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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
PUBLIC HEARING
COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
and
THE HOMELESS
- - -
Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, June 14, 2006, 3:15 p.m.

- - -
060350 - Resolution approving the annual Program
Statement and Budget for the expenditure
of the Neighborhood Transformation
Initiative (NTI) Bond Proceeds for Fiscal
Year 2007.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL, Chair
COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN FRANK DI CICCIO
COUNCILMAN JUAN F. RAMOS
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS-BROWN
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED-MILLER

- - -
V A R A L L O Incorporated
Litigation Support Services
1835 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
215.561.2220 215.567.2670

1 Bill 060350 - 6/14/06

2 - - -

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

4 - - -

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL (Chair):

6 Good afternoon. Welcome, one and all. We
7 invite you to our hearing before the
8 Committee on Housing, Neighborhood
9 Development and the Homeless.

10 This is with regard to Resolution
11 060350 which deals with the Neighborhood
12 Transformation Initiative Program Statement
13 and Budget for fiscal year '07.

14 Chair notes that we have a quorum
15 present. To my left is Councilwoman Donna
16 Miller; to my right, Councilman Juan Ramos;
17 to his right, Councilman Frank DiCicco.

18 We thank you all for being here.
19 Thank you, Councilman.

20 And we will ask the Clerk to read
21 the title of this Resolution.

22 THE CLERK: Resolution 060350,
23 approving the Annual Program Statement and
24 Budget for the expenditure of the
25 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative Bond

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2 Proceeds for Fiscal Year 2007.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
4 very much.

5 Eva Gladstein, Director of
6 Neighborhood Transformation is here. We
7 invite you to come and give your statement.

8 We assume Michael Groman, Senior
9 Director of Philadelphia Green is here.

10 UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I'm representing
11 Michael Groman.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

13 And we note that Councilman Darrell
14 Clarke is also here.

15 And we'll ask, is there anyone else
16 here who will be testifying?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Then we
19 assume you are all proud supporters of this
20 program.

21 All right. Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
24 very much.

25 Please identify yourself and begin

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2 your testimony, Miss Gladstein.

3 MS. GLADSTEIN: Good afternoon. My
4 name is Eva Gladstein. I'm Director of
5 Neighborhood Transformation for
6 Philadelphia. And I brought a cheering
7 squad of other City agencies who are
8 participants in the program and supporters,
9 and who are available to answer any
10 questions that members of Council may have.

11 I'm testifying today in support of
12 Resolution Number 060350, approving the
13 fiscal year '07 Program Statement and
14 Budget for the expenditure of N.T.I. bond
15 proceeds.

16 In January 2000, Philadelphia's
17 neighborhoods faced the challenges of
18 blight, abandonment, and the quality of
19 life the residents suffered.

20 Over the last six years,
21 Philadelphia has become home to an active
22 real estate market, energetic economic and
23 community development activity, and
24 residents are excited by new neighborhoods,
25 a transformed Philadelphia.

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2 In April 2001, Mayor John F. Street
3 unveiled the Neighborhood Transformation
4 Initiative, a \$296 million strategy to
5 eradicate decades of blight and stimulate
6 new investment in our neighborhoods.

7 Today our investments are paying off
8 in ways that no one could have imagined.
9 Increased home values are creating new
10 wealth in communities.

11 Police continue to shut down
12 notorious drug corners, and our citizens
13 walk on cleaner and safer streets.

14 Our neighborhood commercial
15 corridors will be better positioned to
16 compete in the marketplace.

17 The administration set forth a
18 number of goals for Neighborhood
19 Transformation Initiative, and I'm proud to
20 say today that we have met or exceeded many
21 of those goals.

22 By demolishing more than 6,000
23 dangerous buildings, we have eliminated a
24 significant threat to public safety. This
25 year we are on target to complete the

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2 remaining 1100 demolitions in the N.T.I.
3 targeted demolition program.

4 We are also completing the
5 transition of Project Management from Hill
6 International to the City's Department of
7 Licenses and Inspections.

8 Best practices in the areas of
9 decision-making, demolition specifications,
10 procurement and employment will be
11 integrated into the City's operations.

12 N.T.I. continues to meet its
13 participation and employment projections.
14 As of April 2006, Philadelphia residents
15 comprise 79 percent of the work force and
16 80 percent of the total work hours on jobs
17 created by N.T.I. demolition projects.

18 Minority and women workers
19 respectively constitute 71 percent and 2
20 percent of the N.T.I. demolition work
21 force, performing 85 percent of all N.T.I.
22 work hours.

23 The City has awarded \$26 million in
24 demolition contracts to minority-owned
25 firms and \$5.5 million to firms owned by

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2 women. These businesses represent 47
3 percent of all N.T.I. demolition contracts.

4 Blight removal activities continue
5 to improve the look and feel of our
6 neighborhoods, clearing the way for new
7 development and renewed pride.

8 During fiscal year '06, crews from
9 the Managing Director's Office removed
10 graffiti from 30,000 properties and cleaned
11 8,000 lots of 4,700 tons of trash.

12 Through a partnership with the
13 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, three
14 million square feet of vacant land was
15 greened and fenced through fiscal year '05.

16 During this fiscal year, an
17 additional 213,000 square feet of vacant
18 land was greened.

19 With the assistance of nine
20 community-based organizations, employing 70
21 neighborhood residents, this formerly
22 blighted vacant land is now maintained.

