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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON STREETS AND SERVICES

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Thursday, December 7, 2006, 9 o'clock a.m.

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BILL 060890 - Amending chapter of Philadelphia
Code entitled "Use of an Red Light Enforcement
System to Prevent Red Light Violations"...

10

BILL 060891 - Granting permission to Muhammad
R. Shaukat, owner and operator of newsstand
located at Broad and Montgomery to construct,
use, maintain...

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COUNCILMEMBERS PRESENT:

16

Frank DiCicco, Chair
Juan F. Ramos, Vice Chair
Darrell L. Clark
Donna Reed-Miller
Frank Rizzo
Daniel J. Savage

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1 12/7/06 STREETS/SERVICES - BILL 080690

2 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Good
3 morning. Good morning, everyone. We're
4 about to begin our public hearing.
5 Could I have everyone's attention,
6 please? Thank you.

7 We're about to begin the public
8 hearing of the Committee on Streets and
9 Services. My name is Frank DiCicco, and
10 I'm the chair of this committee.

11 To my extreme right is
12 Councilwoman Donna Reed-Miller. To my
13 immediate left is Councilman Clarke, and
14 just about ready to return to the table
15 is Councilman Rizzo. We do have a
16 quorum.

17 I would ask Mr. Abernathy to
18 read the title of the first bill.

19 THE CLERK: Bill No. 060890, an
20 ordinance amending Chapter 12-3000 of
21 the Philadelphia Code entitled "Use of
22 an Red Light Enforcement System to
23 Prevent Red Light Violations" by
24 authorizing the installation of red
25 light enforcement systems at the

1 12/7/06 STREETS/SERVICES - BILL 080690
2 intersection of Mascher Street at
3 Roosevelt Boulevard, and by reducing to
4 60 days the phase-in period during which
5 only warnings are used, all under
6 certain terms and conditions.

7 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Good
8 morning, gentlemen. Please identify
9 yourself for the record and proceed with
10 your testimony.

11 MR. VOGLER: Good morning,
12 Councilman DiCicco. My name is Chris
13 Vogler, V-O-G-L-E-R, and I'm the manager
14 of the Red Light Camera Program for the
15 Philadelphia Parking Authority.

16 I know a couple of my former
17 coworkers. As I've mentioned, I'm not
18 in Council more than when I worked here.
19 It may seem as such, but I'm not.

20 Good morning. As I said, my
21 name is Chris Vogler, and I'm the
22 manager of the Red Light Photo Camera
23 Program at the Philadelphia Parking
24 Authority. And I'm here to testify in
25 favor of Bill 060890, an ordinance which

1 12/7/06 STREETS/SERVICES - BILL 080690
2 authorizes the installation of red light
3 cameras on Roosevelt Boulevard at
4 Mascher Street.

5 To my right is Christopher Bee
6 of the Philadelphia Police Department,
7 who, in coordination with the
8 Philadelphia Parking Authority,
9 administers the program.

10 Again, I would like to thank
11 Councilman DiCicco and the members of
12 the committee for allowing me to testify
13 today. I will have abbreviated remarks
14 because the same members are here that
15 were here last week during my testimony
16 for Bill No. 060798 and 060802 for four
17 other intersections on the Boulevard.

18 As I mentioned previously last
19 week, there were four active
20 intersections in the City; there are now
21 five -- the three on Roosevelt Boulevard
22 at Red Lion, Grant, and Cottman Avenue;
23 Broad Street and Oregon Avenue, which
24 went active on October 31st; and 34th
25 and Grays Ferry, which, as I mentioned

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2 last week, was supposed to go active at
3 the end of last week, and it did last
4 Friday.

5 So now there are five active
6 intersections in the City. Broad Street
7 and Oregon Avenue and 34th and Grays
8 Ferry are in their 60-day warning
9 period.

10 This bill is the next piece of
11 the puzzle, as you would say, in dealing
12 with the very dangerous and unacceptable
13 swaying on the Roosevelt Boulevard. As
14 I mentioned last week, working with City
15 Council, the Parking Authority is trying
16 its best, in coordination with the
17 Police Department, of picking the worst
18 intersections on the Boulevard and
19 working towards having a comprehensive
20 plan from north to south along the
21 entire residential stretch of the
22 Boulevard in the City of Philadelphia to
23 expand the Red Light Camera Program,
24 because, as I mentioned before, the
25 program has been extremely successful in

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2 its first three locations.

