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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

PUBLIC HEARING

4

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Saturday, Feb. 28, 1998
11:00 a.m.

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BILL NO. 980003: An Ordinance Adopting
the Operating Budget
for Fiscal Year 1999.

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PRESENT: PRESIDENT JOHN F. STREET, Chairman
ANNA CIBOTTA VERNA
HAPPY FERNANDEZ
JANNIE BLACKWELL
DAVID COHEN
DONNA REED MILLER
MICHAEL A. NUTTER
FRANK RIZZO

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PRESIDENT STREET: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, this is a public hearing of the Council's Committee of the Whole. Today we will take testimony on our budget bills. Primarily, however, we will be taking testimony on Bill No. 980003, an ordinance adopting the operating budget for Fiscal Year 1999.

There's a considerable list of people who are interested in testifying. I'd just like to assure everybody here that everyone will have an opportunity to testify today, with the proviso that we absolutely have to be out of here by 2 o'clock a.m. in the morning. We cannot stay here any later than 2 o'clock.

We can come back on Monday, but we must be out of here by 2 o'clock a.m., and so we would ask you all to govern yourselves accordingly.

PRESIDENT STREET: Our first witness will be Sue Rosenthal, Sue Rosenthal.

(Sue Rosenthal comes forward.)

PRESIDENT STREET: Good morning.

MS. ROSENTHAL: Good morning.

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2 PRESIDENT STREET: Please identify
3 yourself for the record and proceed with your
4 statement.

5 MS. ROSENTHAL: My name is Sue
6 Rosenthal. I live at 1343 Ascot Place.

7 PRESIDENT STREET: I'm sorry, ma'am.
8 I'm going to have to ask that you pull that
9 microphone closer and speak just a little louder.

10 MS. ROSENTHAL: I can start again. Is
11 that a little better, is that off?

12 PRESIDENT STREET: No, it's on. No,
13 you just have to talk a little louder and very
14 close.

15 MS. ROSENTHAL: Good morning.

16 PRESIDENT STREET: That's much better.

17 MS. ROSENTHAL: My name is Sue
18 Rosenthal. I live at 1343 Ascot Place, and I
19 serve as Chair of the District 10 Public Health
20 Center, the Community Board. Thank you for the
21 opportunity to speak with you today.

22 District 10 Health Center, which is
23 located at 2230 Cottman Avenue, provides the
24 second highest number of patient visits of all
25 public health centers in Philadelphia. Our

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2 20-year-old building is presently undergoing
3 renovations, which include doubling of the size of
4 the pharmacy.

5 I am here today to ask that a second
6 pharmacist be funded for District 10 because the
7 high volume of prescriptions needed by our clients
8 cannot be provided for in a timely fashion by our
9 one hard-working pharmacist.

10 In a study undertaken over three months
11 in the spring and summer of 1998, not a period of
12 the heaviest prescription demand, our pharmacist
13 filled an average of 200 prescriptions per day.
14 This translates into 33 prescriptions per hour or
15 one prescription every minute and 48 seconds.

16 But there are more than 200
17 prescriptions requested each day. This means
18 there are always some clients whose medications
19 are not provided on the date their physician
20 ordered them.

21 SO they are not ready till the next
22 day; or if the next day is a weekend or a holiday,
23 the clients will not get their necessary
24 medications for two or more days after their
25 doctors prescribe them. Besides the obvious

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2 health problems this situation creates, our client
3 must return a second time.

4 We serve a large number of seniors. We
5 serve a large number of mothers of young children
6 who must be bring their children when visiting the
7 health center. It is difficult for seniors and
8 young families to travel, especially in the
9 winter, for even one appointment. And to have to
10 come second time because a prescription could not
11 be filled is an unnecessary burden on people whose
12 lives are already filled with burden.

13 Under Pennsylvania law in our health
14 centers, a pharmacist must either accept a
15 prescription or be present when a technical
16 assistant receives the prescription.

17 At District 10, that means patients
18 whose visits with doctors are completed between
19 12:30 and 2 must wait to hand in their
20 prescriptions because our one pharmacist
21 rightfully closes during that time for computer
22 work and lunch. A second pharmacist could stagger
23 lunch hours and breaks so that prescriptions could
24 be received and filled without interruption
25 throughout day.

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2 Another problem plagues those who
3 complete their doctor visits after 2 or who come
4 to the health center to renew prescriptions late
5 in the afternoon. They must always return the
6 next working day because the pharmacist is
7 catching up with earlier orders and cannot fill
8 prescriptions submitted after mid-afternoon.

9 When the pharmacist is sick or the
10 pharmacy is closed for any reason, there is rarely
11 prior notice. That means clients who ordered
12 medication the day before may have made a trip to
13 the health center for nothing. A second
14 pharmacist could guarantee uninterrupted service,
15 even if one pharmacist were out.

16 The clients' suggestions placed in our
17 suggestion box and examined monthly always list
18 the pharmacy as a main source of problems to our
19 clients.

20 It's the professional opinion of the
21 person conducting the study of the pharmacy last
22 year that volume will increase by 25 percent
23 during the first month of operations of our
24 renovated pharmacy. It is that person's
25 recommendation that another pharmacist will be

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2 immediately needed.

3 We concur with this recommendation and
4 strongly urge City Council to provide the funding
5 needed by the clients of District Health Center 10
6 so that they will receive adequate pharmacy
7 services.

8 Thank you very much.

9 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very
10 much. Is anybody here from the Health Department
11 today?

12 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes, I am.

13 PRESIDENT STREET: Can we ask the
14 Commissioner to come forward and please identify
15 herself for the record.

16 (Health Commissioner Estelle Richman
17 comes forward.)

18 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I am Estelle
19 Richman Commissioner, Commissioner of Public
20 Health for the City of Philadelphia.

21 PRESIDENT STREET: Can you please
22 respond to this testimony.

23 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes. We have
24 been aware of the ongoing pharmacy issues. The
25 issues that are described by Sue Rosenthal are

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2 comparable to some of the other issues that we've
3 also seen in other health centers.

4 And our plan is to look at -- we have
5 been studying this. And we would hope, with the
6 allocation that we are receiving from Council in
7 this budget, that we will be able to remedy those
8 problems.

9 PRESIDENT STREET: Well, I know now
10 Councilman is going to say, "What do you mean when
11 you say you 'hope to remedy this?'" I can see him
12 now. He's leaning forward, he's like a cat ready
13 to strike.

14 (Laughter.)

15 PRESIDENT STREET: So you could save us
16 a lot of time if you could just tell us that you
17 don't dispute the testimony, and you're going to
18 put another pharmacist in there so these people
19 won't have to be inconvenienced.

20 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Well, the only
21 reason I hedge is whether it's a full-time
22 pharmacist only for Health Center 10 or whether
23 we'll be able -- whether we may have to rotate it
24 to a couple of the health centers.

25 But we do recognize the problem. We

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2 are going to try to correct, but it's not the only
3 health center with that problem.

4 And while we hope to add at least one
5 pharmacist to address this one, there may be a
6 time where we have to also use that pharmacist in
7 a couple of health centers. I would hope it
8 wouldn't be more than a couple.

9 PRESIDENT STREET: Well, this is a --
10 yes, ma'am.

11 MS. ROSENTHAL: Councilman, rather than
12 speak here this morning and take up the time, I
13 did speak to people in the Health Department, but
14 not to the Commissioner. And I asked about this,
15 and I was told that there were not funds.

16 Now, since I spoke with them three or
17 four weeks ago, there may have been a change, and
18 I would be very, very happy to see that happen,
19 but I didn't come here just to, you know, take up
20 your time.

21 PRESIDENT STREET: And we understand
22 that, we appreciate your coming.

23 I think what we need from the
24 Commissioner now is a commitment that the
25 situation will be remedied, as well as your own

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2 suggestion. We don't want to take credit for it.

3 But we appreciate your pointing out
4 that this kind of condition might exist in other
5 centers and where it does. We'd just like to have
6 -- I mean, we don't want senior citizens coming
7 and not being able to get the service that they
8 need.

9 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Right.

10 PRESIDENT STREET: It doesn't make
11 sense to us.

12 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: That makes a lot
13 of sense, and that's the condition we're trying to
14 remedy, to make sure someone doesn't have to come
15 back to the health center for a prescription that
16 was prescribed on that day.

17 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

18 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes
20 Councilman Cohen.

21 COUNCILMAN COHEN: The President has
22 short-cutted (sic) one of my questions. How soon
23 could we expect an answer from you as to the
24 situation in District 10?

25 I always have difficulty dealing with

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2 situations that have not arisen, that may exist.

3 And if they exist, I think they ought to be taken
4 care of too. And I don't see any reason why today
5 citizens, particularly seniors, shouldn't get
6 prompt service, you know, with respect to their
7 medical needs.

8 And if you need more everywhere, I
9 think they ought to be provided. But the one
10 situation we're dealing with right now is District
11 10.

12 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Okay, yes. One
13 of the solutions that we're trying to come up for
14 10 is to -- we have what we call "a pharmacy
15 contract" where when a pharmacist is out sick or
16 on vacation, or a pharmacy is not going to be
17 available for a period of time, we could use our
18 pharmacy contract to be able to bring in
19 pharmacists who can fill in.

20 That's the one that we're trying to
21 activate right now, to be able to relieve problems
22 and issues. And I actually thought that that was
23 actually beginning to get into effect.

24 And I will verify immediately Monday
25 that the pharmacy contract is in place and will be

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2 there to relieve some of the issues currently at
3 10.

4 COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right, thank
5 you. And we'll expect sometime by-mid week some
6 kind of a response.

7 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Okay.

8 COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you.

9 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

11 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Thank you very
12 much.

13 - - -

14 PRESIDENT STREET: Karess Lewis.

15 (Karess Lewis is not present.)

16 (Robert Bridget comes forward.)

17 PRESIDENT STREET: Good morning.

18 MR. BRIDGET: Good morning. I'm not
19 Karess Lewis, obviously. My name is Robert
20 Bridget, and hello everyone. And hello to you,
21 Mr. Street. I'm from ACORN, and I'm a field
22 inspector in ACORN.

23 PRESIDENT STREET: Are you speaking in
24 lieu of Karess Lewis?

25 MR. BRIDGET: Yes, I am.

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2 PRESIDENT STREET: Please continue.

3 MR. BRIDGET: Okay. On Thursday,
4 February the 26th, at Whalen Temple, ACORN and a
5 group of 400 supporters and heads of various City
6 departments encountered each other, only to
7 realize that nothing has changed in regard to the
8 housing crisis in Philadelphia for low-income
9 people.

10 For the past two years, ACORN has been
11 involved in a campaign to provide housing for the
12 very low-income people of this City. Our purpose
13 is to rehabilitate existing vacant, abandoned
14 buildings. Our method is to make these houses
15 available to the most needy and deserving of our
16 population by involving them in the whole process.
17 We cannot do it without assistance.

18 So far, the City has vacillated and
19 deceived us, but our purpose is strong and we're
20 resolved to continue to struggle.

21 At present, there appears to be an
22 increased effort on the part of some City agencies
23 to demolish as much of the housing stock as
24 possible, without regard to its salvageability.

25 And we hope, with the aid of the City

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2 and its stated commitment, to revitalize our
3 community by providing home ownership and making
4 the continued maintenance less of an economic
5 burden for the people already financially limited.

6 We see our mission as a three-pronged
7 attack on the largest, most devastating problems
8 confronting us: housing, lack of economic
9 opportunity, and community devaluation and
10 disintegration.

11 The City must consider people already
12 residing in the besieged areas when it comes to
13 erecting new housing, that it's fully aware of
14 that the people living cannot afford.

15 I want to thank you for your kind
16 attention.

17 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

18 MR. BRIDGET: Okay, thank you.

19 - - -

20 PRESIDENT STREET: Anne Dixon.

21 (Anne Dixon comes forward.)

22 PRESIDENT STREET: Good morning.

23 MS. DIXON: Good morning.

24 PRESIDENT STREET: Please identify
25 yourself for the record.

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2 MS. DIXON: I'm Anne Dixon, 4510

3 Chester Avenue.

4 PRESIDENT STREET: Please proceed.

5 MS. DIXON: The City plans to redesign
6 the streetscape of Chestnut Street in Center
7 City. The \$992,500 in federal funds for a new
8 Chestnut Street plan and the approximately
9 \$250,000 of City funds for the same plan is a lot
10 of money.

11 Anytime a large quantity of money is
12 spent, the rationale behind the spending should be
13 examined closely. I have examined the City's plan
14 for Chestnut Street and found it lacking.

15 The City plans to widen Chestnut Street
16 between Sixth Street and Eighteenth Streets.

17 There will be a shared bus/bike lane, a car lane,
18 and a parking loading-lane. No right turns will
19 be allowed, and traffic will flow east.

20 There are some problems with this plan.
21 It does not provide any input for public
22 involvement, it brings increased traffic pollution
23 and noise, and it relies heavily on law
24 enforcement. A shared bus/bike lane is unpleasant
25 and unsafe for bicyclists. It reduces sidewalk,

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2 thus pedestrian space.

3 It also doesn't do anything to attract
4 pedestrians. The Center City District counts show
5 that there are now more people walking on Chestnut
6 than Walnut, and Walnut has cars.