23 The N.T.I. five-year plan envisioned
24 development of 6,000 new units of market
25 rate housing.

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2 Today, more than 10,000 new market
3 rate housing units are planned, under way
4 or completed.

5 We have also far surpassed our
6 five-year goal of 3,500 affordable housing
7 units, completing 6,175 units.

8 To complement this surge in
9 construction, we are strengthening
10 neighborhoods by investing N.T.I. bond
11 funds in existing homes, mostly owned by
12 residents who have lived in the City
13 through the course of blight and now the
14 current prosperity.

15 Over the past five years, the City
16 has directed more than \$92.3 million in
17 grant and loan dollars to more than 19,000
18 homeowners.

19 In order to help our most vulnerable
20 homeowners, we have increased funding for
21 the basic systems repair program in fiscal
22 year '05 and we doubled the budget for the
23 adaptive modification program two years in
24 a row.

25 For fiscal year '07 we are proposing

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2 an additional \$800,000 be added to the
3 adaptive modification budget to further
4 support vulnerable residents.

5 These modifications average 15 to 20
6 thousand dollars per retrofit, and
7 currently there are almost 1,000 residents
8 on the waiting list. The additional
9 \$800,000 will provide repair and retrofit
10 to about 53 homes.

11 Home ownership continues to be a
12 priority for N.T.I. and residents. New
13 loan products are helping people avoid
14 predatory lenders, and we continue to reach
15 out to homeowners through the Don't Borrow
16 Trouble and Protected by Knowledge
17 campaigns.

18 In fiscal year '05, more than 900
19 first-time home buyers received settlement
20 grants.

21 During this fiscal year more than
22 900 home buyers have already received
23 settlement grants of \$800, and we are
24 proposing \$900,000 be added to the
25 settlement grant and assistance program for

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2 fiscal year '07.

3 Home by Now, our employer-assisted
4 housing program, is making home ownership a
5 reality for employees of local businesses.

6 Under contract to the Office of
7 Housing, the Greater Philadelphia Urban
8 Affairs Coalition has a leadership role in
9 the implementation of this program, which
10 uses N.T.I. bond proceeds to match employer
11 home buying assistance up to \$3,000.

12 As of April, 2006, 26 employers have
13 enrolled in the program, 46 employees have
14 received housing counseling, and 35 homes
15 were purchased in Philadelphia
16 neighborhoods.

17 As of July 1, we will bring elements
18 of this program in-house. This will allow
19 the City to work more closely with
20 G.P.U.A.C. to market the program to
21 employers and thereby increase home buying
22 opportunities.

23 We are also committed to seeking new
24 resources for housing and community
25 development activities.

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2 During fiscal year 2006, the Housing
3 Trust Fund was created, to provide an
4 infusion of needed capital for affordable
5 housing, in the face of shrinking Federal
6 funding.

7 In addition to the \$1.5 million of
8 N.T.I. bond proceeds, the Trust Fund is
9 supported with a surcharge from document
10 recording fees, estimated at \$10 million a
11 year.

12 The first request for a proposal
13 using trust funds was issued in fiscal year
14 '06.

15 The cornerstone funding for N.T.I.
16 is provided through bond funding financing.
17 The total budget is \$296 million, of which
18 \$43.5 million are taxable bonds for land
19 assembly and loan programs.

20 \$45 million is constituted by
21 qualified redevelopment bonds for specific
22 redevelopment activities, such as
23 acquisition and demolition in six target
24 areas, and \$207.5 million are tax exempt
25 government purpose bonds for public safety

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2 activities such as demolition, home repair,
3 and other physical improvement grant
4 programs.

5 For fiscal year '07, we are
6 proposing a budget of \$82,362,279, that
7 will support our core activities such as
8 demolition, housing and neighborhood
9 preservation, technology improvements, and
10 improvements to neighborhood commercial
11 corridors.

12 The fiscal year '07 budget includes
13 adjustments that I mentioned previously in
14 the budgets of the settlement grant
15 assistance adaptive modification program,
16 and affordable housing development.

17 These proposed adjustments are
18 informed by an evaluation of the demand,
19 rate of expenditure and impact of these
20 N.T.I. program activities.

21 We are proposing the allocation of
22 900,000 from the affordable rental
23 development line item to settlement grant
24 assistance.

25 We are proposing the reallocation of

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2 800,000 from that same line item to the
3 adaptive modification program.

4 The resulting deduction of \$1.7
5 million to the affordable housing line item
6 will be made up by C.D.B.G., as well as
7 other non N.T.I. funds.

8 Another significant change this year
9 is an increased investment in the Green
10 City Strategy.

11 Using non N.T.I. resources, we have
12 increased the City's investment from \$2
13 million to \$3 million. This will enable
14 the city, in partnership with the
15 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, to
16 green additional vacant land, maintain the
17 previously improved sites, expand the
18 community-based land maintenance efforts,
19 and to create a new street tree planting
20 program.

21 An emphasis on commercial corridors
22 during fiscal year '06 is a gateway to new
23 phases of neighborhood transformation which
24 we expect to fully implement in '07.

25 In February 2006, a request for

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2 proposals was issued for neighborhood
3 projects aligning with the commercial
4 corridor support program of N.T.I.

5 Generally, the communities that will
6 receive funding will be geographically
7 diverse, leverage other investment, have
8 feasible corridor development plans, and
9 have the capacity to partner with the
10 government.

11 We have been working with District
12 Council members and the City's economic
13 development entities, to identify
14 appropriate corridor investments.