3 Now, adding a camera system at
4 Mascher Street and the Boulevard, we
5 will go from Mascher Street, which is
6 one of the last intersections in the
7 southern part of Roosevelt Boulevard
8 before it comes an expressway, to South
9 Hampton Road, which is the northern-most
10 intersection in the City on Roosevelt of
11 having a red light camera enforcement
12 north to south along the entire
13 residential stretch of the Boulevard,
14 which, myself and the Parking Authority,
15 feels will continue to work with the
16 three current intersections to help
17 decrease the number of speeders, red
18 light runners, and pedestrian and
19 vehicle accidents on the Boulevard.

20 I, again, would like to thank
21 Councilman Clarke and the work of his
22 office in crafting this legislation and,
23 introducing it and sponsoring it.

24 I would also like to thank the
25 cosponsors Councilman Rizzo and

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2 Councilman Kelly.

3 And with that, I would like to
4 conclude my testimony with a request to
5 ask for a suspension of the rules to
6 allow for first reading at the next
7 Council session.

8 And I'll be happy to answer any
9 questions the committee may have.

10 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you.

11 The Chair recognizes Councilman
12 Rizzo.

13 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: First of
14 all, I'd like to congratulate you on the
15 success. The statistics are impressive
16 at the Grant Avenue, Red Lion, and
17 Cottman, the reduction in red light
18 runners and, subsequently, the reduction
19 in vehicle accidents at those three
20 locations.

21 The culture has changed, and I
22 appreciate that, but this leads me just
23 to publicly announce that next Tuesday,
24 the 12th, we start here at 10 o'clock,
25 and we're going to have hearings on,

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2 again, other improvements to the
3 Roosevelt Boulevard, and then we recess
4 here at Council and will move the
5 hearing to Cora Services on Verree Road
6 at 2 o'clock.

7 And we expect PennDOT and,
8 hopefully, Mr. Vogler, yourself, to
9 report to the citizens and listen to the
10 citizens about what they believe could
11 improve, but I personally believe that
12 the red light cameras and the additional
13 cameras will lend to making the roadway
14 alone a safer place.

15 And then the other improvements
16 that we can develop will certainly even
17 enhance that.

18 So congratulations on a program
19 that I believe is working well and fair.

20 MR. VOGLER: Thank you very
21 much, Councilman.

22 I would like to add quickly
23 briefly that I would like to thank you
24 for your resolution. The Paring
25 Authority, we will be here next Tuesday.

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2 And as I mentioned in the
3 testimony last week and at a press
4 conference, that yourself and some of
5 the other Councilmembers at Council --
6 Councilwoman Krajewski, Councilman
7 O'Neill, Councilman Kelly -- about
8 inoculative by State Representative
9 George Kenny approximately six weeks ago
10 to bring speed cameras to the Boulevard.

11 And as I mentioned last week,
12 and I'll say it again briefly, the Red
13 Light Camera Program is very effective,
14 but it's just a piece of the puzzle on
15 the Boulevard.

16 Red light running is a
17 significant problem on the Boulevard.
18 But also, a number of the accidents and
19 pedestrian fatalities are because of
20 people speeding not just through lights,
21 not just at intersections, but along the
22 length of the Boulevard.

23 And I do think next week that
24 that's one of the things we want to talk
25 about because this is a part of an

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2 overall plan which, you know, you're
3 going to talk about.

4 And because this is just a
5 piece of the puzzle, this doesn't finish
6 the puzzle for the Boulevard.

7 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, I'll
8 make sure that we have not neglected to
9 invite Representative Kenny to that
10 hearing.

11 And also, if you could just
12 briefly comment. I understand the new
13 phase, the new generation of red light
14 cameras, will have the ability to do
15 more, something about monitoring speeds
16 on green?

17 MR. VOGLER: Yes. Actually,
18 the current apparatus that is on the
19 Boulevard has that capability, and that
20 would be something that the Parking
21 Authority --

22 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Could you
23 describe what that is?