7 It negates businesses from having
8 warm-weather sidewalk cafes. And it also
9 contradicts a national park plan, which the park
10 plan includes closing Chestnut to traffic at
11 Independence Mall. And it kills 20-year-old trees
12 in the process.

13 Chestnut Street does have problems.
14 The second stories of many buildings are vacant,
15 and delivery trucks remain parked all day. The
16 Meridian Building fire took out a large section of
17 the street, and there has also been a problem with
18 absentee landlords.

19 Twenty years ago, there were plans to
20 make improvements by running electric shuttles on
21 it; this never happened. Instead diesel buses
22 were put on the street.

23 Making the street pedestrian-friendly
24 is a good idea. Pedestrians can enter stores and
25 make purchases; cars can't. Pedestrian-friendly

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2 streets allow for more possibilities such as
3 sidewalk cafes. And cafes add vibrancy to a
4 street but won't work in places with loud traffic,
5 because no one wants to eat outside, next to it.

6 One idea for making the street more
7 pedestrian-friendly would be to use a trolley
8 instead of buses and to add a bike lane. These
9 vehicles would quietly bring people to Chestnut
10 Street.

11 At night, the street would be open to
12 auto traffic. Cutouts could be made in the
13 sidewalk on one side in order to allow vehicles to
14 get front-door deliveries. This would also allow
15 the road to be used for commuters driving home.
16 Cross streets would be used for delivery parking
17 during the day.

18 Another idea is to make the whole idea
19 a pedestrian mall and only allow car traffic at
20 night. This is a less expensive, less destructive
21 plan. People can easily walk the two blocks from
22 Market, where there are lots of buses.

23 People would want to come to the only
24 pleasantly auto-free street in town. Think of
25 South Street without the traffic jams and car

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2 stereos.

3 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very
4 much.

5 - - -

6 PRESIDENT STREET: Aaron Stewart.

7 (Not present.)

8 PRESIDENT STREET: Rocco Stezzi.

9 (Rocco Stezzi comes forward.)

10 MR. STEZZI: Good morning, President
11 Street and City Councilmembers and citizens.

12 I am here today to present a four-step
13 plan to improve the City services and reduce the
14 budget. The anticipated savings are in the
15 neighborhood of a \$100 million to a quarter of a
16 million dollars immediately.

17 The plan was arrived at after an
18 intensive investigation of the five-year fiscal
19 plan presented by the Mayor of Philadelphia,
20 audits from the State, audits from the City of
21 Philadelphia. The Fiscal 1999 operating budget --
22 I couldn't get a copy of the 1998 budget, detailed
23 budget that is.

24 The plan is simplicity in itself. The
25 four-step plan is very simple: audit the agency,

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2 investigate the failings of the agency, deny the
3 budget request, and stipulate that the agency
4 audit recommendations be implemented.

5 This will reduce the waste, the loss,
6 the misuse, and will increase the efficiency,
7 productivity, and accountability of the City
8 agency agencies.

9 The expenditure of time and money
10 that's required for this four-step plan is none.
11 The City agency audit recommendations, Jonathon
12 Saidel, and Mr. Scaparatta have done a very good
13 job.

14 I have the recommendations for the last
15 ten years from many agencies. Each year, City
16 Council passes the budget of agencies similar to
17 the last year in which the money has been wasted,
18 lost, and misused as determined by the City
19 Auditor. City Council permits the inefficiency,
20 the lack of productivity, and the refusal of the
21 agency to be held accountable.

22 The savings expected immediately is 5
23 percent. There will a dramatic increase expected
24 long-term. As an example, I have chosen the
25 Register of Wills budget. The Register of Wills

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2 requested \$2.6 million. For 10 years now,
3 Jonathon Saidel and Mr. Scaparatta have made all
4 the recommendations that this office has ignored.

5 For instance, one audit recommendation
6 was that he reduce the probate clerks from 7 to
7 2.4 -- 3 of course. The savings here is 132,000
8 or an immediate 5 percent of the total budget.

9 This is just one example of the amount
10 of savings that could be realized if you implement
11 this very simple four-step plan. And it's already
12 been done for you. The only thing that it takes
13 is a little bit of courage and for the
14 Councilmembers to exercise leadership.

15 Mayor Green, Mayor Rizzo, even Mayor
16 Goode had laid off people, frozen assets, frozen
17 personnel. And I have read the labor union
18 contracts. There is nothing about layoffs.

19 And the most important thing is the
20 automation of the City government. Every single
21 year, Jonathon Saidel tells the Register of Wills
22 and other departments to automate.

23 In fact, in this particular department,
24 he recommended a \$1,800 personal computer and \$100
25 software that will save -- that will enable the

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2 City to realize hundreds of thousands of dollars
3 in additional revenue, in addition to personal
4 savings.

5 I thank you. If there are any
6 questions, I have read the budgets, I have looked
7 at the labor contracts. I even looked at the
8 First Judicial reorganization -- unification. I'd
9 be glad to answer any questions.

10 PRESIDENT STREET: Mr. Stezzi, thank
11 you very much for coming.

12 What I will do is ask that Mr. Certo
13 here to my right, who is our Chief Budget Officer,
14 get in touch with you. And if we have any
15 questions -- I would like him to get some more
16 information on the details, and if we have further
17 questions, we can get that information through
18 him.

19 MR. STEZZI: The information is
20 available in the Municipal Service Building, 12th
21 floor. And the City Comptroller is more than
22 happy to give you the audits, which seem to be
23 gathering dust year after year.

24 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay, thank you very
25 much.

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2 - - -

3 PRESIDENT STREET: Mike McCrea.

4 (Mike McCrea and Esther McCrea comes
5 forward.)

6 MR. MCCREA: I'll let my younger member
7 speak here first.

8 PRESIDENT STREET: Please identify
9 yourself for the record, young lady, give us your
10 name.

11 MISS MCCREA: My name is Esther McCrea,
12 and I am 8 years old.

13 Many of my friends and I spend a lot of
14 time at the Feltonville Rec. Center. Every day we
15 can get help with our homework, use the computers,
16 get a snack, and we play lots of games or arts and
17 crafts. We also go to the library.

18 In the summer, we go to camp, we get to
19 swim every day, and we do lots of fun things like
20 pie-eating, bubble-gum-blowing, Follow-the-Leader,
21 scavenger hunts, and arts and crafts, and all
22 kinds of games. We get lunch every day, and it's
23 always good.

24 We go on trips to the Franklin
25 Institute, the Zoo, miniature golf, Dorney Park,

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2 Penns Landing, the Please Touch Museum, and the
3 Library. We also get visits from the Police, Fire
4 Department and the SPCA.

5 When camp is over, we practice with the
6 swim team for one hour each day. Every Saturday,
7 we play baseball. Other kids also come to the
8 Center for basketball, football, soccer, and
9 hockey.

10 Thanks to Mr. Ed, Miss Lisa, Miss
11 Terry, Miss Dorian, Tom, Mary, Helen, Tyrone,
12 Peggy, Michelle, Charisma, and especially our moms
13 and dads, who are always there for us.

14 We understand that many kids are not as
15 lucky as we are, but all kids should be able to
16 have as much fun as we do.

17 Thank you for letting me tell you how
18 important the Rec Center is to us.

19 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.
20 (Applause.)

21 MR. MCCREA: Thank you. I was -- it's
22 a hard act to follow. My name is Michael McCrea,
23 I'm President of the Philadelphia Recreation
24 Advisory.

25 Members of City Council, as President

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2 of the Philadelphia Recreation Advisory, I
3 represent 138 volunteer organizations, each of
4 whom represents their own neighborhood recreation
5 center.

6 We appreciate the support from City
7 Council last year and again this year pertaining
8 to after-school programs. It's nice to see that
9 all of us are at least in the same chapter if not
10 on the same page.

11 Although modest on the surface, it will
12 enable us to serve almost 3500 children after
13 school. It would be unsupervised without it.
14 From 62 this year, it would increase to over 100
15 next year.

16 As great as that may sound, almost
17 every one of our existing programs does have a
18 waiting list. At Feltonville, for instance, where
19 I come from, the need is so great, we could double
20 the size of our program, fill every spot, and we
21 probably would still have a waiting list. That
22 being said, we are making progress.

23 In this proposed budget, though, I
24 again have to ask key questions about the
25 Administration's priorities.

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2 When the SEPTA subsidy's more than
3 twice the Recreation's operating budget, when just
4 the increase in human services from last year to
5 this is almost two times this department's
6 operating budget, and when even the Convention
7 Center's subsidy this year is more than this
8 department's operating budget, I have to ask,
9 Where do our children rank on the priority list of
10 this Administration?

11 When the proposed budget allocates \$162
12 a day to send a juvenile offender out of state for
13 treatment, \$89 a day to keep a juvenile offender
14 in our own Youth Center, \$5.82 a day to keep a
15 drug addict in free needles and drug
16 paraphernalia, and only \$1.18 a day to keep a
17 child in an after-school program or a summer camp,
18 the question must be asked, Can't we do better
19 than this?

20 Personally, I don't think we can do
21 better; I know we can do better. We must make our
22 children our top priority. And to this point, we
23 just have not come close to meeting that goal.

24 My position takes me all over the City,
25 from Northeast to Southwest, from South

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2 Philadelphia to Chestnut Hill. I cover it all,
3 and I see thousands of people who work 9 or 10
4 hours a day and then come home to volunteer 3 or 4
5 hours a night at their local recreation center
6 because the services offered there are that
7 important, not only to them, but also to their
8 community.

9 And we would like to feel that the
10 delivery of these services is as important to you
11 as they are to us. We would like to see the
12 Administration work as hard as we do to enhance
13 the delivery of these services. And, to be real
14 honest, we haven't felt that way in a long time.

15 As individuals, some of you have come
16 out and publicly supported what we in the
17 Department of Recreation are about. But as a
18 group, I think you've fallen short of meeting the
19 basic requirements. I should not have to remind
20 you that this is a partnership.

21 We really believe Recreation Department
22 has succeeded in doing the best with what it has
23 to work with, and I think things have improved
24 greatly over the last six years. But, as
25 volunteers, we feel the past and present

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2 Administrations have left much of the burden on
3 our shoulders to carry. We don't mind doing our
4 part, but we also don't like being taken advantage
5 of.

6 This brings me to my next question:
7 How much more do you want from us? We're not
8 looking for a free lunch, just a helping hand, and
9 we really don't think that's too much to ask.

10 I was surprised when listening to the
11 Commissioner's testimony this past Monday that the
12 question came up about what would happen to money
13 left over from the Activities Grant Fund. I find
14 it extremely hard to believe that with all the
15 applications that were received, you could not
16 find enough worthy organizations to give out all
17 of the money that was available to you.

18 Of the 742 qualifying organizations
19 that applied for this grant, 55 got nothing, and
20 148 got less than \$1,000. I really know we can do
21 better than this. This is not rocket science,
22 ladies and gentlemen, it's just plain common
23 sense.

24 To put this in perspective, however, we
25 cannot not lay all of this at your doorstep,

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2 because part of the failure has been ours. If, as
3 parents and adults, we did our jobs better and set
4 the right examples, some of these services would
5 not be in such demand.

6 And part of the failure is also mine
7 because it has been my responsibility to bring
8 this message to you each year and convince you to
9 come on board us. Every year that's gone by with
10 little or no action from the Administration has
11 been a reflection on how well I deliver this
12 message.

13 I think we have made some progress, but
14 we still have a way to go. The Recreation
15 Department has come a long way over the last six
16 years under this Commissioner's guidance. I think
17 it's time for the entire Administration to journey
18 down the trail that has been blazed.

19 I have always believed that there's
20 room on this bus for everyone, and I look forward
21 to the day when the Administration can catch up
22 with us and we can fill every seat.

23 Thank you.

24 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

25 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman

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2 Blackwell.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Sorry, Mr.

4 President.

5 PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes

6 Councilman Rizzo.

7 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Mr. President, I

8 work regularly with Mr. McCrea, and I just want to

9 acknowledge all of the good work that he does in

10 the community. You heard him mention about all

11 the activity effort and the amount of effort he

12 and many others, and also the involvement with his

13 daughter, Esther, to get her at a very early age

14 involved.

15 So I just want to thank you, Mike, for

16 all you do.

17 MR. MCCREA: Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And I know I

19 appreciate it. Thank you.

20 MR. MCCREA: I appreciate it.

21 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Mr.

22 President.

23 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

24 Mr. McCray is almost like a fixture here. When we

25 see him, we know he's going to talk about the

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2 Recreation Department.

3 We always appreciate your testimony and
4 you shouldn't -- it is at least in part because of
5 the case that you make that this Council makes
6 sure that we do something for the Recreation
7 Department. I thank you very much.

8 MR. MCCREA: I appreciate that, Mr.
9 Street, thank you.

10 PRESIDENT STREET: We really do. And I
11 have seen you here and you have seen me see you
12 here.

13 MR. MCCREA: You've seen me enough
14 times; not just here, all over the place. I catch
15 up with everybody.

16 PRESIDENT STREET: I thank you very
17 much.

18 MR. MCCREA: Thank you.

19 - - -

20 PRESIDENT STREET: Thomas Grabe.

21 (Thomas Grabe comes forward.)