15 As a result of meetings with
16 District Council members, N.T.I. is able to
17 understand the vision, goals and priorities
18 for the stabilization and enhancement of
19 commercial corridors, and to make funding
20 and investment decisions accordingly.

21 Building on this experience, we have
22 developed the Restore Philadelphia
23 Corridors program, designed to revitalize
24 neighborhood commercial corridors
25 throughout the City and reestablish their

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2 historic role as central places to shop, to
3 work, and to meet neighbors.

4 The Restore Philadelphia Corridors
5 Program will increase attention to and
6 investment in neighborhood commercial
7 corridors.

8 In order to make the corridors more
9 welcoming to residents and businesses,
10 Restore will direct significant funds to
11 streetscape enhancements and capital
12 improvements to neighborhood commercial
13 corridors.

14 The administration was pleased to
15 transmit to City Council on June 1st an
16 Ordinance that would authorize a tax exempt
17 bond issue of \$150 million to help fund
18 this program, as well as to provide
19 critical support to Philadelphia's cultural
20 corridors.

21 We are excited about working with
22 City Council on this program over the
23 summer, and we look forward to introduction
24 of the Ordinance in the fall.

25 The integration of the City's

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2 neighborhood economic development
3 activities with N.T.I. is a necessary step
4 towards holistic neighborhood change.

5 The significant impacts we have made
6 in blight removal, housing development and
7 preservation, and improved government
8 delivery systems must be supported by
9 strategic investments in neighborhood
10 commerce.

11 Working with City Council, we have
12 helped create strong residential markets in
13 Philadelphia's neighborhoods.

14 Now is the time to invest in
15 commercial corridors that will serve as
16 healthy, vibrant hubs for these steadily
17 improving neighborhoods.

18 Our collective efforts will help
19 realize Mayor Street's vision that all
20 neighborhoods will be great places to live,
21 work, learn, shop and play.

22 Madam Chairwoman and members of the
23 Committee, I would also like to take this
24 opportunity to thank you and to acknowledge
25 your contributions to the Neighborhood

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2 Transformation Initiative.

3 I've truly enjoyed working with you
4 throughout the last year. Without your
5 support, our work and these achievements
6 would not have been possible.

7 I respectfully request your
8 favorable consideration of Resolution
9 Number 060350.

10 Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Are there questions for this
14 witness?

15 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Thank
17 you, Madam Chair.

18 Good afternoon.

19 MS. GLADSTEIN: Good afternoon.

20 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: With
21 regards to process, how have other
22 departments been intimately involved in
23 what you're doing? And how did they
24 participate in the testimony you ultimately
25 provided today?

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2 MS. GLADSTEIN: The people sitting
3 behind me have all provided nuggets of the
4 information that I've presented today.

5 As you know, Neighborhood
6 Transformation, N.T.I., is really a
7 strategy. It's not an operating
8 department. And as such, all of the
9 investments are really directed to the
10 appropriate City departments.

11 And that is why you see the City
12 Planning Commission, the Office of Housing,
13 the Redevelopment Authority, Department of
14 Licenses and Inspections, the Office of
15 O.E.S.S., the Historical Commission -- and
16 I'm probably leaving some of my --

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I like the
18 yellow tee shirts, Community Land Care,
19 myself.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. GLADSTEIN: Okay.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right
23 John Fenton, we love you.

24 MS. GLADSTEIN: Not to mention the
25 Horticultural Society and the

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2 community-based organizations.

3 So, it really is a very...

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN:

5 Integrated?

6 MS. GLADSTEIN: ...coordinated,

7 collaborative kind of process.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Okay.

9 I do know well of the Philadelphia
10 Horticultural Society.

11 And I need to join Chairman Jannie
12 Blackwell in just giving the work they do
13 kudos, and how they are intimately woven
14 into N.T.I.

15 What about Commerce and specifically
16 P.C.D.C. which historically has been
17 principally responsible for corridor
18 activity?

19 MS. GLADSTEIN: The Philadelphia
20 Commercial Development Corporation is one
21 of the lynch pins of our economic
22 development activity and one of our key
23 economic development partners.

24 They're simply not here today
25 because we're not testifying about the

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2 commercial corridor program per se.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Yes.

4 MS. GLADSTEIN: They were available
5 when we were here for the Community
6 Development Block Grant Plan hearings
7 previously.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Okay.

9 MS. GLADSTEIN: We are working with
10 them. But to talk substantively, we are
11 working with them to integrate various
12 resources that are available for
13 neighborhood economic development. And
14 they represent significant capacity in
15 terms of their staff.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Right.

17 MS. GLADSTEIN: And they're also a
18 significant recipient of our economic
19 development funds, primarily through the
20 Community Development Block Grant.

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Yes.

22 MS. GLADSTEIN: So we are
23 coordinating the Community Development
24 Block Grant resources with the N.T.I.
25 resources.

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2 And last year it was only \$2
3 million. We're hoping with the new bond
4 issue it would be about another \$65
5 million.

6 Also, with general funds that are
7 spent through the economic stimulus program
8 on various economic development activities,
9 and then with state and Federal resources.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Sure.

11 MS. GLADSTEIN: So, we are trying to
12 use each source of funds in the most
13 strategic way to support an integrated
14 strategy.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Sure.

16 And a very layered strategy as well.

17 MS. GLADSTEIN: Yes.

18 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: So the
19 work that they've done -- and I'm relying
20 purely on the testimony I've heard them
21 offer in recent years, with regards to the
22 priority listing they've given to a number
23 of business corridors -- will be factored
24 into what you just articulated, correct?