24 MR. VOGLER: It's just more or
25 less is -- briefly, it does have the

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2 capability to measure speed through the
3 phase by the taking of two photos, just
4 like you would when going through an
5 intersection.

6 The red light camera system, as
7 I've mentioned previously, as State
8 legislation has provided for us in the
9 City, the sensors are not digital;
10 they're in the ground.

11 So, you know, when an
12 automobile hits the sensors before the
13 stopper on the red light, the camera is
14 activated.

15 It will more or less be using
16 the same technology on the green phase
17 'cause, you know, the car hits the
18 intersection during the green phase too,
19 and we'll just be able to operate the
20 sensors on that green phase and more or
21 less just take what happens on red, and
22 just do it for both phases.

23 COUNCILMAN RIZZIO: Thank you.

24 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you.

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2 Any other questions for this
3 witness?

4 (No further questions.)

5 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Sergeant
6 Bee, are you testifying?

7 SERGEANT BEE: Yes, I am.

8 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Please
9 identify yourself for the record and
10 proceed with your testimony.

11 SERGEANT BEE: Sergeant
12 Christopher Bee. I'm from the
13 Philadelphia Police Department Special
14 Patrol Bureau.

15 Chairman DiCicco, Councilwoman
16 Miller, Councilman Clarke, Councilman
17 Rizzo, thank you again for inviting me
18 to speak today here regarding the red
19 light camera enforcement.

20 A few years ago, State Farm
21 Insurance Company compiled a list of the
22 most dangerous intersections, as you've
23 heard before, and Philadelphia had the
24 two worst intersections, being Grant
25 Avenue and also Red Lion and the

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2 Boulevard.

3 Today, these intersections have
4 red light cameras at their
5 intersections, and we're happy to report
6 that the impact has been very
7 successful.

8 Keeping public safety in mind,
9 we're here today to support the
10 installation of additional red light
11 cameras throughout the City to enhance
12 the safety of vehicular traffic and also
13 for our citizens.

14 The roles of agencies regarding
15 red light camera enforcement are
16 certainly circumscribed under State law.
17 The Philadelphia Police Department has a
18 relatively narrow role in this, but it
19 is important. Thus, we do final review
20 and approval of these red light
21 citations and we work hand in hand with
22 the Philadelphia Parking Authority.

23 The program has been extremely
24 successful in re-educating drivers. In
25 addition to re-educating drivers, red

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2 light camera enforcement keeps heavily
3 traveled routes clear while allowing
4 citations to be issued. It also allows
5 police officers, who would otherwise be
6 citing violators, to focus on other
7 enforcement and emergency 9-1-1 needs.

8 Early critics of the Red Light
9 Camera Program allege that operations of
10 these cameras would cause drivers to
11 stop suddenly to avoid being cited, thus
12 causing rear-end collisions and
13 nullifying the very purpose of the red
14 light cameras.

15 Experience has shown that this
16 concern is unfounded. Intersections
17 that have red light cameras are now
18 safer.

19 One death is tragic and,
20 unfortunately, this year, there have
21 been far too many people killed
22 involving vehicles in the City. There
23 are many more vehicles on the roads and
24 highways, requiring new enforcement
25 strategies to be implemented to keep

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2 roads and citizens safe, and the red
3 light camera enforcement is certainly
4 one of them.

5 In closing, as a result of
6 positive impact experienced with the Red
7 Light Camera Program, the Police
8 Department supports the installation and
9 use of additional red light system
10 citywide.

11 Thank you very much. If you
12 have any questions, I'll be happy to
13 answer them.

14 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you,
15 Sergeant.

16 Mr. Vogler, I think in either
17 one of our prior committee hearings or
18 just in informal conversations with
19 either you or Mr. Finnerty, I
20 mentioned -- and I know there are a lot
21 of dangerous intersections or
22 intersections that are prone for people
23 to run red lights.

24 But the intersections around
25 this very building in which we're

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2 sitting in is probably one of the worse
3 areas in the City. I mean, I
4 continually see people running these red
5 lights constantly.