22 PRESIDENT STREET: Identify yourself
23 for the record and proceed with your testimony.

24 MR. GRABE: Good morning, Members of
25 City Council. My name is Thomas Grabe, and I am

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2 an attender at Germantown Friends monthly
3 meeting.

4 And we have been involved through the
5 Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the Meeting
6 with the Northwest Recreation Network. And we
7 have been working for about the last year in
8 paying close attention to the recreation centers
9 in our area, with the hope that some of the
10 results of our effort might have some effect
11 Citywide.

12 What I'm here to say today has solely
13 to do with us. And what's more important to us
14 than our children. Our children, they're our
15 bloom, they're our blossom, they're our seed.
16 Children deserve everything they can get. We must
17 give it all to them who will shine when our light
18 dims.

19 But how? We spend lots of money
20 irresponsibly -- my opinion -- but irresponsibly
21 on their education. We can no longer squander
22 precious time. We must see the summer of '98 as
23 the Renaissance summer, the summer that
24 Philadelphia began to shine as a beacon into the
25 millennium.

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2 The most efficient way to show the true
3 meaning of urban existence is the Rec. Department;
4 but not just the Rec. Department, but the
5 volunteer council.

6 Volunteerism, we've heard a lot about
7 it lately. Volunteerism is the most efficacious
8 means to cultural magnificence. And no group of
9 volunteers exceeds the Philadelphia Recreation
10 Council in its size, in its strength, in its
11 spirit, in its humility, and its true concern.

12 With a truly unified effort, we in
13 Philadelphia can tap resources never before
14 imagined. We can see our recreation centers
15 become cultural centers, neighborhood centers, day
16 care centers, after-school centers, athletic
17 centers, senior centers, education centers,
18 enrichment centers, art centers, technical
19 training centers, meditation centers, ethnic
20 identity centers, health education centers, and
21 fun centers.

22 Now, let's consider our neighborhoods.
23 Neighborhoods are our villages of the past. Much
24 more needs to go on in the neighborhoods. They
25 must become more diverse, their richness must

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2 grow.

3 When you view the recreation centers in
4 the context of the neighborhoods, the function
5 that emerges is the volunteer councils. They are
6 neighbors. Let's bring neighbors together.

7 The Rec. Department budget stands at 1
8 percent of the City budget. If 0.5 percent of the
9 current Fiscal Year '97-'98 budget were
10 reallocated to the Rec. Department for the summer
11 of 1998, we could have a quality in life in
12 Philadelphia never before dreamed of. We could
13 have neighborhood residents going to rec. centers,
14 some receiving a stipend, others simply
15 volunteering.

16 But one thing is for sure. Thousands
17 of our children would receive what they need:
18 attention and time.

19 Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

21 - - -

22 PRESIDENT STREET: Sheila Harper,
23 Sheila Harper.

24 (Sheila Harper comes forward.)

25 MS. HARPER: Good morning, Council

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2 President Street, City Councilmembers, Health
3 Commissioner Richman. My name is Sheila Harper,
4 and I'm here on behalf of Health Center No. 9.
5 We're located at 131 East Chelton Avenue and we
6 service the northwestern area of the City.

7 Health Center No. 9 has been in
8 existence since 1958, which was prior to public
9 health being implemented around the City during
10 the sixties. We are housed in a building also
11 that was built at that same time, at which time we
12 were providing care to TB patients, chest clinics,
13 dental clinics, and immunization.

14 Since that time, of course, subsequent
15 to the closing of PGH, we began to serve a lot of
16 outpatient primary care patients. As a result of
17 that, our original facility that was built was not
18 designed to provide the level of services that
19 we're providing currently.

20 You figure if we're providing basic
21 immunizations and walk-in chest clinics, now
22 we're seeing 12,000 patients who average
23 approximately 40,000, 45,000 visits per year. Our
24 old facility is a little bit outdated. We have no
25 child care play area, our children sit in the

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2 waiting room with the adults who are sick.

3 We have been scheduled for renovation
4 since I originally became Board Chair two years
5 ago. I believe that those renovations were
6 supposed to begin originally in 1996.

7 Every few months, we are told, Okay,
8 the renovations are going to start in September,
9 okay, they're going to start in September of '98,
10 the following year, six months subsequent to
11 that. It has not occurred.

12 The last time we were told that there
13 were going to be renovations, they were scheduled
14 to occur, I believe, beginning in March, this
15 coming March. At the hearing on Monday, I
16 understood that that has now been delayed until
17 August again.

18 We have attempted to work as best as
19 possible with our community and with our Health
20 Commissioner, and she has been extremely helpful.
21 However, the delays that we're consistently
22 receiving in terms of beginning the process is a
23 problem.

24 The unemployed, the self-employed --
25 which I have been for the last twelve years -- the

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2 future unemployed, along with the thousands of
3 people that are going to be coming off of medical
4 assistance, we have to plan some alternative means
5 for their care. When they're off of medical
6 assistance, obviously, they cannot come into the
7 health centers and be seen, unless they go to
8 public health center.

9 My vision -- in terms of having been
10 Board Chair, I have this vision that once this
11 welfare reform takes place, that we're going to
12 have thousands of people who are going to be
13 needing care who will not be able to get care
14 because the priority ones are going to be the ones
15 that are already within the system.

16 Physically, our facility is unable to
17 house any additional exam rooms. I personally
18 have been a patient at Health Center No. 9 during
19 periods of time when my health insurance lapsed.

20 I have had my medical records lost on
21 numerous occasions. It's not because of the
22 inadequacy of the staff; it's because of the
23 physical limitations. It's impossible to house
24 12,000 active patient records on ten shelves,
25 okay, without something getting lost.

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2 I am here today to request that City
3 Council, first of all, look at the scheduled
4 renovation, see what can be done to expedite the
5 process, hire some additional staff. We have been
6 understaffed for some time in terms of clerical
7 assistance, which is important to things like
8 paperwork and maintaining the paperwork on the
9 12,000 patients that we see.

10 We need assistance in the area also of
11 a pharmacist. Our pharmacist is frequently pulled
12 to go to other health centers. We also recently
13 also lost a dentist.

14 We need those additional staff members
15 and we don't need the process where once the
16 position is vacant for longer than a year, it's
17 eliminated off of the approved staffing list.

18 Likewise, in terms of our rest rooms,
19 ventilation is really important. Our rest rooms
20 actually have a real severe odor. I would not
21 take my daughter and put her on that infant
22 changing table. It's dirty and it smells.

23 And, again, it's not because the
24 janitors don't do the best that they can. If you
25 have one and a half janitors that are cleaning up

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2 an entire 17,000 square feet, I'm certain they're
3 doing the best that they can. However, we need
4 additional janitorial assistance so that the rest
5 rooms don't smell like that.

6 Health Commissioner Richman has been
7 very helpful, her and Mariette Buckman from the
8 Capital Budget Office. One of the first things,
9 when they came out to meet with us, I took them on
10 a tour. I wanted to take them to the rest room,
11 and no one wanted to go in there.

12 I don't know how many of you have ever
13 been in Health Center No. 9, on Chelton Avenue,
14 but if that was your only alternative -- which it
15 is for a number of people -- I don't think that
16 you would want to go there for care. The
17 ventilation systems need to be improved.

18 If the Health Department can go in and
19 close our facilities because of inadequate
20 ventilation, what is it that indicates that we
21 have to have inadequate ventilation? It doesn't
22 make any sense to me.

23 Likewise, in addition to our staffing
24 issues and the delayed renovation problems, along
25 with the ventilation problems issues, I feel as

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2 though we need additional space. The more doctor
3 exam rooms that are available, the more patients
4 we can then see.

5 In preparation -- although we've been
6 extended for one additional year for the medical
7 assistance program, in other words, those that
8 will be coming off of the welfare rolls in March
9 of 1999, once they begin work, they will have an
10 opportunity to get one additional year of medical
11 assistance benefits.

12 However, once that's over, which will
13 be in March of the year 2000, they will be saddled
14 with -- unless they have a job which pays for
15 medical coverage. And I've had an opportunity to
16 listen and talk to some of the women who are
17 coming off of the welfare rolls through these
18 various training program. Frequently, they do not
19 have insurance benefits on their jobs. They are
20 being paid \$6.50 an hour.

21 Yes, we do have the CHIPS Program;
22 however, that's based on a sliding fee scale. So
23 therefore, if you make money, that does not
24 necessarily cover every -- all of your health care
25 needs.

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2 What I'm here today to ask City Council
3 to do is to see if you can expedite the
4 renovations. Do a study -- which Miss Buckman has
5 already initiated -- to determine whether our
6 physical plant can house additional people, which
7 I know it can't, but I know it's a process that
8 has to happen before a new or an expanded facility
9 is needed.

10 Also, I'd like you to begin to take a
11 look at the thousands of dollars, the millions of
12 dollars that the State of Pennsylvania is saving
13 as a result of welfare reform. They have saved
14 million of dollars off of the medical assistance
15 program.

16 I think that because they've saved
17 millions of dollars, what they need to do and what
18 we need to do is initiate the process to get
19 additional State funds to focus on providing
20 public health services.

21 Additionally, there's a lot of alcohol
22 and tobacco-related diseases that many of our
23 patients exhibit. I think that we need to make a
24 move towards these alcohol and tobacco companies
25 to have them offset some of our operational costs,

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2 okay, because many of the people that we see, of
3 course, have alcohol or tobacco-related illnesses.

4 The other thing I would like to look at
5 is have a basic planning session to determine
6 exactly how our dollars are currently being
7 allocated, are allocated amongst the various
8 health centers.

9 Okay, basically at this point, from
10 what I have been able to garner information in
11 terms of the budget, the expenses, the revenues --
12 well, the revenues are broken out, the expenses
13 are not, therefore I do not know if there is
14 equitable distribution across all of the health
15 centers in this City. I would like to take a
16 strong look at that.

17 If Health Center No. 9 serves a larger
18 percentage of uninsured, which we do, we have 75
19 percent Citywide, the percentage is 61 percent.
20 I can only imagine that that 75 percent is going
21 to worsen after welfare reform begins to actually
22 have its full effect. The 75 percent that I'm
23 quoting to you is prior to welfare reform.

24 I think that since we do serve people
25 from Chestnut Hill, Mount Airy, East Oak Lane,

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2 lower North Philadelphia, particularly after the
3 closing of Health Centers No. 7 and 8, that we
4 need to consider allocating additional resources
5 so that we can look at providing a better,
6 improved quality of care. And with our physical
7 limitations and with the consistent delayed
8 renovations, that's going to be a little bit more
9 difficult to achieve.

10 As a taxpayer, as a Board Chair, as a
11 health professional in the field for 20 years, I
12 basically am imploring City Council to take a look
13 seriously at this matter so that in the year 2000,
14 there is not going to be a massive crisis that we
15 are ill-prepared to address.

16 I'm going to leave the health care of
17 our citizens in your hands and in God's hand.
18 Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very
20 much. I have to tell you that many of the
21 questions that you have raised have already been
22 raised by a number of Members of City Council,
23 particularly the welfare reform questions and
24 where we will be, you know, as this program is
25 systematically implemented.

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2 And much of the -- many of the
3 questions have been raised. And the Department,
4 in all fairness, is working on a response to those
5 questions and is very much concerned about these
6 issues. So you are right on the money.

7 And if you stay tuned, I think you're
8 going to find that City Council agrees with most
9 of what you've said and is determined that we're
10 going to be prepared for this crisis.

11 MS. HARPER: I'm sorry. So what are we
12 going to do? I know that's Citywide, but what
13 about these delayed renovations that consistently
14 get delayed? You know, two, three years --

15 PRESIDENT STREET: I'm looking for the
16 Commissioner.

17 MS. HARPER: How do we address that?

18 PRESIDENT STREET: Is the Health
19 Commissioner here? Maybe she could give us word
20 on this record about the delayed renovations.
21 There may be a good reason for it, there may not.
22 So, hopefully, we'll get some response from the
23 Health Commissioner.

24 MS. HARPER: Okay, thank you very much.

25 (Commissioner Estelle Richman comes

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2 forward.)

3 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: My name is
4 Estelle Richman. I'm the City Health
5 Commissioner.

6 Actually, I just sent someone out to
7 make a phone call to find out the exact date. We
8 have been working very closely with the Capital
9 Budget Office. Many of the projects have been
10 delayed. My understanding is they are getting on
11 track now as the Capital Budget Office is working
12 with us.

13 We have two centers that are to be
14 finished in June of '98, and I think that Health
15 Center 9 is in the second round of programs, and I
16 think the due date is in December of '98.

17 But I need to get that confirmed, and I
18 will get back to you.

19 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay. Well, Miss
20 Harper is here. And if you get that information,
21 maybe you can get it directly to her. I'm sure
22 she'd be more than willing to talk to you about
23 the details of the renovations of the center.

24 Is that all right with you, Miss
25 Harper?

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2 MS. HARPER: But what --

3 PRESIDENT STREET: I'm saying that the
4 Commissioner has made a phone call to get the real
5 detail and the specifics. And what I would ask
6 her to do is, if she gets that information, that
7 she makes sure that she gets it directly to you so
8 that you'll be able to know exactly what the
9 situation is.