25 MS. GLADSTEIN: Yes.

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2 We are working with them, with our
3 staff, because we had staff who work on
4 corridors as well, and with the Mayor's
5 Business Action Team.

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Okay.

7 MS. GLADSTEIN: To have a plan that
8 makes sure that there is adequate
9 deployment of resources on each corridor.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Okay.

11 MS. GLADSTEIN: Some corridors are
12 very well functioning and just need a kind
13 of check-in.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Yes.

15 MS. GLADSTEIN: Others need more
16 technical assistance and capacity building.
17 And we are working directly with them to
18 prioritize and to determine which of those
19 entities will be sort of for point for each
20 corridor --

21 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Sure.
22 Sure.

23 MS. GLADSTEIN: -- within the range
24 of corridors that we service.

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Okay.

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2 So, do you have a time frame or a milestone
3 date when you expect to have identified the
4 top three or the top six corridors that
5 become lucky for any number of, you know,
6 criteria-related reasons?

7 MS. GLADSTEIN: We anticipate there
8 will be many more corridors than that. And
9 we hope to be able to continue working over
10 the summer, particularly with District
11 Council members, but with all members of
12 Council, around the Restore Program.

13 And what we would be doing is
14 identifying corridors and the types of
15 investments for corridors.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Yes.

17 MS. GLADSTEIN: Some corridors, for
18 example, are very well functioning.
19 They've raised some Federal or state money
20 for street scape improvements. They might
21 just need a little bit of money for
22 engineering or planning.

23 Other corridors have well
24 functioning groups, but they need that kind
25 of major investment of capital dollars.

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2 And, you know, yet other corridors
3 we might be helping build the capacity of a
4 business organization or a community
5 development corporation, so that they could
6 start the planning to get to that next
7 level. So, expect it to be many more than
8 three or four corridors --

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Okay.

10 MS. GLADSTEIN: -- because, again,
11 it will be --

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The Chair
13 is supposed to get at least three.

14 (Laughter.)

15 MS. GLADSTEIN: See? See? I've
16 done the math also.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I wish.

18 MS. GLADSTEIN: But we expect there
19 will be a number of corridors in each
20 District. It's just that the type of
21 investment will vary. So...

22 But the goal, again, is to be able
23 to have some immediate impact, and to be
24 able to bring the corridor to its next
25 level of development.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Okay.

3 Well, I'll close by... Given what
4 you shared... Commenting on the
5 thoughtfulness and thoughtful but very
6 strategic in how you are integrating
7 dollars at Federal levels with what the
8 stages of need of corridors around the
9 City.

10 Thank you very much.

11 MS. GLADSTEIN: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Thank
13 you, Madam Chair.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
15 very much.

16 Before I call on Councilwoman
17 Miller, in terms of the restore of
18 commercial corridor and development, we'll
19 assume that you'll work with the District
20 Council people, so that those people with
21 whom you interact on the corridors are
22 people that the Council persons and their
23 staff and offices work with.

24 MS. GLADSTEIN: Absolutely. We
25 started those conversations, as you know,

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2 with District Council people, and we will
3 continue to communicate with you.

4 And again, our goal is to understand
5 what the needs are and to be able to
6 intervene in the appropriate way on each
7 corridor.

8 And certainly we have been very
9 pleased with the kind of conversations
10 we've had so far.

11 We feel that the District Council
12 people have a very good understanding of
13 the corridors, the capacity of the groups,
14 the potential development projects. And
15 that's all information that we have to
16 factor in to what the investment strategy
17 would be.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I think one
19 program that we need, of course, is City
20 wide. Everybody has tree removal needs, as
21 well, that we know a vacant lot, if
22 there -- you know, if you're doing demo
23 and, you know, some homes have trees
24 growing through them. And on lots you may
25 get it if you're doing demo there.

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2 But in terms of rowhouse blocks, we
3 really do need some tree trimming help.

4 We understand the problems
5 associated with the cement. You know,
6 everybody's worried about water pipes below
7 and cracking cement around the property.
8 But we definitely need a strategy for that
9 problem.

10 MS. GLADSTEIN: Okay.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
12 Councilwoman Miller.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Thank
14 you.

15 Thank you, Madam Chair.

16 Just a couple questions. Every now
17 and then I go in the web, into the housing
18 agency sites.

19 And I guess... Unless you have it
20 in there and I haven't found it, I think
21 you still need a guide that tells people
22 how to acquire a vacant house, I mean,
23 really step by step.

24 We get a lot of questions. I mean,
25 when you go out -- particularly young

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2 people are constantly asking, you know, how
3 can I get this house, how can I get that.

4 And it would be so much easier if
5 there was something written that you could
6 just give to them that really helps them
7 have specific steps.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Yes.
9 One-stop shop.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: What does
11 it mean to go to V.P.R.C.? What is that?
12 How long does it take?

13 Of course, most people think all the
14 vacant properties in the City belong to the
15 City, and they think they're all free.
16 And, you know, we get through that one.

17 But then the next question becomes,
18 well, how can I get this and where can I
19 get this from.

20 I know that would help me in many of
21 the young people that I encounter.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: That
23 would help me -- all of us, except for
24 Jannie.

25 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: I think

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2 it actually helps everybody.

3 And as far as the commercial
4 corridors, right now in my office we're
5 getting ready to help two business
6 corridors organize a business person's
7 association.