6 Legislation would be required
7 to request those for that to happen here
8 as well, right? For having the lights?

9 MR. VOGLER: Yes.

10 And if I may comment, you did
11 send a letter to the Parking Authority
12 actually a couple months ago listing a
13 number of intersection's in your
14 district. A number of them were -- are
15 essentially in the area that you do
16 represent.

17 I could tell you for the record
18 now that some of them are ones that
19 we're going to look at more closer and
20 possibly do what we call "a VIM study,"
21 which is just a study over a period of
22 time just to see on average how many
23 cars go through the intersection on a
24 red phase.

25 Specifically in your district,

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2 actually, the one that has -- the
3 Parking Authority has the most interest
4 in using accident data because accident
5 data is the main criteria for when we
6 start the process, is actually Aramingo
7 and Lehigh.

8 We were out and did an onsite
9 visit actually during the time of
10 schools being let out. And, as you
11 know, that intersection is a wide
12 intersection, and it's really the
13 gateway to Port Richmond if you're
14 coming up Aramingo or going down
15 Aramingo or going below that.

16 And out of the intersections in
17 your district, that is one that the
18 Parking Authority does have an interest
19 in because of the data. We will
20 definitely look into that, most
21 definitely.

22 There are some other ones in
23 the City. There were a couple on Vine
24 Street; I think Eighth and Vine is one
25 of your requests, and it looks like it

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2 fits the criteria to look at closer.

3 And myself and the Parking
4 Authority would be more than happy to
5 work with yourself or with any other
6 individual Councilmembers that have
7 concerns. I know Councilwoman Tasco,
8 we've been in touch with her office with
9 a couple intersections in her district.

10 And some of problems, though --
11 it looks like an intersection is bad,
12 but on the accident data, it doesn't
13 show up.

14 And one of the reasons I think
15 that occurs -- and some of the
16 intersections in Center City fit that
17 bill -- is 'cause a lot of it is, you
18 know, the whole Don't Block the Box
19 Initiative that was undertaken, I think,
20 about two years ago.

21 That is a big problem. There's
22 not as much red light running to a
23 degree as people entering the
24 intersection and then are stuck there.
25 And then the light turns. And the

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2 people that have that green, to use a G
3 or a GP version of what they would say
4 or do, they're going 'cause they feel
5 they have the right-of-way, and that is
6 what is the cause of a number of those
7 accidents, not somebody blowing a red
8 light specifically.

9 But there are some in Center
10 City that do fit the bill, especially on
11 Vine Street. They want to get to one
12 place, and just 'cause that light turns,
13 it doesn't necessarily mean that's going
14 to stop them from getting to where they
15 want to go.

16 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Was City
17 Hall on my list of requests?

18 MR. VOGLER: Yes.

19 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: It was? I
20 didn't recall.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I have a
23 question.

24 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Councilman
25 Rizzo.

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2 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: You know,
3 you talk about "Don't Block the Box."
4 One of the negatives that commerce has
5 in the Center City is the fact that you
6 could miss two, three cycles of a
7 traffic light. All the signage in the
8 world -- "Don't Block the Box," the
9 fine -- if there's no enforcement --

10 MR. VOGLER: That's --

11 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Without
12 enforcement, it's a waste of money on
13 the signs.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you.

16 Are there any others questions
17 for these witnesses?

18 Councilwoman Miller.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good
20 morning. I don't have a question; I
21 just have a comment.

22 I think it's important that we
23 educate and continue to educate the
24 public on crossing the street properly.

25 The red lights help. You know,

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2 all these things help, and I think we
3 should do all of the above.

4 But I think we still have to
5 tell people and remind them, you know,
6 Philadelphia is a city of jaywalkers.
7 And we have to remind people and we have
8 to reinforce that these mechanisms only
9 work when people are crossing the street
10 properly.

11 MR. VOGLER: Absolutely.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We all
13 jaywalk.

14 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you,
15 Councilwoman.

16 Also let the record reflect
17 that two other members of this committee
18 have joined us: Vice chair to my
19 immediate right, Councilman Ramos; and
20 to my far right, Councilman Savage.

21 Are there any other questions
22 for these witnesses?

23 (No further questions.)