10 MS. HARPER: Well, my concern is --

11 PRESIDENT STREET: I understand. She
12 will be able to give you all that information.

13 MS. HARPER: (Inaudible/off mike.)

14 COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I don't have the
15 date, that's why I'm trying to find out.

16 PRESIDENT STREET: We don't know what
17 it is. I mean, we'll be glad to work with you on
18 it. Okay?

19 MS. HARPER: Thank you.

20 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you.

21 PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes
22 -- Councilwoman Miller, did you have questions?

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I just wanted to
24 make a comment.

25 PRESIDENT STREET: A comment. The

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2 Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. I want to
4 thank Sheila Harper for coming down. She's really
5 a proactive, very interested Advisory Chair.

6 And some of these issues were issues
7 before I came to Council. I was on a committee of
8 people that used to go to Health Center No. 9.
9 So, you know, we've been working to do what we
10 can, but I didn't know about this delay, well,
11 since it just happened Monday.

12 But I just really wanted to take the
13 time and thank Sheila for coming down. Thank you.

14 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

15 - - -

16 PRESIDENT STREET: Scott Maits.

17 (Scott Maits come forward.)

18 MR. MAITS: Council President Street,
19 ladies and gentlemen, my name is Scott Maits, 4230
20 Regent Square in West Philadelphia.

21 I'm of Citizens in Business for Transit
22 -- I'm sorry, excuse me. It's Citizens in
23 Business on Chestnut Street. It's a coalition of
24 groups, individuals, and businesses that are
25 interested in improving Chestnut Street.

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2 Currently, the City has some plans that
3 we feel do not address the real shortcomings of
4 the street. They want to widen and return it to
5 former state, similar to Walnut Street today. The
6 feeling with City planners is that Walnut Street
7 is the way to go and that this would greatly
8 improve Chestnut.

9 Well, we feel that most of the people
10 -- we know that most of the people arrive by
11 transit into Center City, and we feel that
12 improving the amenities for transit riders, for
13 pedestrians, inviting bicyclists in a good way
14 down to Chestnut is the way to bring more people
15 down there.

16 As another person from our group, Ann
17 Dixon, pointed out, Chestnut Street already has
18 more pedestrians than Walnut Street. I'd also add
19 that I don't think Chestnut Street could ever
20 become Rodeo Drive for Philadelphia, as Walnut
21 Street is. There are several reasons for the
22 differences in them.

23 What we need to do with Chestnut is to
24 create its own niche, to restore it to its former
25 glory as the leading regional shopping area for

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2 the entire tristate area really at one time.

3 What we can do -- and we've done some
4 art work to show you what that might look like --
5 is to bring light rail, to bring a bike lane, to
6 keep the sidewalks wider but to improve them with
7 really taking care of maintenance on them so that
8 the sidewalks don't look deplorable.

9 We have some of this art work to hand
10 out to people. We also have a cross-section of a
11 typical block of Chestnut Street in what is now
12 considered the closed transit section. We feel
13 that this plan could bring those people in. We'd
14 like to bring people from the train stations, from
15 the subways, and we'd like to have them connect
16 directly to Chestnut and to be brought down
17 there.

18 We'd like to have a Center City loop
19 like SEPTA is trying to do to Chestnut Street.
20 They want to have a loop that goes down to South
21 Street and Penns Landing. Well, this is an
22 improved design for one.

23 I wanted to point out also that cars
24 were the original reason that Chestnut Street was
25 going down in the fifties, sixties, and seventies.

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2 The busway had been brought in in the first
3 instance because the street was going downhill, it
4 was declining.

5 Well, the buses were not able to stem
6 that decline because they were a poor substitute
7 with what had originally been intended, which was
8 to have trolley cars on the street, as Ed Bacon in
9 the 1963 plan had intended.

10 Now, we have a slightly different
11 design, one that goes to the Convention Center by
12 returning on Arch Street. We've invited bicycles
13 down there.

14 Many people in our group are
15 bicyclists, and we also see that there's many
16 bicyclists adding every day. There's going to be
17 a bicycle network through Philadelphia. However,
18 there's going to be no downtown connection for
19 them to ride on. Chestnut Street could be that
20 downtown connection and could have a lot of
21 people.

22 I think the true key to Chestnut is to
23 do something that has been done for the hotels in
24 this City, which is to encourage them through
25 various incentives like we've done, and we're now

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2 having a hotel boon. We need to do the same thing
3 for apartment buildings. That's one of the keys
4 to Chestnut, to bringing it back.

5 But we need to make it a pedestrian way
6 too, something that people will love to come down
7 and see and something that will be a tourist
8 attraction known in other cities. And this plan
9 can address that.

10 I'll be available to come by City
11 Council chambers and talk specifics about the
12 plan. I don't want to bore everybody with many,
13 many technical things and reasons why this would
14 be a better plan.

15 And there is also some written
16 testimony, which I'm not going to -- it's a two-
17 page thing, I'm not going to read the whole thing
18 here today. But I will say that I will be
19 available to come around in mornings and meet with
20 people, take off from my day job and from my other
21 duties to come see you and talk about this
22 project.

23 I think it's very important that we
24 look at Chestnut Street very carefully before we
25 make this big decision, which was done behind

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2 closed doors for the large part and very quickly
3 for the other part. While Chestnut Street has
4 been languishing for many years, all of a sudden,
5 there's a plan, and there's been no public debate
6 on it at all, about whether it's going to work or
7 not.

8 And I might also point out that modern
9 democracy in America and in the world started on
10 Chestnut Street. We might need to introduce some
11 debate and some give-and-take on what might be
12 needed for its future.

13 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

14 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
15 Fernandez.

16 COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
17 President.

18 As Chair of the Transportation
19 Committee here in City Council, I know I've
20 started to get a number of letters around the
21 Chestnut Street proposed plan. And I assume, Mr.
22 President, that it affects your district and also
23 Councilman DiCicco's district.

24 I would like to suggest that we try to
25 figure out some way to make sure there is clear

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2 public discussion of what the Streets Department
3 is proposing to do. And whether that be in public
4 hearings or some round-table discussions, maybe we
5 could look at that, but I think it affects not
6 only those districts, but this is a major
7 thoroughfare for our whole City.

8 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.
9 That's a good idea, Councilwoman. We'll make sure
10 that we get more people involved in the
11 discussion.

12 - - -

13 PRESIDENT STREET: Joan Preston. Joan
14 Preston. Sorry, she wasn't here, can't talk.
15 Just kidding.

16 (Joan Preston comes forward.)

17 PRESIDENT STREET: There are a number
18 of people who all wish to speak. And I
19 understand, Miss Preston, you're interested in the
20 Public Access Media.

21 MS. PRESTON: Correct.

22 PRESIDENT STREET: I think that's the
23 same issue as the Cable Public Access. Is that
24 the same issue?

25 MS. PRESTON: Yes.

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2 PRESIDENT STREET: Well, Louis Massiah,
3 William Goldsby, Keith Brand, Alice Hayes, are all
4 of you here for the same issue? Can we get
5 everybody, all of those witnesses who are all here
6 for the same issue up at the table?

7 Because it will facilitate -- it's a
8 whole lot easier when we read the notes of
9 testimony because then we can have, you know, the
10 Public Access part of the notes. And sometimes we
11 take the stuff home with us and we won't have to
12 take a big book. We might even be able to take
13 just a section of the notes and have all the
14 testimony right at our fingertips.

15 So those people who are all here for
16 Public Access, can I ask you to identify
17 yourselves. We have Joan Preston --

18 MS. PRESTON: Yes, I'm Joan Preston.

19 PRESIDENT STREET: And who else is here
20 for Public Access? Can you give us your names.

21 COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Identify
22 yourselves for the record.

23 MR. MASSIAH: My name is Louie Massiah.

24 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay.

25 MR. MASSIAH: I live in the 1500 block

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2 of North 16th Street.

3 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay.

4 MR. BRAND: Keith Brand. I live at 454
5 west Earlham Terrace.

6 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay.

7 MS. COATES: My name's not on the list.
8 My name's Inja Coates. I'm with all these folks
9 in the Coalition.

10 COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Spell you name and
11 come closer to the microphone. The stenographer
12 cannot hear you.

13 MS. COATES: My name is Inja Coates.
14 I'm with members of the Coalition for Public
15 Access and I live in West Philadelphia.

16 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay.

17 MR. GOLDSBY: William Goldsby, 3329
18 North Hubert Street.

19 PRESIDENT STREET: We heard you.

20 MR. GOLDSBY: I'm sure you did.

21 PRESIDENT STREET: No, that's good,
22 that's very refreshing. I mean, some witnesses
23 come to the table and they say (speaking in a very
24 soft voice), "My name is. . ." And we can't hear
25 them, you know.

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2 Okay, is Alice Hayes here?

3 MS. HAYES: Yes.

4 PRESIDENT STREET: Do you mind coming
5 up --

6 MS. HAYES: I'm with -- (inaudible/off
7 mike.)

8 PRESIDENT STREET: Oh, I thought you
9 were with Public Cable. So you're with Public
10 Health, okay, no thank you.

11 All right, is there anyone else here
12 for Cable Public Access?

13 COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Just raise your
14 hands.

15 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay, let's get all
16 the Cable Access people right on the rail here,
17 right here on the inside 'cause we'll do you all
18 at once. And maybe what we can do is have people
19 just make a brief statement. And after we hear
20 all the statements, we can entertain whatever
21 discussion we need.

22 Is that all right? Any Councilmember
23 have a problem with that? I think it helps
24 organize this whole thing.

25 Okay, Miss Preston, we'll start with

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2 you.

3 MS. PRESTON: Thank you very much.

4 Regarding Public Access, we deem it not only a
5 need but a must for our citizens and for our
6 City. We envision this access to be a resource
7 that will bring a broad range of education for our
8 children and an awareness to the general public.

9 For now, Public Access is like a
10 mystery. And also the consensus is that our City
11 is the only large city in the nation that does not
12 have Public Access. And today, what we are asking
13 is that City Council will vote yes to make this a
14 part of the 1999 budget.

15 (Keith Brand comes forward.)

16 MR. BRAND: My name, again, is Keith
17 Brand. I'm an adjunct faculty member in
18 Communication Arts at Temple University and
19 Ursinus College. And for the last ten years, I've
20 been doing my dissertation on Public Access Cable
21 Television, not only here or the lack of it here
22 in Philadelphia, but also in other cities around
23 the country.

24 And I'm here to say right now that it
25 works, as witness the cameras that do broadcast

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2 the Council hearings live. Also, the educational
3 channels have been up and running for nearly ten
4 years, but we have not had the Public Access
5 channels up and running. So, again, we're asking
6 you to let's finally get this thing on the move.

7 I'm sure -- I know everybody, all
8 Councilpeople here in this chambers have their
9 problems with the media. City Council President
10 Street, you've mentioned a number of times that
11 you're disappointed with the way that the media
12 covers certain issues in the news.

13 Well, somebody came up with the
14 brilliant idea about 20 or 30 years ago that we
15 should turn over some of these new channels on
16 cable in the cable systems that were just
17 springing up around the United States to the
18 community.

19 We have a very rich community history
20 here in Philadelphia, and we'd like to be able to
21 give those people, the people that live out in our
22 neighborhoods, the opportunity and the access to
23 the tools and technology of television so that
24 they can make their own stories for other people
25 here in the City of Philadelphia.

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2 That's what was negotiated for back
3 when the franchise agreements were signed, back in
4 1983. And for reasons we're not all too sure of,
5 Public Access has never been instituted by City
6 Council here in Philadelphia. And we believe that
7 now with the franchise renegotiations that are
8 probably going to happen soon, that we need to
9 deal with this issue and we need to deal with it
10 now.

11 Thank you.

12 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

13 (Applause.)

14 (William Goldsby comes forward.)

15 MR. GOLDSBY: My name is William
16 Goldsby. I'm a registered voter in North
17 Philadelphia and I'm strongly advocating for
18 Public Access because it's an opportunity to give
19 voice to those who are voiceless.

20 Specifically -- I work with a number of
21 projects in North Philadelphia, but the two that
22 really comes home to me is the one where at least
23 8 to 12 young people between the -- well, under
24 14, meets every Tuesday to learn how to break down
25 and build computers, computers that are given to

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2 us by different organizations.

3 And these young people volunteer to
4 come every Tuesday, at 4 o'clock after school.
5 The objective is to get them at some point
6 prepared to build and create and serve the Web
7 wage. Many of these young people are voiceless.

8 The other group that I work with is a
9 group of young fathers who meet just to support
10 themselves, to keep themselves out of jail, to
11 help deal with crisis, dramas, and other issues,
12 to help deal with child support. Again, this
13 group is voiceless.

14 They are great projects, and it would
15 be good that other Philadelphians realize that
16 there are positive things going on out there in
17 the City.

18 One last thing. It's an illusion that
19 African-Americans, women, and other
20 disenfranchised population have a voice these
21 days. We do not have the voice that we deserve.
22 And to deny Public Access is another way of
23 denying that voice.

24 So, again, my emphasis is to -- well,
25 actually, my expectation is that we facilitate

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2 this Board of Directors so that Public Access
3 could provide the voices for the people in this
4 City.

5 (Applause.)

6 (Inja Coates comes forward.)

