 questions for this witness from other members of
21 Council?

22 (No question.)

23 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Is there anyone
24 else here who wishes to testify?

25 (Marty Soffer comes forward.)

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203

2 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Please state your
3 name for the record.

4 MR. SOFFER: Good morning, Mr. Chairman
5 and members of the Streets Committee. My name is
6 Marty Soffer. And that's S-O-F-F-E-R.

7 The proposed ordinance authorizes the
8 revision of lines and grades from the City Plan by
9 relocating the easterly curb line of Juniper
10 Street from Commerce Street to Filbert Street to
11 permit the construction of a vehicular drop-off
12 area that will support the conversion of a vacant,
13 architecturally historic building into a Marriott
14 Hotel.

15 The City Planning Commission staff
16 approves this action, which supports the City's
17 redevelopment activities within the Convention
18 Center area.

19 Therefore, the Planning Commission
20 staff recommends that Bill No. 980203 be
21 approved. And it will be formally approved by the
22 Planning Commission tomorrow.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is there somebody
25 here who could tell us the effect of the

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203
2 revision? What does it mean to people, say, who
3 use the sidewalk?

4 MR. LONIE: Paul Lonie again. Mr.
5 Connors, I believe, has a sketch of the proposed
6 site, and I think he would be best to explain
7 exactly what his purposes are.

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. Connors, please
9 come forward and identify yourself for the record.

10 (Mr. Connors comes forward.)

11 MR. CONNORS: My name is John Connors,
12 C-O-N-N-O-R-S. I'm an officer of Brickstone
13 Realty, and our affiliate is the owner of the City
14 Hall annex, Annex Center Realty, Inc.

15 I think I'm going to let my architect,
16 Mr. Jim Platt, of Burt Hill Kosar & Rittelman,
17 explain what we are proposing.

18 COUNCILMAN COHEN: For the benefit of
19 the committee, could somebody explain the picture.

20 (Jim Platt comes forward.)

21 MR. PLATT: Yes. My name is Jim Platt.
22 I'm an architect with Burt Hill Kosar Rittelman.

23 And the proposed improvement in front
24 of the City Hall annex building involves a
25 vehicular drop-off area that's now part of Juniper

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203
2 Street.

3 And what we have proposed is to provide
4 two lanes of drop-off in front of the building and
5 to provide a grade access from the drop-off area
6 directly into the front main lobby area, which is
7 the existing lobby that will be restored.

8 There's a drop-off lane next to the
9 building, and there'll be a stacking lane for
10 three cars. We have provided a one-way exit onto
11 Filbert Street. We've provided a planting area in
12 front of our stacking lane that will have two
13 trees, a monument sign, and low ground cover.

14 We will also provide a new
15 port-cachere, which is a glass-and-steel canopy,
16 in front of the building to provide a covered
17 entryway for guests as they arrive at the front of
18 the hotel. The public sidewalk on Juniper Street
19 will continue through, as it does now, in front of
20 the hotel.

21 We have provided for the four lanes of
22 traffic to continue along Juniper Street, and
23 there is a single lane that will have a right turn
24 from Juniper onto Filbert Street.

25 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is Juniper Street

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203
2 the street that we generally think of as Market
3 Street, in front of the City Hall annex?

4 MR. PLATT: Yes, that's correct.

5 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That's technically
6 Juniper Street?

7 MR. PLATT: That's technically Juniper
8 Street, yes.

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: And where would the
10 entrance be?

11 MR. PLATT: The front door is right in
12 the middle of the building.

13 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is that where it is
14 now?

15 MR. PLATT: That's where it is now.

16 There's some plywood covering those,
17 and they've been covered for some time, so I can
18 see why it would be not so clear where the front
19 entrance is. But this is the main front door
20 right off of the plaza and into the hotel will be
21 right in this area.

22 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: I would assume
23 from looking at this island, or whatever we refer
24 to it as, that it will probably actually be a good
25 calming device. Because I know now, when people

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203
2 are traveling north and they're looking to go
3 either up Juniper or Filbert, there's really no --
4 there aren't any controls here.

5 And I myself see when I cross over
6 sometimes, it's very difficult because cars are
7 not looking for traffic coming from here, foot
8 traffic, and they're going straight in, and
9 there's always a lot of confusion.

10 So I think that it will add some sense
11 of, you know --

12 MR. CONNORS: It is true that the curb
13 line modification -- the radius of the curb line
14 was specifically designed to have a car making a
15 right turn reduce speed --

16 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Before they get
17 there.

18 MR. CONNORS: -- in order to get to
19 Filbert Street. Right now, they go around that
20 corner pretty quickly.

21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Where's the old
22 curb line?