8 Now, does M.B.E.C. or Commerce have
9 people available to go out with my staff to
10 help organize? I mean, we've already been
11 out. We've got names of all the businesses
12 and all kinds of people.

13 But once we have the meeting -- And
14 they're all very anxious to meet. Once we
15 have the meeting, does Commerce have
16 someone that can help us help them organize
17 and develop a business association?

18 MS. GLADSTEIN: I think --

19 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Or
20 N.T.I., I mean.

21 MS. GLADSTEIN: Right. What I was
22 going to say is between the N.T.I. staff,
23 the M.B.E.C. staff and the P.C.D.C. staff,
24 we would try to be of assistance and could,
25 I'm sure, attend a number of meetings.

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2 I don't want to overstate our
3 ability, because I don't think... Because
4 our resources are spread thin, I don't
5 think we'll be able to do the actual door
6 knocking, but if there's --

7 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: We've
8 already done that.

9 MS. GLADSTEIN: And if there's
10 identification of leadership already on the
11 corridors, then I think that we would be
12 happy to be a resource to that leadership,
13 to help support that organizing effort.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Okay.
15 And also, I think we still need to revisit
16 and visit the whole area of commercial
17 demolition.

18 Commercial demolition is still -- at
19 least in my District we still have not had
20 any, that I believe -- If we did, we had
21 one.

22 And also... Damn, I lost my train;
23 of thought. I lost that question. I'll
24 come back.

25 Thank you, Madam Chair.

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2 MS. GLADSTGEIN: If I could just
3 respond on the commercial demolition piece,
4 that is, again, assuming the \$150 million
5 bond issue is approved by Council in the
6 fall.

7 We are anticipating that one of the
8 uses of those bond proceeds could be for
9 demolition on commercial corridors. So, I
10 wanted to make you aware of that as well.

11 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Okay.

12 MS. GLADSTEIN: And we'll be happy
13 to follow up in terms of the status of
14 commercial demolition under N.T.I.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Okay.

16 And I regained my thought there.

17 The other thing that I think, if we
18 get this... Well, I actually think we need
19 to put more money or additional funding in
20 the lot cleaning crew, you know.

21 We went from 100 people down to
22 whatever we have now. Whatever we have
23 now, you know, is just not adequate.

24 And it's okay if you have a
25 community-based group doing the lot

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2 maintenance through the Horticulture
3 Society, because I think they do a really
4 good job.

5 And I can see the clear difference
6 in my District of the appearance of lots
7 that have folks like... What's the name of
8 your group? Community land something.

9 I can see the clear difference
10 between the maintenance and upkeep of those
11 lots, because I think across the City those
12 guys and women are doing a really good job.

13 But we don't have enough
14 lot-cleaning crews for those areas of the
15 District that needs to have lot maintenance
16 and lot service.

17 So, I think you need to hire more
18 people or give out more contracts.

19 MS. GLADSTEIN: Well, I'll speak --
20 As you know, that crew is managed through
21 the Managing Director's Office. So, we can
22 certainly have a conversation there. But
23 in addition, our additional funding to the
24 Horticulture Society, which is coming out
25 of general funds, as it has in previous

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2 years, does permit the inclusion of at
3 least one new group that could do the
4 Community Land Care Program.

5 So, we have heard that testimony in
6 the past and tried to be responsive to that
7 this year.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Okay.

9 All right. Thank you.

10 Thank you, Madam Chair.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
12 very much.

13 Are there any other questions for
14 Miss Gladstein?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
17 very much.

18 Our next witness,

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. GLADSTEIN: That's because I
21 didn't get any questions. They're all
22 happy.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes. So,
24 everybody gets a break today.

25 Pennsylvania Horticultural Society.

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2 Mr. Bob Grossman.

3 MR. GROSSMAN: Yes. Thank you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
5 Welcome.

6 Please identify yourself for the
7 record and begin your testimony.

8 MR. GROSSMAN: Good afternoon, Madam
9 Chair, committee members.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
11 afternoon.

12 MR. GROSSMAN: My name is Bob
13 Grossman. I'm Associate Director of
14 Philadelphia Green, and I'm presenting
15 testimony that's been submitted by Mike
16 Groman, the Senior Director of Philadelphia
17 Green.

18 We very much appreciate the support
19 provided to Philadelphia Green by the
20 Neighborhood Transformation Initiative. We
21 have put these resources to good use. More
22 importantly, we have been able to leverage
23 City dollars into significant support from
24 foundations, businesses, and other entities
25 in the private sector.

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2 In the past three years, P.H.S. has
3 been awarded contracts totaling \$8 million
4 to oversee greening projects in the City,
5 with the aim of making a substantial impact
6 in improving community open spaces.

7 This unprecedented level of
8 investment has resulted in dramatic
9 improvements in the quality of life in our
10 communities, and has clearly conveyed the
11 importance of quality open space, as part
12 of the neighborhood's revitalization
13 strategy.

14 The immediate visual improvements
15 bring hope to residents of formerly
16 blighted areas and help build support for
17 investment in the City's green spaces.

18 As part of the \$8 million investment
19 in greening and open space revitalization,
20 P.H.S. has partnered with hundreds of
21 neighborhood residents, community groups
22 and City organizations, and we are proud of
23 the following accomplishments.

24 Working with the Mayor's Office,
25 City Council members, and key neighborhood

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2 stakeholders, P.H.S. identifies strategic
3 corridors, as well as sites adjacent to
4 schools, churches, commercial and housing
5 developments and gateways for land
6 stabilization.