7 MS. COATES: My name is Inja Coates,
8 and I don't have any prepared speech, but I just
9 want to make a brief comment.

10 I work in North Philadelphia at a
11 community-based arts organization with education
12 programs that target at-risk youth and
13 particularly teens.

14 And I also am an independent media
15 maker. I document a lot of social issues and
16 stuff and events that go on at that particular
17 place and other places around the City.

18 And every time I'm there with my video
19 camera, the teens come running up and beg to be
20 able to hold the camera. And these are kids that
21 very little else motivates them to want to learn.
22 And they don't -- they're not rooted in their own
23 sense of identity, and they do not have a voice.

24 And I think I've seen just in my time
25 working with these kids that this is a really

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2 powerful tool, and it is powerful enough that it
3 gives them a reason not to be standing out on the
4 street corners and getting involved in a lot of
5 the illicit activities that take place in
6 neighborhoods like that.

7 So that's all I wanted to say.

8 (Applause.)

9 (Louis Massiah comes forward.)

10 MR. MASSIAH: Thank you. My name is
11 Louie Massiah. I am the Director of Scribe Video
12 Center, a media arts facility where we teach
13 individuals and members of community organizations
14 how to use film and video. And I'm also here with
15 my colleagues from the Philadelphia Community
16 Access Coalition.

17 As you can see, we're a diverse group
18 of about a hundred people, and growing. Our
19 mailing list is well over a thousand.

20 And we really carry on the tradition
21 that was sort of started by many people who work
22 in City Council maybe about 15 years ago,
23 specifically John Anderson who really pushed very
24 hard for Public Access. And there are a number of
25 people on City Council now who were also a part of

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2 that effort.

3 Now that it seems like two of the cable
4 franchisees are discussing renegotiating
5 contracts, it's very, very important that the
6 ordinance which was passed in 1983 finally be
7 enacted to finally set up Public Access.

8 A nonprofit corporation, which is
9 described in that ordinance, was to be chosen by
10 City Council and the Mayor. And funding which
11 comes from really the revenues of Public Access --
12 of the cable system was to fund this Public Access
13 Corporation. The capital expenses were to come
14 directly from the franchisees. So we really want
15 to push for this to happen so that we don't lose
16 this very, very important opportunity.

17 And the other thing is, as these new
18 cable agreements are being drafted, it's important
19 that Public Access not be lost, nor that we lose
20 educational access or government access.

21 These channels are extraordinarily
22 valuable, but they're also valuable to the
23 citizens of the City, and we don't want to lose
24 them, not because of any fault on our own part,
25 but because of just sort of having sort of drifted

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2 off the agenda.

3 And the other thing is that, you know,
4 Public Access is more than just a voice. It also,
5 as many of us have talked about, is part of
6 community-building and skills-building for young
7 people and old people in Philadelphia.

8 Thank you very much.

9 (Applause.)

10 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you. Can we
11 ask the people who have already testified to step
12 aside and let the others come up who would like to
13 testify so we can make sure get everybody on the
14 record.

15 (Denis Doyen comes forward.)

16 MR. DOYEN: My name is Denis Doyen. I
17 live in West Philadelphia. And I'm a small
18 business owner in a small video-production company
19 which specializes in production of videos for
20 nonprofit organizations in the City.

21 And what I've discovered in the course
22 of my work is that there's a great need for a
23 number of nonprofit organizations throughout the
24 City to use video as a way of getting their
25 message, their news about their work and their

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2 services and the issues that they address to their
3 constituents.

4 And many -- particularly those who work
5 with young people find out that a brochure or
6 printed material is not going to communicate that
7 message. Video is the best way to reach public,
8 whether it's on public health issues, whether it's
9 on education issues, whether it's violence
10 prevention issues, whether it's community
11 development. Whatever that organization is
12 working on, video is a very important and
13 effective way to get that message across.

14 Even though, as a small company, I try
15 to make my rates low enough so that nonprofits can
16 utilize that and create videos, and there are
17 other places that people can go for that, it's
18 really still prohibitive for many of the smaller
19 groups that are finding that their resources are
20 very stretched.

21 And with Public Access cable, they
22 would be able to go into a studio funded -- where
23 the equipment is funded by the cable companies who
24 have franchises here, get training, produce shows,
25 and get them on the cable networks so that people

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2 could find out the information that exists in the
3 community.

4 There's a great deal of expertise and
5 information and talent in the community, and cable
6 access can allow that to be shared with others
7 through the community. It can really be a very
8 important element of any strategy for community
9 development in Philadelphia.

10 (Applause.)

11 (Gail Lloyd comes forward.)

12 MS. LLOYD: My name is Gail Lloyd. I
13 live in the Mount Airy section of Philadelphia.
14 And I just want to make this brief 'cause,
15 actually, I have to go 'cause my meter just ran
16 out, but I just --

17 PRESIDENT STREET: Well, maybe we'll be
18 able to get some financial help here today.

19 (Laughter.)

20 PRESIDENT STREET: To hold you here and
21 ask you a lot of questions.

22 MS. LLOYD: I just wanted to repeat
23 what was said earlier about Philadelphia being one
24 of the -- or I should say the last large city to
25 have Public Access. I'd like to appeal to you to

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2 really consider that.

3 I think Philadelphia is a world-class
4 city, of course, and there's a large independent
5 film community here. And, actually, I was in
6 Cambridge earlier this year, which is a very small
7 town, and they have a wonderful Public Access
8 station there.

9 And I really think that Philadelphia
10 could -- could also, you know, be well served by
11 this.

12 PRESIDENT STREET: You know, I'm very
13 impressed by this testimony. And what I would
14 like to do is make the following recommendation.
15 I would like to make a commitment on behalf of all
16 the Members of Council, because everybody
17 understands that this is a very important issue.

18 I would like to make a commitment on
19 behalf of all the Members of Council to volunteer
20 the services of the Chairperson of Council's
21 Committee on Public Property, which is
22 Councilwoman Clark. She's not here so she can get
23 an assignment today.

24 That's what happens when you're not
25 here. Councilwoman Clark's mother is very, very

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2 ill, and this is a difficult time for her. She's
3 at the hospital every day, sometimes for long
4 periods of time. And so she can't be here, but I
5 know how interested she is in this, and her
6 committee is the committee that's responsible for
7 this issue.

8 Now, what I would like to do is ask
9 those people who are here on the Public Access
10 issue, to make sure that I get their names
11 separate from this record. 'Cause this record, it
12 will take us some time to get this record. I mean
13 the stenographer does what they do, and we finally
14 we get it.

15 But I would like for you do is to get a
16 list of your names, give it to Ms. Diaz here. And
17 what I will do is have a separate meeting where
18 you all can come. I will ask Councilwoman Clark
19 to be there.

20 All Councilmembers will be notified
21 when that meeting is, so if a Councilmember can be
22 there, that's fine. If a Councilmember can't be
23 there -- Councilmembers are very busy -- he can
24 send a staff member.

25 And I'd like to, in a less formal

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2 setting, under Councilwoman Clark's leadership as
3 the Chairman of that Committee, just have a little
4 more in-depth discussion about this so that before
5 these budget hearings are over, we can have a much
6 more specific plan.

7 Now, every member here is very
8 sympathetic to the testimony, and I think we want
9 to do the right thing. But I think that we maybe
10 need to put this other little side process into
11 effect so that we can make sure that we get the
12 level of the detail that we need and we can get
13 the action steps necessary to make sure that this
14 happens in a fair, reasonable way.

15 I think if we do that, you know, it's
16 much, much less likely to kind of get caught up in
17 all of the budget discussions and all, because it
18 really is something that's above and beyond just
19 the budget. This is something that's coming up,
20 it's coming up in other ways, and I would like for
21 us to be organized in order to effectively deal
22 with it.

23 MR. DOYEN: I think that sounds like a
24 good proposal, and I'm seeing people nodding here.
25 Now, would you also be attending that meeting

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2 yourself?

3 PRESIDENT STREET: I'm -- I will --

4 yes, I'll attend.

5 MR. DOYEN: Thanks.

6 (Randi Cecchine comes forward.)

7 MS. CECCHINE: Great, sounds great. I

8 just wanted to add one thing. I actually live in

9 New York. I grew up in the area, and I --

10 PRESIDENT STREET: She lives in New

11 York, strike that testimony from the record.

12 (Laughter.)

13 MS. CECCHINE: Well, I just wanted to

14 be honest about it.

15 PRESIDENT STREET: Unless she makes a

16 clear and unequivocal commitment to come back to

17 Philadelphia.

18 MS. CECCINE: But I would like to

19 invite Council and anybody else present to come to

20 New York to see the access centers in New York,

21 which are really wonderful centers. In Manhattan,

22 they've had Public Access for over 17 years.

23 They've had the channel, and they have a brand new

24 facility.

25 PRESIDENT STREET: That's not a bad

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2 idea. If you attend that meeting, maybe we can
3 have Councilwoman Clark and/or one or more of our
4 technical staff do that.

5 MS. CECCHINE: Great.

6 (Richard Paul comes forward.)

7 MR. PAUL: Hi. My name is Richard
8 Paul. I'm a local artist in Center City. I grew
9 up in East Falls, my father was born and raised in
10 Kensington, my mother was born and raised in East
11 Falls. My grandparents were Italian immigrants.

12 Growing up in East Falls in the
13 seventies, I'm aware of the need for community-
14 building and diversity, and how important it is
15 for all of us to know that we all have something
16 to share.

17 I feel that Public Access is a
18 wonderful way to tell the stories of my relatives
19 and your relatives so that we all get to know each
20 other and, you know, in that sense, we can all
21 live together in a better way.

22 That's all I wanted to say.

23 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

24 Yes, sir.

25 (Alex Jevons comes forward.)

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2 MR. JEVONS: Hi, I'm Alex Jevons. I
3 live in Center City. I'm an artist and AIDS
4 activist and, until recently, a Board Member at
5 the William Way Community Center for the Lesbian,
6 Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community.

7 Television is really, really, really
8 important in this society. And in an age when the
9 ownership of the media is being concentrated into
10 fewer and fewer hands, things like Public Access
11 television become even more important. It's
12 really vital that we have it in Philadelphia.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.
16 We look forward to seeing all of you at the
17 meetings and, I will tell you, the meeting will
18 probably be at 6 o'clock in the morning.

19 MR. JEVONS: We'll be there.

20 PRESIDENT STREET: I know you will. I
21 have come to understand that whenever we're
22 willing to meet, you'll be there. Thank you.

23 - - -

24 PRESIDENT STREET: Joanne Fischer,
25 Joanne Fischer. Going once, going twice -- just

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2 kidding, take your time.

3 (Joanne Fischer answer comes forward.)

4 MS. FISCHER: Hi. Thank you for
5 allowing me to testify today. My name is Joanne
6 Fischer. I am the Executive Director of the
7 Maternity Care Coalition, and we run the
8 Mom-Mobile Program, a community-based outreach and
9 family support program.

10 PRESIDENT STREET: Did you say "the Law
11 Mobile"?

12 MS. FISCHER: The Mom-Mobile.

13 PRESIDENT STREET: Oh, the Mom-Mobile,
14 okay.

15 MS. FISCHER: Okay.

16 PRESIDENT STREET: I was going to say
17 I'm very curious about that 'cause I never heard
18 of the Law Mobile.

19 MS. FISCHER: No, no, we're the Mom-
20 Mobile, and we are now in nine sites throughout
21 Philadelphia, in schools in Strawberry Mansion and
22 Overbrook, at health centers in Strawberry
23 Mansion, and Health Center 4 at 44th and
24 Haverford.

25 And we're also at three (sic)

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2 community-based sites: the Latino Mom-Mobile on
3 Fifth Street, the Germantown Mom-Mobile, the South
4 Philly Mom-Mobile, and the North Philly
5 Mom-Mobile.

6 And I'm here today to bring to your
7 attention some trends in the Health Department
8 that are of deep concern to me and to some of the
9 City's most vulnerable citizens and to those of
10 you who are trying to see social services in the
11 context of economic and community development.

12 And I brought this book with me that
13 I'd like to recommend to all of the Members of
14 City Council. And it's called, "Common Purpose:
15 Strengthening Families and Neighborhoods to
16 Rebuild America," by Elizabeth Shore. And --

17 PRESIDENT STREET: I have read every
18 word of it.

19 MS. FISCHER: You have? Good, I'm glad
20 to hear that, and I hope that you're remembering
21 the same sentence that made me want to come
22 testify today, which is --

23 PRESIDENT STREET: I wait to hear that
24 sentence.

25 MS. FISCHER: All right. "If we are to

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2 move beyond discovering one isolated success after
3 another, only to abandon it, dilute it, or
4 dismember it before it can reach more than a few,
5 we must identify the forces that make it so hard
6 for success to survive."

7 And my sense is that what's we're
8 doing.

9 As you may or may not know, our
10 Mom-Mobile program is the result of hearings at
11 City Council in 1987. You asked us what we
12 needed. We told you that we needed a
13 community-based outreach effort. We brought
14 people in from around the country who ran
15 successful programs, and you said, Tell us what to
16 do, tell us how to do it, do it, and we have.

17 We have created public-private
18 partnerships, and we've grown to serving over 3500
19 families in 9 sites throughout the City. And our
20 brightly-colored Mom-Mobiles, yellow, are seen
21 throughout and known in the neighborhoods where
22 we've been for a long time.