24 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Seeing
25 none, will the clerk please read the

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2 title of the next bill.

3 Thank you gentlemen.

4 THE CLERK: Bill No. 060891, an

5 ordinance granting permission to

6 Muhammad R. Shaukat, owner and operator

7 of the newsstand located on the

8 southeast corner of Broad Street and

9 Montgomery Avenue, to construct, use,

10 and maintain overhead electrical and

11 telecommunications lines from the

12 existing utility pole over and across

13 the public right-of-way for the purposes

14 of supplying electrical service and

15 telephone services to said newsstand.

16 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Good

17 morning, Mr. Mautz.

18 MR. MAUTZ: Good morning,

19 Chairman and members of the committee.

20 My name is William Mautz, and I'm a

21 construction engineer with the Streets

22 Department, and I'm here to offer the

23 following testimony for Bill No. 060891.

24 This bill grants permission to

25 Muhammad Shaukat, owner of the newsstand

1 12/7/06 STREETS/SERVICES - BILL 060891
2 at Broad and Montgomery Avenue, to
3 construct, use, and maintain overhead
4 electrical and telecommunications lines
5 from an existing utility pole over and
6 across the public rights-of-way for the
7 purpose of supplying electrical and
8 telephone service to the newsstand.

9 The Streets Department has
10 reviewed the construction plans for this
11 project and has no objection to the
12 passage of the bill.

13 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you.
14 Thank you, Mr. Mautz.

15 Are there any questions from
16 the committee?

17 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Councilman
19 Rizzo.

20 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Was there
21 any effort to engineer this so that it
22 could be underground?

23 MR. MAUTZ: No.

24 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Why?

25 MR. MAUTZ: There is an

1 12/7/06 STREETS/SERVICES - BILL 060891

2 existing pole on Montgomery Avenue that
3 has telephone and electrical service,
4 and there's nothing in the Code that
5 would require them to go underground.

6 COUNCILMAN RIZZ0: So, in other
7 words, they're just going to run the
8 wire with existing wire.

9 MR. MAUTZ: That's correct.

10 COUNCILMAN RIZZ0: Fair enough.
11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you.

13 Any other questions from the
14 members of the committee?

15 (No questions.)

16 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Is there
17 anyone else here to testify for or
18 against this bill.

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Seeing
21 none, this concludes the public hearing
22 on the Committee of Streets and
23 Services.

24 * * *

25 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: We will

1 12/7/06 STREETS/SERVICES PUBLIC MEETING

2 now go into the public meeting.

3 The Chair recognizes Councilman
4 Ramos.

5 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you,
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 I move that Bill No. 060890 be
8 reported out of committee with a
9 favorable recommendation and further
10 move that the rules of Council be
11 suspended to permit first reading of
12 this bill at our next Council session.

13 (Motion seconded.)

14 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: It's been
15 properly moved and seconded that Bill
16 No. 060890 be reported out of this
17 committee with a favorable
18 recommendation and a further
19 recommendation that the rules of Council
20 be suspended.

21 All those in favor will signify
22 by saying aye.

23 Those opposed?

24 The bill's approved.

25 Councilman Ramos?

1 12/7/06 STREETS/SERVICES PUBLIC MEETING

2 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I move that
3 Bill No. 060891 be reported out of
4 committee with a favorable
5 recommendation and further move that
6 rules of Council be suspended so as to
7 permit first reading at our next Council
8 meeting.

9 (Motion seconded.)

10 COUNCILMAN DICICCO: It's been
11 properly moved and seconded that Bill
12 No. 060891 be reported out of this
13 committee with a favorable
14 recommendation and that the rules of
15 Council be suspended so as to permit
16 first reading at our next Council
17 session.

18 All those in favor, signify by
19 saying aye.

20 Those opposed?

21 The bill is approved. This
22 concludes the public meeting of the
23 Committee on Streets and Services.

24 Thank you all for attending.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the

proceedings of the City of Philadelphia

Council Committee on Streets and Services are

contained fully and accurately in the

stenographic notes taken by me on Thursday,

December 7, 2006, and that this is a true and

correct statement of same.

JOSEPHINE CARDILLO
Registered Professional Reporter

(The foregoing certification

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