7 Land stabilization has been
8 completed in many neighborhoods throughout
9 Philadelphia, and has included clearing
10 land of debris, replacing topsoil, planting
11 grass seed and trees, and constructing post
12 and rail fencing.

13 Coupled with the City's efforts to
14 demolish abandoned buildings in the
15 neighborhoods, stabilizing vacant land in
16 these communities has significantly
17 improved their appearance, discouraged
18 further deterioration, and built momentum
19 for other enhancements.

20 In fiscal year 2006, Philadelphia
21 Green stabilized 503 additional parcels,
22 more than three-quarters of a million
23 square feet.

24 An additional 2,000 parcels of
25 previously treated abandoned land is being

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2 regularly maintained under the management
3 of the vacant land stabilization program.
4 70 percent of the maintenance being
5 done on the stabilized lots is actually
6 being done by community land care program
7 which is an approach to -- We started out
8 as an approach to maintaining land that was
9 not stabilized, that was not improved in
10 any way but in many of the same
11 neighborhoods that were doing the vacant
12 land stabilization work.

13 This approach gives local
14 organizations a direct role in improving
15 the appearance of their own environment,
16 investing the community in the success of
17 the project.

18 Representatives of the community
19 land care are here today. Over 70 City
20 residents have been hired by nine
21 organizations. Participating in the
22 program are Centro Pedro Claver; New
23 Kensington C.D.C.; Ready, Willing and Able;
24 Self, Incorporated; Tioga United;
25 University City District/Mantua Improvement

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2 Association; Universal Companies and
3 Village of the Arts and East Park
4 Revitalization Alliance.

5 As part of the N.T.I. contract,
6 P.H.S.'s goal was to provide basic
7 housekeeping for 1,760 parcels of vacant
8 land, utilizing community organizations.

9 To date, we are pleased to report
10 that over 2500 parcels are cleaned and
11 mowed monthly through this land management
12 program.

13 As part of a City-wide greening
14 approach, P.H.S. was able to expand urban
15 greening efforts that are key programmatic
16 initiatives of Philadelphia Green.

17 Outside of the vacant land
18 management efforts, a variety of greening
19 projects have been developed and
20 implemented. A series of educational
21 programs for residents has supported these
22 efforts.

23 Specifically, P.H.S. is currently
24 completing work on six signature or gateway
25 greening projects, one major park

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2 improvement project and two City-wide park
3 cleanup events.

4 Again, the Pennsylvania
5 Horticultural Society is grateful for the
6 long-term support provided by N.T.I., as
7 well as the opportunity to serve.

8 We look forward to support in the
9 coming year to continue our work in the
10 neighborhoods, using greening as a
11 community development tool.

12 We also look forward to expanding
13 our impact and building on the landmark
14 investment made by N.T.I. in open space
15 revitalization.

16 The Green City Strategy holds
17 tremendous promise for Philadelphia's
18 continuing revitalization.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
20 Mr. Grossman.

21 When we were children in school, we
22 learned in school that cleanliness is next
23 to Godliness. And these men and women help
24 make that possible.

25 We really, really appreciate it,

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2 because no matter how much development you
3 do in emerging communities, no matter how
4 much you do in blighted communities, and no
5 matter how much you do in transformed
6 communities, you've got to have a way to
7 keep it clean or you still lose the battle.

8 So it's a very, very vital part of
9 what's necessary in the whole picture.

10 Questions from members of the
11 Committee?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
14 very much.

15 Don Kelly, G.P.U.A.C.

16 Is there anyone who would like to
17 speak thereafter?

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Anyone else
20 thereafter?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

23 Thank you, Mr. Kelly. Welcome.

24 Please identify yourself for the record and
25 make your testimony.

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2 MR. KELLY: Yes. Don Kelly,
3 Director of Community and Economic
4 Development for the Greater Philadelphia
5 Urban Affairs Coalition.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

7 MR. KELLY: Thank you, Madam Chair,
8 and members of Council.

9 I just wanted to elaborate a little
10 bit more on a couple of the programs that
11 are funded by Neighborhood Transformation
12 Initiative, in which G.P.U.A.C. has a role
13 as partner to the N.T.I. program.

14 One is the anti-predatory lending
15 program through which five 5 and 25 housing
16 counseling agencies, home inspection firms,
17 all partner together to make home
18 improvement loans available to people who
19 could not just walk into a bank and qualify
20 for a loan, because they have some credit
21 problems.

22 It's not for people with terrible
23 credit, but these are people who would
24 ordinarily be prime candidates for
25 predatory lenders. And so, we want to give

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2 them an alternative.

3 And through this partnership with
4 the City, we've been able to now provide
5 128 loans, averaging over \$20,000 each, for
6 \$2.6 million, and most of which have gone
7 to low and moderate income people in target
8 neighborhoods in the City of Philadelphia.

9 Through the N.T.I. -- the new N.T.I.
10 team, we're now looking to offer a third
11 product. We have the Phil-plus and the
12 Mini-Phil.

13 Now, we're about to launch a new
14 product, called the mini-Phil Energy Loan,
15 specifically to help people who are faced
16 with rising energy costs and are having
17 difficulty making ends meet because of
18 that.

19 So, if we can help them make some
20 energy conservation improvements on their
21 homes, we can save some people from getting
22 into financial difficulties. And so, that
23 should be online this fall.

24 The other program that's funded by
25 the N.T.I. that has, I think, become

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2 somewhat of a model, certainly in the State
3 of Pennsylvania, and that is the Employer
4 Assisted Housing Program. We market it as
5 the Philadelphia Home Buy Now Program.