23 For example, in Strawberry Mansion, one
24 of our first sites, I don't think there's anybody
25 who gets pregnant who we don't know about. We're

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2 a part of the fabric of the community.

3 I would like to see the City as a
4 strong and eager partner, working with us to
5 extend these programs in effective ways. However,
6 and I want to share one other piece with you
7 because I'm so proud of our program at Strawberry
8 Mansion High School.

9 Some of you may know the school
10 community coordinator at our open house told me
11 that at Strawberry Mansion High School, they begin
12 with 20 ninth-grade classes and they end with 6
13 senior classes. A hundred percent of the pregnant
14 and parenting teens in our program at Strawberry
15 Mansion High School have graduated from high
16 school.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. FISCHER: And where we are at
19 Overbrook High School, 98 percent have graduated.

20 Unfortunately, we're only at two of the
21 high schools as a subcontract for Project Elect,
22 and I would like to see us at every high school,
23 because we're there during the summer, we're in
24 people's homes, and we have a program that really
25 works.

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2 I understand when the Health
3 Commissioner was questioned last week about the
4 Mom-Mobile and programs such as ours, that she
5 responded that she is working with managed care to
6 get programs like ours funded.

7 And I need more time than we have today
8 to explain why and how managed care will not cover
9 all programs previously funded by the Health
10 Department.

11 PRESIDENT STREET: Can I interrupt
12 you?

13 MS. FISCHER: Mm-hmm.

14 PRESIDENT STREET: Because this is
15 really important.

16 MS. FISCHER: I'm going to go into that
17 a little bit more, mm-hmm.

18 PRESIDENT STREET: But this is what you
19 have to -- I need you to understand a little bit
20 about how this Council works.

21 MS. FISCHER: Mm-hmm.

22 PRESIDENT STREET: You come here, you
23 give this testimony. We can't engage you the way
24 we'd like to, but what you have to do is go and
25 see Councilwoman Tasco.

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2 Councilwoman Tasco is the Chairman of
3 Council's Committee on Health and Human Services,
4 and she and her staff are the people who need
5 every level of detail that you have, because she
6 would be the person -- and I'm the Vice Chairman
7 of that Committee too, by the way.

8 She would be the person who would be
9 able to work with you and with the Commissioner
10 and with the Council in making sure that your case
11 got the consideration that it needs as we move
12 beyond the public hearing stages of this
13 testimony. And I wanted to -- 'cause if I didn't
14 say that now, I might forget.

15 MS. FISCHER: Thank you. And we've
16 been meeting -- we met with your staff, we've met
17 with a variety of City Councilpersons, and we've
18 been working to get an appointment with her
19 staff.

20 And I know that Councilwoman Tasco also
21 has a sick family member right now, but her staff
22 promises us we will have an appointment.

23 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay, I just wanted
24 to make sure you knew that.

25 MS. FISCHER: Thank you.

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2 I believe that the Health Department,
3 School District, managed care organizations,
4 health systems, and private money are all required
5 to put these programs in place in a way that will
6 truly support families and communities.

7 I am not aware of the efforts and
8 successes of the Health Department in making this
9 happen, but I do want you to know that we have
10 been successful in getting managed care contracts;
11 and, in fact, we have had contracts with every
12 managed care company currently working in the
13 Health Choices Program. And we have now two
14 contracts.

15 And, again, they're long stories, which
16 I would love to go into with you at some other
17 time. But currently, we do not have contracts
18 with Oxford, Oak Tree, or HMA Health Plan.

19 I do want you to know that I have
20 become a national expert on community-based
21 maternal/child health organizations contracting
22 with managed care and have been asked to write a
23 chapter of the book that the Annie Casey
24 Foundation is putting together around community
25 health workers and their integration in the

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2 managed care system, so that it's -- and have been
3 asked to present around the country on this topic.

4 But, once again, if managed care can
5 pay for half of those services, I think that we
6 will be doing well.

7 What has happened is that we have been
8 given another \$75,000-cut in our Title 5 Health
9 Department contract. Over the past five years,
10 we've gone from funding of \$689,000, and we're now
11 at a point where our funding is 330 -- I'm sorry
12 that's the cuts. We've had \$337,000 worth of cuts
13 over the past five years.

14 And we're now at the point -- I've cut
15 staff and I've cut staff and I've cut staff. I've
16 raised new dollars, and I'm at the minimum number
17 of staff you can have for a program at each health
18 center.

19 So I'm in a situation where I've been
20 using -- when the City cuts funds from us, I've
21 been able to leverage other dollars so it's two or
22 three -- every dollar takes away two or three
23 other dollars.

24 So I'm in a situation now where I've
25 just gotten an agreement with Huggies to buy us a

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2 Mom-Mobile for West Philadelphia, and I don't have
3 the staff to staff it. And the William
4 Pennsylvania Foundation has given us a \$465,000
5 grant for our infrastructure support so that we
6 have state-of-the-art MIS and case management.

7 We're way ahead of anyone in the United
8 States in this regard so that we can bill, so that
9 we can do the quality assurance and the valuation
10 that's needed. Once again, we need the staff and
11 we need the programs to do it.

12 We're not going to give up. And I want
13 you to know that where I've been successful is in
14 raising money in the suburbs, in Camden. They're
15 contracting with us around the country.

16 But where we got started, in the heart
17 of the City, we're now being cut, so that I'm
18 either going to have to cut a site, which is
19 probably what I'm going to have to do in order to
20 survive. And --

21 PRESIDENT STREET: Miss Fischer, I'm
22 going to have to ask that you summarize.

23 MS. FISCHER: I will. And, again, I'm
24 hiring people from the City. We hire people from
25 the neighborhoods we serve, so we're taking jobs

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2 away from City.

3 And, finally, I have asked again and
4 again that there be programs in the Northeast part
5 of the City. And it hasn't happened.

6 And yesterday, at my staff meeting, my
7 North Philly team tells me that they continue to
8 get calls for people who need help in the
9 Northeast part of the City, and there is no --
10 there's nothing for them.

11 And I would really like this City to
12 partner with us to make these programs available
13 in a public-private partnership throughout the
14 entire City so that I don't have to take all of my
15 programs to the suburbs and to replicate them
16 around the United States.

17 Thank you.

18 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.
19 You're going to be meeting with Councilwoman
20 Tasco?

21 MS. FISCHER: If you can help me get an
22 appointment, I'd appreciate that.

23 PRESIDENT STREET: Well, I can help you
24 get an -- actually, I think I can easily help you
25 get an appointment Julia Danzy of my staff, if you

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2 haven't already met her.

3 MS. FISCHER: I've had that meeting.

4 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay. But I need
5 you to -- I don't know whether she's here.

6 Is Miss Danzy here?

7 (Miss Danzy is not present.)

8 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay. I will talk
9 to her, and we will look into this very carefully,
10 okay?

11 MS. FISCHER: And you'll look into the
12 funding cuts?

13 PRESIDENT STREET: Absolutely.

14 MS. FISCHER: Thank you.

15 PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes
16 Councilwoman Verna.

17 COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you, Mr.
18 President.

19 Ms. Fischer, can you tell me at what
20 site in South Philadelphia it --

21 MS. FISCHER: We're at Belmont, the
22 YWCA -- I mean, excuse me, it's the Belmont
23 Community Center there.

24 And I understand from my frontline
25 staff after we met that they work very closely

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2 with your office for referrals.

3 COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Right, thank you.

4 PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes
5 Councilwoman Blackwell.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr.
7 President.

8 I saw Miss Fischer this morning when we
9 came in together, both of us rushing from other
10 meetings. And, certainly, she gave an excellent
11 presentation, and it is obvious that she is
12 committed to this program and it is really
13 something that we need.

14 So let me thank you again, Miss
15 Fischer, and say that we hear you and that
16 certainly I'm committed to doing whatever we can.

17 MS. FISCHER: Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

19 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

20 - - -

21 PRESIDENT STREET: Claudia Crane.

22 MS. CRANE: Here.

23 (Claudia Crane comes forward.)

24 MS. CRANE: My testimony is short. I'm
25 here in part to testify about recycling, and there

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2 are others here about recycling, so I'd like to
3 suggest that perhaps --

4 PRESIDENT STREET: Well, I -- as a
5 matter of fact, I have Susan Gobretski on
6 recycling and Bob Pierson on recycling. Are those
7 folks here? Why don't you come up.

8 MS. CRANE: I think there's one or two
9 others as well.

10 PRESIDENT STREET: Anybody else here on
11 recycling?

12 (No response.)

13 PRESIDENT STREET: That's all the
14 recycling people. Is there anybody here for
15 something else that we could recycle into
16 recycling?

17 (Laughter.)

18 MS. CRANE: Okay, my name is Claudia
19 Crane. I live at 2335 Pratt Street, in
20 Philadelphia. I'm here to testify on the City's
21 -- on recycling in the City and also on the
22 City's plan for Chestnut Street.

23 First of all, I'd like to express my
24 appreciation for this Saturday opportunity for
25 public testimony. When it is time for the school

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2 budget hearings, it's important that Saturdays be
3 set aside for that as well, and I think that
4 that's been done in the past so that working
5 people can participate.

6 So, as I said, I'm speaking on two
7 subjects today: The Recycling Office and the
8 City's plan for Chestnut Street. The first has to
9 do with the operating budget; the second has to do
10 with the capital budget.

11 While I know, having learned this late
12 yesterday, that the hearing is supposed to only be
13 about the operating budget, I am taking advantage
14 of this opportunity because I may not be able to
15 get to another hearing.

16 Also, the Recycling Office and the
17 City's plan for Chestnut Street have at least one
18 thing in common: they are both under the
19 administration of the Streets Department, and they
20 are both subjects that I care very much about.

21 I have been a leader in community
22 recycling and am a mayoral appointee to both the
23 Recycling Advisory Committee and the Solid Waste
24 Advisory Committee.

25 I have also taken an interest in

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2 Chestnut Street because I believe it to be a
3 magnet, a destination, a place where people really
4 want to be.

5 You've already heard testimony about
6 the hundreds of thousands dollars-plus. I think
7 my latest information shows that it's about
8 \$400,000 in State recycling grants that the City
9 has already lost or might lose.

10 And it is my understanding that the
11 responsibility of this loss resides not with the
12 Recycling Officer, per say, but with the Streets
13 Department for failing to follow up on those
14 grants.

15 And given that lack of support, it is
16 really hard for me not to conclude that the
17 Streets Department would prefer to see recycling
18 in this City simply fade away and die. If these
19 grants had been realized, perhaps we would be
20 seeing an increase in participation in recycling
21 tonnages, not the decline that you've all already
22 heard about.

23 Here's what I suggest: that City
24 Council demand that the next Recycling Coordinator
25 report personally to Council and to the Mayor

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2 whenever any recycling grant money appears to be
3 in jeopardy, as well as any other impediments to
4 carrying out the recycling program.

5 City Council and the Mayor must
6 sanction or give Recycling Coordinator the
7 authority to sanction those who stand in the way.
8 Perhaps the Recycling Coordinator should again
9 report directly to the Managing Director, as the
10 Recycling Coordinator used to, instead of to a
11 Deputy Commissioner, as the Streets Department
12 would have it.

13 Now Chestnut Street. The City's plan
14 for Chestnut Street calls for widening of the
15 street, narrowing of the sidewalks, and bringing
16 back parking and auto traffic all day long.

17 My first complaint about it is that it
18 is a travesty to call this "the City's plan." It
19 would be more accurate to call it "the plan of the
20 Streets Department and the Center City District,"
21 who, near as I can tell, have been the once
22 pushing for this.

23 There has been virtually no opportunity
24 for public input into the plan for this most
25 important street, so I'm very grateful to hear

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2 today from Councilwoman Fernandez that there will
3 be now an opportunity for a public forum on this
4 subject.

5 We have the seed money from the feds,
6 which, I understand, is about \$1.2 million already
7 obtained through a Congressional earmark,
8 otherwise known as "pork."

9 The Streets Department and the Center
10 City District hopes to get Council to provide the
11 additional -- about \$300,000 to get this project
12 started; whereas, the remaining \$13.5 million said
13 to be needed to complete the project is coming
14 from is rather than uncertain.

15 It is important to note that this
16 Congressional earmark, with City match, is not
17 wedded to the City plan as it exists now. This
18 money can be used to fund an alternative plan, one
19 that results from a truly public process.

20 The place for that to happen should be
21 right -- you know, right here in City Council or,
22 you know, with City Council's caucus or something
23 like that, as Councilwoman Fernandez has
24 suggested.

25 I have several complaints about the

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2 City's plan for Chestnut Street, which I hope I
3 will have a chance to elaborate on at a public
4 forum. Number one, the City's plan brings
5 increased auto traffic, pollution and noise, and
6 it relies heavily on law enforcement.

7 A shared bus/bike lane, as called for
8 in the plan, is unpleasant, noxious, and unsafe
9 for bicyclists. It doesn't do anything to attract
10 pedestrians. And the narrowed sidewalk, as called
11 for, and continued presence of bus fumes
12 discourages business from operating warm-weather
13 sidewalk cafes.

14 And it contradicts the National Park
15 Plan, which calls for closing Chestnut to traffic
16 at Independence Mall. And, lastly, it kills
17 20-year old trees.