23 MR. PLATT: The old curb line is about
24 right where the existing one is. I think it's out
25 in front. We're pushing it back about three feet.

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203

2 COUNCILMAN COHEN: One East Penn Square
3 is right next to it, it's the old Market Street
4 National Bank building.

5 MR. CONNORS: That's this one.

6 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That's there. What
7 separates the two buildings?

8 MR. PLATT: There's a street now,
9 Commerce Street.

10 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That's not used for
11 vehicular street traffic is it, Commerce Street?
12 Isn't that a very narrow --

13 MR. CONNORS: It's not very functional.
14 There's a nine-foot cartway.

15 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Nine-foot.

16 MR. CONNORS: So when a vehicle goes
17 down there, they typically have one wheel up on
18 the curb and one wheel down, so it's not a
19 commonly used street.

20 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: May I ask a quick
21 question? Taxi cab staging, where will that be?
22 Taxi cabs, where would tax cabs line up here?

23 Because taxi cabs always seem to be
24 where they're not supposed to be because no one
25 plans for the staging area for tax cabs. Where

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203
2 will that be?

3 MR. CONNORS: Well, one of the reasons
4 that we needed to create at least a three-car
5 queuing area out front was for taxi-cab-waiting,
6 and it's -- it's --

7 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: You know that's
8 where the doorman's going to park his friends.

9 MR. CONNORS: We're going to do the
10 best we can in managing that.

11 But the answer is that we did need a
12 need queueing lane and we do have a drop-off lane
13 that will handle, I believe, five cars, six, if
14 it's the right arrangement of cars.

15 Right now, the queueing for the taxi
16 queuing occurs in front of the big Marriott on the
17 1200 block of Filbert Street, and sometimes runs
18 up to the 1300 block, as you know.

19 And so we're hoping that we can improve
20 traffic flow by utilizing this device, this curb
21 line modification.

22 COUNCILMAN COHEN: What do you call
23 this area with the greenery?

24 MR. PLATT: That will be -- that will
25 be low planting. We'll probably have ground cover

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203
2 there below and put in new granite curbs and put
3 two trees.

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: That faces City
5 Hall?

6 MR. PLATT: Yes, that's correct.

7 MR. CONNORS: Not unlike the Wanamaker
8 Plaza.

9 COUNCILMAN COHEN: It was necessary, I
10 assume, to do that, to get the Mayor's approval?

11 (Laughter.)

12 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Doesn't he look out
13 the window right at this?

14 MR. PLATT: I'll let Mr. Connors answer
15 that one.

16 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Okay, any other
17 questions of Members of the Committee?

18 (No further questions at this time.).

19 (Paul Deegan comes forward.)

20 MR. DEEGAN: Good morning, Mr.
21 Chairman, members of the committee. My name is
22 Paul Deegan, D-E-E-G-A-N. I'm senior Vice
23 President of the Philadelphia Industrial
24 Development Corporation. And I'm here to testify
25 in support of the bill.

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203

2 PIDC and the Administration have been
3 working with the developer and owner of the annex
4 to convert the building into a Marriott Hotel.
5 We're very much in support of this project, and we
6 ask that the Council give bill favorable
7 consideration.

8 And we also ask that the rules of
9 Council be suspended so as to support first
10 reading of the bill at the next regularly
11 scheduled meeting of Council.

12 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you, Paul.

13 MR. DEEGAN: Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Is there anyone
15 else here who wishes to testify for or against the
16 bill?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Seeing no one,
19 this concludes the public hearing on the Committee
20 of Streets and Services.

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22 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: We now go to the
23 public meeting on the Committee of Streets and
24 Services.

25 The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen

1 COMMITTEE ON STREETS & SERVICES, BILL NO. 980203
2 for a motion on Bill No. 980203.

3 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. Chairman, I move
4 that Bill No. 980203 be approved and that the
5 rules of Council be suspended to permit first
6 reading at the next Council meeting.

7 (Duly seconded.)

8 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: It has been moved
9 and seconded that Bill No. 980203 be reported out
10 of committee with a favorable recommendation and
11 that the rules of Council be suspended.

12 All those in favor of the bill, signify
13 by saying aye.

14 Nay?

15 The bill is approved.

16 I thank all of your and thank the
17 Committee for coming down here this morning. I
18 appreciate your time.

19 (Adjourned at 9:40 a.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia of Wednesday, April 8, 1998 were
reported and accurately by me, and that this is a
correct transcript of same.

RE: COMMITTEE ON STREETS AND SERVICES

_____,
JOSEPHINE CARDILLO, RPR