6 As Director Gladstein mentioned, we
7 now have 26 employers participating in
8 this, including St. Joseph's University,
9 and Drexel University, University of the
10 Sciences, People's Emergency Center.

11 And over 50 people now have
12 purchased homes through this program. And
13 it's becoming a rather admired model. And
14 we know that other cities and areas in
15 Pennsylvania now are looking to this as an
16 example.

17 So I want to compliment the City for
18 its vision in taking this kind of a
19 innovative step to strengthen not only the
20 housing market but employers, and making
21 employers in Philadelphia more competitive
22 by having housing benefits with their
23 employees.

24 So I think these programs
25 demonstrate that the N.T.I. has a very

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2 comprehensive, multi-faceted approach.
3 These are just two of many strategies, but
4 they all weave together to reinforce the
5 conditions of our neighborhoods,
6 particularly with housing and now
7 commercial areas.

8 So, we feel privileged to be your
9 partner in this program, and to work with
10 the very good people at the N.T.I. And we
11 want to thank you for that.

12 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: I have
13 one question. What was the name of the
14 manager assistance program?

15 MR. KELLY: It's called -- Well,
16 it's a variation of what we call our
17 mini-Phil home improvement loan program.
18 So, it's the mini-Phil energy loan.

19 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Okay. So
20 this would help someone weatherize and make
21 their house more energy efficient.

22 MR. KELLY: Right. New heater; more
23 efficient heater; window weatherization;
24 window, door replacement, things like that;
25 insulation.

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2 It's up to \$10,000. It's an
3 unsecured loan. And we're expediting the
4 process so that this can take place more
5 rapidly than it normally would in the
6 program.

7 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Thank
8 you.

9 Thank you, Madam Chair.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
11 very much.

12 We appreciate the job. We agree:
13 We need as many new homeowners as we could
14 get. And people want to own their homes.

15 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown.

16 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Thank
17 you, Madam Chair.

18 Please help us understand how you
19 identified those 50 families. You said
20 there were 50 new homes?

21 MR. KELLY: 50.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: 50?

23 MR. KELLY: In the Employer Assisted
24 Housing Program?

25 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Yes.

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2 MR. KELLY: Yes, there are 50 people
3 that have now purchased homes through...
4 with assistance from their employers and a
5 matching grant from the City, N.T.I., up to
6 \$3,000 to help with a down payment and
7 closing costs.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: I see.

9 And so, they come from all over the
10 City?

11 MR. KELLY: All over the City. Yes,
12 they're all over the City.

13 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: How
14 are they identified? Or they simply hear
15 about it and they apply?

16 MR. KELLY: They can only apply if
17 their employers are participating in the
18 program.

19 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: I see.
20 I see.

21 MR. KELLY: And we've developed a
22 menu of products, housing-related benefits
23 that an employer could offer to its
24 employees, one of which is a cash
25 contribution towards their down payment and

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2 closing costs or educational services.

3 And we have a bunch of mortgage --
4 mortgage lenders that have signed on, to
5 offer their best products, along with this.

6 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Might
7 there exist a list of those employers?

8 MR. KELLY: Yes, we can provide
9 that.

10 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Would
11 you please provide that information to the
12 Chair?

13 MR. KELLY: Sure.

14 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Thank
15 you very much.

16 MR. KELLY: Sure.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Thank
18 you, Madam Chair.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

20 Are there any other questions?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
23 very much, Mr. Kelly.

24 Is there anyone else to testify?

25 Any other statements or comments?

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2 Seeing none, this will... Yes.

3 Miss Robinson, please come forward.

4 Welcome.

5 Feel free to identify yourself for
6 the record and make your testimony.

7 MS. ROBINSON: Good afternoon. My
8 name is Judith Robinson.

9 And I'm here today to testify on
10 Bill Number or Resolution Number 060350.

11 I was wondering, is there a copy of
12 the budget available?

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

14 MS. GLADSTEIN: Yes.

15 MS. ROBINSON: Thank you. Thank
16 you.

17 I have three areas that concern me
18 about the N.T.I. at this late date.

19 One is notification, one is the
20 planning, and land banking.

21 Regarding notification, this Council
22 body, not the Finance Committee, but City
23 Council voted on a Bill back in 2000 called
24 Notification Before Demolition. I don't
25 remember the number because I'm rushing

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2 now, but you certainly can consult your
3 records regarding that.

4 This was an important bill because
5 there are seniors in our older communities
6 that have respiratory issues. There's dust
7 flying all over the place.

8 And according to Licenses and
9 Inspections, they do not require that these
10 contractors use water to keep the dust
11 down.

12 So, at least we could get
13 notification per your law that's on the
14 books before demolition is started. So
15 that way those that are affected by dust,
16 those airborne debris, will be able to go
17 outside of the community.

18 I just would respectfully request
19 that you all adhere to the law that you all
20 put in effect. It's important in our
21 community.

22 It's important because of the damage
23 demolition can start -- can create. Issues
24 like water, cracking up buildings. I just
25 like it's respectful to the people in the

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2 community to have notification. That's why
3 we fought so hard to get that law.

4 Secondly, I'm concerned that with
5 all this reorganization and whatever else
6 is going on -- and Council lady Blackwell,
7 I want to commend you for your hard work,
8 you along with all the other people. I
9 don't think you got enough props, so to
10 speak...

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
12 Thank you.