18 And I'd like to note again that, as has
19 been noted by a couple of other people already,
20 that Center City District counts -- their counts
21 show that Chestnut Street, despite its present
22 flaws, now has more people on it than Walnut
23 Street.

24 Chestnut Street, as it is now, is
25 unpleasant; behemoth, diesely (sic) buses lumber

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2 down; delivery trucks are allowed to sit there all
3 day; and the brickwork is crumbling.

4 I would like to see a plan that
5 reroutes buses onto Market, that keeps the
6 sidewalks wide, and prohibits vehicular traffic in
7 the middle of the day. A trolley would be nice,
8 although I personally don't believe necessary to
9 the street.

10 What is necessary is a commercial
11 street that is attractive to pedestrians, and a
12 shopping district where people would want to
13 stroll, relax, meet friends, eat lunch away from
14 the unpleasantness of bus fumes and traffic.
15 Chestnut Street really can be such a place, but
16 not if the City's plan, as it exists now, is
17 adhered to.

18 My voice is just one of many that
19 should be heard before any plan is set in stone,
20 and I really look forward to a hearing
21 specifically on Chestnut Street.

22 Thank you very much.

23 PRESIDENT STREET: Councilwoman
24 Fernandez, did you want to comment now or wait
25 until after these --

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2 COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: I'll wait.

3 PRESIDENT STREET: She wishes to wait.

4 - - -

5 (Susan Gobretski comes forward.)

6 PRESIDENT STREET: Please identify
7 yourself for the record.

8 MS. GOBRETSKI: My name is Susan
9 Gobretski. I live at 943 South Sixth Street.
10 Good afternoon, President Street and Members of
11 City Council.

12 I'm a program organizer with the Clean
13 Water Action, located on Walnut Street, here in
14 Philadelphia. Clean Water Action's a grass-roots
15 organization working for better environmental laws
16 and policies protecting the health and quality of
17 life. We also conduct a door-to-door educational
18 and outreach organizing campaign.

19 We're here today to share our concerns
20 for Philadelphia's Recycling Program. We believe
21 the program is in jeopardy, confirmed by the
22 absence of any commitment to its expansion by
23 Commissioner's Moy this past Tuesday.

24 According to the Commissioner's
25 testimony in his response to questions from City

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2 Council, we're currently recycling only 6.5
3 percent of our waste, 10 years after recycling has
4 become mandatory.

5 The total tonnage for recycling has
6 fallen to a level lower than that collected in
7 1995. According to the Commissioner, that's
8 because of falling paper prices and people buying
9 more plastic. The tonnage goals for Fiscal Year
10 1997 was 7,000 tons lower, again, according to the
11 Commissioner, because of bad weather and
12 scavengers.

13 Commercial education and the
14 enforcement program consists of three sweep
15 officers, a Web page, and articles in business
16 journals.

17 Apparently, between 200,000 and
18 potentially as much as \$1 million in State grant
19 funds has been lost. The plan to address this is
20 only a pilot -- a, quote, pilot for weekly
21 collection, unquote, with no funds allocated to
22 expand the program in the coming fiscal year.

23 And we are currently without a
24 Recycling Coordinator, for which there will be a
25 local search. The Recycling Advisory Committee

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2 would be informed about the search. Only due to
3 questioning from Councilman Cohen did we learn
4 that someone's supposed to be picked by April.

5 I'd like to address some of these
6 issues.

7 First, there is no excuse for a
8 recycling rate of 6-1/2 percent. The
9 Commissioner's assertion that the reasons for
10 lower recycling rates were falling paper prices,
11 bad weather, and scavengers is strange.

12 The price of paper simply does not
13 affect how many people put their paper out at the
14 curb. And while plastic has displaced some paper,
15 glass, and metal for packaging uses, and this does
16 affect recycling rates, Philadelphia recycling
17 rates could triple based on the materials we
18 recycle now before that were to even become an
19 issue.

20 As for weather and the scavengers, last
21 winter was pretty mild. And to lay the blame for
22 the shortcomings of a major City program at the
23 feet of scavengers is absurd.

24 In fact, low participation comes from
25 confusion about the program's operation and

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2 schedule, and a failure to educate and properly
3 promote the program.

4 According to members of the RAC, Al
5 Dezzi, presented a comprehensive education and
6 promotion plan over a year ago in conjunction with
7 going to weekly collection. Why wasn't this plan
8 considered and implemented and how much more might
9 we have collected?

10 The truth of the matter is, the best
11 program is going to weekly recycling collections
12 on the same day as trash day. According to
13 studies done by the Recycling Office, a weekly
14 recycling collection program would more than
15 double citizen participation and would likely
16 increase the recycling rate to more than 20
17 percent.

18 It would also result in a lower
19 collection cost per ton of materials and give us
20 the opportunity to restructure trash collections,
21 lowering the cost of the whole collection system.
22 So why aren't we doing this?

23 When asked by Councilwoman Fernandez
24 what he was doing to increase the recycling rate,
25 all the Commissioner would say is that he has

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2 plans for a pilot for weekly collection. However,
3 he has no plans to budget for weekly collection.
4 No reason given.

5 The City's mandatory Recycling Act set
6 a goal of 50 percent to be met by 1991, the
7 Statewide goal set in 1988 was 25 percent by 1997,
8 and we aren't even close.

9 The City's Solid Waste Management Plan,
10 formulated under the leadership of the late
11 William Donaldson and adopted by City Council in
12 1990, set a goal for 40 percent by the year 2000.
13 Can we reach this goal?

14 It's unclear. But without going
15 weekly, it will be impossible. So we would like
16 to ask for the following:

17 Number one, that the budget for Streets
18 must include an allocation to expand recycling to
19 a weekly collection, period.

20 Money alone is not enough. Require the
21 Streets Department to submit a plan showing how
22 weekly collection will be accomplished, how the
23 money will be spent, what would be done to expand
24 the program, and a schedule for when it will
25 happen. If it will take more than a year, then

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2 the budget should be presented as well.

3 The best model for this plan was the
4 June 1992 document response to the State of
5 Pennsylvania Department of Environmental
6 Resource's Consent Order and Agreement on Citywide
7 Implementation for Curbside Recycling Collection.
8 (I can't say that again.)

9 But the money and plan are also not
10 enough. The former coordinator, Al Dezzi, held
11 the position of Deputy Commissioner and lacked the
12 authority to implement a single major program. We
13 need a real recycling advocate and expert to
14 achieve a successful, economically-productive
15 recycling program, and that person needs the
16 position and the authority to get the job done.

17 In 1987, City Council took the
18 leadership in passing the first urban mandatory
19 recycling law in the country, adopting 1251-A,
20 with a vote of 13 to 1; and by doing so, ushered
21 in what was one of the best programs in the
22 country.

23 We need you to do it again. We urge
24 you to once again provide the leadership. Insist
25 on weekly collection, a well-developed plan, and

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2 an independent recycling expert at the helm of the
3 program, with the authority to run it right.

4 Philadelphia's a beautiful city. I
5 bought a house here about a year ago. It has an
6 eye on the future. Recycling will make that
7 future economically stronger and cleaner.

8 Thank you.

9 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

10 - - -

11 PRESIDENT STREET: Mr. Pierson.

12 (Bob Pierson comes forward.)

13 MR. PIERSON: Yes, thank you. My name
14 is Bob Pierson. I live on the 300 block of
15 Gaskill Street. I'm a member of the Recycling
16 Advisory Committee, and I've been a member of the
17 Recycling Advisory Committee since its inception
18 in 1987, and I served as its Chair from 1992
19 through 1994.

20 The Recycling Advisory Committee is
21 appointed by the Mayor and is charged by Bill
22 1251-A with formulating policy and regulations for
23 the Philadelphia Recycling Program.

24 The RAC prepared the basic blueprint
25 for the program in 1987 and drafted regulations

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2 for both the City-collected premises and the
3 commercial sector. And these regulations were
4 adopted and form the basis for collection of
5 recyclables from households and businesses in the
6 City. RAC members have contributed hundreds, if
7 not thousands, of volunteer hours over many years
8 to bring this program into effect.

9 After the Streets Department
10 incorporated the recycling program into the
11 Department in the early nineties, the RAC
12 recognized the need for a formal planning process
13 for program expansion. In 1994, the RAC passed
14 the Resolution for Strategic Planning for
15 Recycling. And I'll submit this and attach it to
16 my testimony.

17 It was approved by the Interagency Task
18 Force on August 8th of '94. The resolution, as
19 approved, has the weight of City policy to Bill
20 1251-A.

21 The purpose of the RAC resolution was
22 to require the Streets Department to prepare a
23 plan that would achieve the 40 percent recycling
24 goal of the City's Solid Waste Management Plan.

25 The resolution required that -- and I'm

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2 quoting -- "the strategic plan shall be the basis
3 for program elements for implementation in Fiscal
4 Year '96 in subsequent capital and operating
5 budgets."

6 The RAC wanted to see in every budget
7 cycle what program elements from the Recycling
8 Program would be funded in the effort of the City
9 to reach its recycling goals.

10 And I think that's a very important
11 point, that that plan should be linked to -- the
12 program elements should be linked to budget so
13 that everyone could see in November and December,
14 going into the budgeting process for the next
15 year, what the program elements that were going to
16 be funded by how much and how much that goes
17 toward reaching the goals that we have.

18 This plan was never released. The
19 Streets Department missed the resolution's
20 deadline of November 15, 1994. The Department
21 hired a consultant to assist it with the plan and
22 prepare a schedule for its completion by the end
23 of the calendar year '95, in time for the Fiscal
24 Year '96 budgeting process.

25 The Department did not meet this

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2 deadline, either. In fact, nearly four years have
3 gone by, and there's still no plan for recycling,
4 a plan that ties specific program elements to a
5 schedule for implementation; and, most
6 importantly, to the budgeting process of the City.

7 As a result of the Department's failure
8 to prepare a strategic plan for recycling, the
9 Recycling Program has no road map to reach the 40
10 percent recycling goal by the year 2000 that was
11 established in the City's Solid Waste Management
12 Plan that was prepared by the Department; nor to
13 reach the 50 percent goal set by City Council back
14 in '87. Without a strategic plan, the Department
15 has failed and will continue to fail to meet the
16 City's recycling goals.

17 I cannot tell you the collective
18 disappoint of the many volunteers from industry,
19 from commerce, and from just general citizens who
20 have come to endless meetings over the last ten
21 years. We have struggled so hard to have a
22 premium recycling program, but the Streets
23 Department has not let this happen.

24 I recommend that the City Council
25 review the RAC resolution and transform this

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2 resolution into its own requirement that the
3 Streets Department prepare a strategic plan for
4 recycling that will meet the City's recycling
5 goals.

6 City Council should require that the
7 plan be prepared by the end of the third quarter
8 of this year, of this calendar year, so that it is
9 ready for implementation in the Fiscal Year 2000
10 budget. City Council should closely monitor the
11 preparation of the plan to make sure that the
12 Department meets this deadline.

13 If the Street Department once again
14 fails to prepare a plan to meet the City's
15 recycling goals, I would recommend that the
16 recycling program be moved from the Streets
17 Department and placed elsewhere, free from the
18 institutional inertia of the Department.

19 I attach to my testimony the original
20 RAC resolution. And I also at this point would
21 like to take an opportunity to transmit to the
22 Council the Recycling Advisory Committee's
23 resolution of its meeting from last week on the
24 recycling program.

25 And I would like to just take really

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2 one minute to summarize the testimony of the Clean
3 Air Council. Joe Minott handed this to me and
4 asked me to hand it in, and I'd like to highlight
5 the four points that he makes.

6 Now is a critical time for recycling
7 in Philadelphia, especially since Al Dezzi left
8 the post of Recycling Coordinator and Deputy
9 Streets Commissioner.

10 Over the years, the Streets Department
11 has worked hard to bring recycling to all
12 Philadelphians, and some important steps have been
13 made. However, there is much more to be done to
14 ensure that the recycling program does not
15 stagnate or even slip backwards.

16 And these are the points that the Clean
17 Air Council makes:

18 First, the Streets Department should
19 work to ensure that the person who replaces the Al
20 Dezzi as Recycling Coordinator is both a champion
21 for recycling and someone with the power and
22 authority to get things done in Philadelphia.

23 Second, that there is universal
24 agreement among recycling advocates that the best
25 way to improve participation in the curbside

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2 program is to return to weekly residential
3 curbside collection. The Clean Air Council
4 strongly recommends that the Streets Department
5 provide a plan for moving to weekly collections in
6 its proposed budget this year.

7 Third, an ongoing, long-term public
8 education program about recycling should be fully
9 funded.

10 And, fourth, enforcement is critical to
11 the success of the commercial recycling program.
12 It cannot be done with only three sweep offers.

13 I thank you very much for your
14 attention.

15 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

16 You should be aware, if you're not
17 aware already, that Council actually did pass a
18 resolution on Thursday, and I believe it
19 authorizes the Streets and Services Committee of
20 City Council to have hearings on the whole
21 recycling program.

22 There was also considerable
23 disappointment on the part of Members of Council
24 as to the status of the recycling program, much of
25 which mirror the comments that you have made in

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2 this record today.