13 MS. ROBINSON: ...in dealing with
14 that issue.

15 And I know it's not over, but it
16 gives all of us a chance to write letters
17 and do all those things. So I digress just
18 to give you those props, if I can use the
19 vernacular.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

21 MS. ROBINSON: But regarding
22 planning, it's important that you include
23 the residents, the homeowners, the people
24 that live in the communities.

25 So often, as I go into various

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2 communities, I see the kind of respect that
3 people are given in their neighborhoods.
4 They get the first right of refusal.

5 It seems like in certain areas, like
6 where I live in North Philly, other people
7 are busy planning for my community.

8 I have every intention to stay in my
9 community. As a matter of fact, I just
10 purchased another property so I can be
11 there. So, I want to be consulted about
12 what's going on in my community.

13 I'm about to open up a business on
14 one of the major corridors with my own
15 money. So, I want to be consulted.

16 I'm a taxpayer. And I don't want
17 others planning for their jobs and being
18 disrespectful of what my community needs
19 are.

20 So, in that regard, I would like to
21 have more of a planning process, not just
22 run through the Planning Commission, run
23 through City Council, run through the
24 Redevelopment Authority, and then it's a
25 done deal. Let's work together, since

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2 that's what we're supposedly doing.

3 I'm also concerned with the
4 reorganization in the future that this land
5 banking -- We're doing all this land
6 banking, taking people's property, giving
7 them fair market or not value.

8 I'm concerned that with this
9 reorganization, that you make sure that we
10 are clear, there's transparency about where
11 this land is going to be and how do we get
12 it back out of the bank.

13 It's already a issue now with
14 Redevelopment Authority, issues such as
15 appraisal value, who can get -- who's
16 respected in this development process.

17 Some people get through the process
18 real smooth. I go to the Redevelopment
19 Authority every second and fourth Tuesday
20 of the month.

21 I see how quickly some people get
22 through the process. And then I see the
23 dragging on and the obstacles others have.
24 And I also see a strangeness about the
25 appraisals.

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2 I really would like you all to look
3 closer at that, because if this
4 reorganization happens, and R.D.A.'s duties
5 to implement development process is taken
6 over, will a citizen have the right to have
7 input, as we do now and the small bit we do
8 at the Redevelopment Authority?

9 So, I think we really need to be
10 clear on what the reorganization will mean
11 for us, the citizens? Let me get a little
12 plug in there for the citizens, to say we
13 will be very much concerned about how you
14 get land out of the land bank.

15 What will be the process to have
16 citizen input with this new organization,
17 whatever. And those are my major concerns.

18 Right now I'm just concerned about
19 the land bank as it is. So I definitely am
20 concerned about this new organization.

21 And thank you much for your
22 attention and time.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you
24 very much. We appreciate your important
25 testimony.

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2 And we will say, as this discussion
3 about reorganization ensues and the whole
4 issue of land bank, that you will keep
5 those issues in mind. I'm saying that to
6 the administration, so that they will be
7 included in that discussion.

8 MS. ROBINSON: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It's very
10 important.

11 Thank you very much. Is there
12 anyone else here who would like to testify?

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Any other
15 comments or questions from members of the
16 Committee?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Seeing
19 none, we will end our hearing.

20 (Public hearing concluded; 4:01 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me upon the public hearing of The Philadelphia City Council, taken on June 14, 2006, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

DAVID A. DEIK, RPR and
Commissioner of Deeds

(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.)

1 COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
2 PUBLIC MEETING
3 COMMITTEE ON HOUSING, NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT
4 and
5 THE HOMELESS
6

7 - - -

8 Room 400, City Hall

9 Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

10 Wednesday, June 14, 2006, 4:01 p.m.

11 - - -

12 060350 - Resolution approving the annual Program
13 Statement and Budget for the expenditure
14 of the Neighborhood Transformation
Initiative (NTI) Bond Proceeds for Fiscal
Year 2007.

15 PRESENT:

16 COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL, Chair
17 COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
18 COUNCILMAN FRANK DI CICCIO
19 COUNCILMAN JUAN F. RAMOS
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS-BROWN
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED-MILLER

20 - - -

21
22 V A R A L L O Incorporated
Litigation Support Services
23 1835 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
24 215.561.2220 215.567.2670
25

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

4 - - -

5 And we will enter our Public Meeting.

6 The Chair will call on the Vice Chair,
7 Councilman Ramos, to entertain a motion to
8 report out of Committee Resolution Number
9 060350.

10 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Madam Chair.

11 Move that Resolution Number 060350 be
12 reported out of Committee with a favorable
13 recommendation, and further move that the rules
14 of Council be suspended to permit first reading
15 of this Resolution at our next City Council
16 meeting.

17 COUNCILWOMAN REED-MILLER: Second.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It has been moved
19 and seconded that this Resolution be reported
20 out of Committee with a favorable
21 recommendation.

22 All in favor will say aye.

23 (Chorus of "ayes.")

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Opposed?

25 (No response.)

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The ayes have it.

3 The Resolution is passed.

4 I thank you all for coming. Quick hearing
5 today. And I thank the members of the Committee
6 as well. Thank you all.

7 (Public meeting concluded; 4:02 p.m.)

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1 CERTIFICATE

2

3 I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings and
4 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the
5 stenographic notes taken by me upon the public meeting
6 of The Philadelphia City Council, taken on June 14,
7 2006, and that this is a true and correct transcript of
8 same.

9

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14 _____
15 DAVID A. DEIK, RPR and
16 Commissioner of Deeds

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