3 And I recommend that you stay in touch
4 with Councilmember DiCicco, I believe, who is the
5 Chairman of the committee that is responsible for
6 holding those hearings. They will be held, and I
7 think they are very, very important, and we would
8 like to work along with you.

9 This Council has a proud history in
10 this area, and we really would like to continue to
11 work with the community and the Department to make
12 sure that we make a lot more progress than we have
13 made.

14 Councilwoman Fernandez, did you have a
15 comment?

16 COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr.
17 President.

18 First, I want to -- so I don't forget
19 it, I want to thank all of you for your thousands
20 of volunteer that hours you've given to try to be
21 the private part of a public/private partnership,
22 to help us realize the intent and the spirit of
23 what was behind the 1987 law. And probably some
24 of you worked to get it through. I was not here
25 at that point.

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2 But, as President Street noted, many of
3 us in Council were very upset to find out how far
4 behind we were with the goals and the fact that it
5 was only six percent. When I asked the question.
6 I didn't know the answer, so I was dumbfounded
7 that it was that bad. And Councilman DiCicco and
8 I did work together on the resolution which got
9 passed on Thursday for hearings.

10 Mr. President, I think an issue we
11 face, however, is that the hearings on that
12 resolution probably would not occur until April or
13 May, and the Council will continue -- will be
14 continuing to consider the budget for the next
15 fiscal year till mid- to late March.

16 So to wait to have the hearings till
17 then would make us another year to miss these
18 deadlines. So I would like to request that the
19 Streets Department send to us within a week their
20 best estimate, since they've had how many years to
21 figure it out --

22 MR. PIERSON: Almost ten, almost ten.

23 COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: And, as you
24 know, the Streets Department has been missing all
25 these deadlines, so I would request that they

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2 submit to us their best estimate as of, say, March
3 the 12th, of what would be the cost to move toward
4 weekly residential collection of recycled
5 materials -- or recyclable materials.

6 MR. PIERSON: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: So that we
8 would have that -- try to think of the calendar
9 for our consideration because I think it would be
10 a serious mistake to let the time again drag and
11 let years and years go by.

12 And many of us are upset at the -- at
13 whatever is going on in the Streets Department
14 that they can't seem to get it together to meet
15 the law. And, frankly, having you review all the
16 steps and regulations and goals and deadlines that
17 have been met, makes me even more upset. And I
18 think there's a sense of urgency to get the
19 Streets Department to be more responsive.

20 MR. PIERSON: One point that I would
21 recommend, along with the recommendation to go to
22 weekly, there should be a parallel recommendation
23 to fund an education program so that people know
24 about it and will respond to it.

25 COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Yeah. And,

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2 actually, one of my problems with doing a pilot
3 is, if you're going to educate people, why not do
4 it all over the City because one of the problems
5 is now, as a lot of us noted, we can't remember
6 whether we're blue or green or what week it is.
7 It's a very confusing thing that we have right
8 now.

9 So if we're going to educate citizens,
10 why not do it, say, Citywide, whatever day they
11 agree to do it.

12 But I would like -- I can't see anyone
13 here from the Streets Department. Are they here?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Okay, well, I
16 would just like that message sent back to the
17 Commissioner that, I would say, within a week, I'd
18 like to see their best estimate of what it would
19 cost.

20 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.
21 We appreciate it.

22 MS. CRANE: Thanks. We're counting on
23 ya.

24 - - -

25 PRESIDENT STREET: And that brings us

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2 to the end of our list -- except for Alice Hayes.
3 She has been very patient, and we appreciate it.

4 (Alice Hayes comes forward.)

5 PRESIDENT STREET: She obviously has a
6 group of people with her.

7 MS. HAYES: Thank you very much. I'm
8 Alice Hayes, and I am on the Board of Citizens at
9 Health Center No. 9, as are all of us here. I
10 will be brief because Sheila Harper certainly
11 covered a lot of material as Chairperson of our
12 Board of Citizens.

13 PRESIDENT STREET: She covered a lot of
14 material.

15 MS. HAYES: Yes, she did.

16 (Laughter.)

17 MS. HAYES: So some of this will
18 basically reiterate some of that information.

19 I would like to thank Commissioner
20 Estelle Richman and the staff at Health Center No.
21 9 for being so forthcoming with information and
22 helping us to understand the complexities of
23 delivering health care in a public health setting
24 like Health Center No. 9.

25 We certainly recognize that they are

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2 doing a giant task of managing the Health
3 Department on the whole, but in particular, Health
4 Center No. 9, which does serve the highest number
5 of uninsured in the City of Philadelphia.

6 And as a Board Member for the last four
7 years, I'm basically here to present my perception
8 of services at the health center. And the very
9 first thing you can see, as a Board Member, also
10 as a recipient, having had that experience as
11 well, I have received care at the health center
12 with my children, so I can also speak from that
13 perspective.

14 Basically, when you walk into Health
15 Center No. 9, what you see is a decaying
16 building. And you cannot help but see, once you
17 enter that building, a decaying internal
18 structure.

19 As you enter, you see a long line in
20 front of the pharmacy. And, of course, then it's
21 left up to you to try to get through that line.
22 And, believe me, I'm happy many times that I don't
23 have to wait in line for the pharmaceutical
24 service -- that is, if the pharmacy is staffed by
25 a pharmacist. Recently, we had the occasion to

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2 have no pharmacist at the pharmacy for over a
3 week, and that presented tremendous difficulty for
4 the patients.

5 And that raises the issue of staffing.

6 In the four years that I've been a Member of the
7 Board, every month, our very diligent Director of
8 the Center presents information on the latest
9 staffing difficulty. It seems tremendously
10 difficult to get staffing positions up to line
11 with the services.

12 The other issue with the pharmacy is
13 that the pharmacist is so busy, that to try to
14 educate patients about the drug interactions that
15 they may experience, I can imagine, would be
16 absolutely impossible.

17 I know that because of the antiquated
18 computer system, a computer system where the
19 hardware is not compatible with the software. It
20 does not allow the pharmacy the important task of
21 providing written patient education materials to
22 the patients about drug interactions.

23 And if you've listened to the news
24 recently, you know that that is very important for
25 patients to receive because of the number of

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2 deaths that are occurring recently as a result of
3 that. And so it's left up to this extremely busy
4 pharmacist to try to educate patients verbally.
5 And, as you know, that is just not a very good
6 situation.

7 Try and make an appointment and get
8 through the antiquated phone system. That in
9 itself will cause a tremendous frustration.

10 The waiting rooms. Try and wait in an
11 extremely crowded waiting room where I've had the
12 experience of waiting with two toddlers who were
13 very difficult to entertain for the long wait.
14 And, unfortunately, a very sick adult sat within
15 such close proximity to us that we were literally
16 touching shoulders.

17 And he became quite ill and vomited
18 right next to us, in an extremely crowded waiting
19 room, where there were no materials to help to
20 entertain the two toddlers or the rest of the kids
21 in the waiting room.

22 The waiting room was so crowded that,
23 needless to say, whatever his problem was, we
24 probably were exposed to it. Let's hope it wasn't
25 TB. So the issues of just the building itself and

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2 the waiting rooms and waiting in the crowded
3 waiting rooms is extremely difficult.

4 And then you watch this very
5 hard-working staff try to get you through the
6 systems as quickly as they possibly can while
7 they're dealing with an antiquated phone system, a
8 computer system where the hardware is not
9 compatible with the software.

10 And the medical records. Take a visit,
11 pay a visit to the medical record room, where you
12 see an extremely small room, with one person
13 staffing. And you look at the shelves and you see
14 that there are so many medical records on the
15 shelves, you don't know how this staff person
16 could possibly to attempt to try to get one
17 medical record off those shelves. I don't know
18 how she does it.

19 And the bathrooms, they're another
20 issue. The building, in general, is in a general
21 state of decay, And the equipment is in decay.

22 And basically, I invite Members of City
23 Council to pay a visit to not only the health
24 centers within their district, but particularly
25 the health center at Health Center No. 9, because

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2 they do serve the highest number of uninsured and
3 because we are so concerned about next year and
4 what next year will bring for the public health
5 centers. And we do not envy Commissioner Estelle
6 Richman's job of trying to provide services under
7 these circumstances.

8 So we would like you to take the
9 opportunity to visit the health center and see it
10 firsthand and utilize these services firsthand ,
11 because unless you actually utilize these services
12 firsthand, you really cannot get an idea of the
13 need for attention that Health Center No. 9 is
14 in.

15 And that has basically been my
16 experience as a Board Member.

17 And I'd like to bring your attention to
18 a document that was written by the Board four
19 years ago, in which exactly the same conditions
20 were addressed. And it addressed the status of
21 Health Center No. 9 four years ago.

22 It was written that Health Center No. 9
23 cannot possibly be user-friendly under these
24 circumstances. The building is deteriorating and
25 should be replaced. In particular, play space for

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2 the children that come to the Center with their
3 parents is in great need.

4 The clerical shortages, the staffing
5 shortages continue. We need more physician hours.
6 And this is all compounded by the antiquated
7 information system, resulting in administrative
8 backups and a discontinuity in patient
9 relationships.

10 And also, four years ago, we had the
11 opportunity as a Board to receive a visit from the
12 Department of Public Property, which then promised
13 \$360,000 in renovations for this 38-year-old
14 facility.

15 Four years later, the \$360,000 in
16 renovations have not materialized, the play space
17 for children has not materialized. And we can
18 only guess, because the Health Department is in
19 just such drastic need of funding, that they need
20 to prioritize.

21 But we would implore the City Council
22 to please take the health centers under your
23 wing. Go to Health Center No. 9, please visit,
24 please utilize the services, and see for yourself
25 what is in need at that health center.

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2 And we certainly have appreciated
3 working with Commissioner Estelle Richman, who has
4 been very open to us in meeting with us, and we
5 want to work with her in the future as well.

6 What we hope is that Health Center No.
7 9 will be in place next year to address the needs
8 of the citizens of that area.

9 Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

11 - - -

12 (Tony Okafor comes forward.)

13 PRESIDENT STREET: Please identify
14 yourself for the record.

15 MR. OKAFOR: My name is Alice Hayes,
16 I'm a member of --

17 PRESIDENT STREET: I'm sorry. I was
18 talking to the new witness.

19 MR. OKAFOR: My name is Tony Okafor.
20 I'm also a Board Member for four years.

21 I'm trying to emphasize the need for
22 more exam rooms because that's what the Director
23 asked us, that that was the cause for the delays
24 because --

25 PRESIDENT STREET: Sir, I'm going to

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2 have to ask you, and I hate to interrupt you, but
3 could you please spell your name for the
4 stenographer.

5 MR. OKAFOR: Anthony.

6 PRESIDENT STREET: Okay, Anthony,

7 A-N-T-H --

8 MR. OKAFOR: A-N-T-H-O-N-Y.

9 PRESIDENT STREET: And your last name?

10 MR. OKAFOR: Okafor, O-K-A-F-O-R,
11 Okafor.

12 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much,
13 sir.

14 MR. OKAFOR: Okay. So what I'm really
15 emphasizing is that in a recent survey to the
16 patients, everybody is complaining about the
17 waiting time.

18 Sometime people wait from three hours
19 to five hours before they can get treatment. And
20 this is the cost of not having enough doctors,
21 enough waiting rooms. So we need the improvement
22 in the services.

23 And also, the sanitation there is very
24 poor. Because I witness firsthand a patient
25 vomited on the floor, and there's nobody to pick

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2 it up. And as the Director said, the Director
3 said that the janitor that was there was on leave,
4 and there's no replacement, no person to take his
5 place until he's back from vacation. So
6 everything was a mess.

7 So I have to just go there for myself.
8 I was a patient, and I just went there to clean it
9 up, seeing that the sanitation issue is a problem
10 that should be addressed. We need more janitors
11 in the health center.

12 Thank you.

13 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

14 (Robert Morris comes forward.)

15 PRESIDENT STREET: Please identify
16 yourself for the record.

17 MR. MORRIS: My name is Robert Morris,
18 and I'm Vice Chairperson of the Board of Health
19 Center No. 9.

20 I don't wish to take up much of the
21 Board's meeting -- of this Council's time, and I
22 don't wish to reiterate all of the things that my
23 colleagues have already talked about.

24 But I'm interested in one thing, and
25 one thing only. And that is, why haven't we

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2 started with the renovations? These renovations
3 have been approved for over two years now, and we
4 never can seem to find out why it is that they
5 haven't started.

6 So all I want to say to this Board is
7 -- to the Council is, Let the games begin and
8 let's get started doing something.

9 Thank you.

10 PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.
11 We appreciate it.

12 Is there anyone else to testify? Is
13 there anyone else to testify?

14 (No response.)

15 - - -

16 PRESIDENT STREET: If not, this Council
17 will stand in recess until Tuesday, March 3, 1998,
18 at or about 9 o'clock a.m., in these chambers.

19 Thank you very much for coming.

20 (Adjourned at 1:01 p.m.)

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I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing
proceedings of the Council of the City of
Philadelphia of Saturday, February 28, 1998 were
reported and accurately by me, and that this is a
correct transcript of same.

RE: Public Hearings - Committee of the Whole
Bill No. 980003
Approval of FY '99 Operating Budget

_____,
JOSEPHINE CARDILLO, RPR