

Committee on Public Property and Public Works
November 18, 2019

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC PROPERTY AND PUBLIC WORKS

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, November 18, 2019
10:14 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON - CHAIR
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE - VICE
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE L. PARKER

BILLS: 190554, 190710, 190742, 190744, 190824,
190827, 190862

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good morning.

3 We will start the hearing on the
4 Committee on Public Property and Public Works.
5 A quorum is established. To my left,
6 Councilwoman Gym, Councilman Greenlee. And to
7 my right, Councilman Domb and we are also joined
8 by Councilwoman Blackwell here with us today.

9 Again, this is a public hearing on the
10 Public Property and Public Works Committee. The
11 purpose of the hearing is to hear testimony of
12 Bill Nos. 190554, 190710, 190741, 190744, 190827
13 and 190862. Also for the record, we will be
14 holding at the call of the sponsor, Bill No.
15 190824 will be held.

16 Clerk, would you please read the title
17 of the bills.

18 THE CLERK: Bill No. 190554: An
19 Ordinance authorizing the Commissioner of Public
20 Property, on behalf of the City, to acquire fee
21 simple title or a lesser interest, by purchase,
22 dedication, donation, condemnation, agreement in
23 lieu of condemnation or otherwise, in parcels of
24 land generally bounded by South Street, the
25 Bulkhead Line of the Schuylkill River and Grays

1 Ferry Avenue for public recreational purposes;

2 And an Ordinance authorizing the
3 Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of
4 the City of Philadelphia, to enter into a lease
5 agreement with 2401 Walnut LP for use by the
6 City of all or a portion of the premises located
7 at 2401 Walnut Street;

8 And an Ordinance officially naming and
9 designating the Cobbs Creek Recreation Center
10 located at 280 Cobbs Creek Parkway, in the City
11 of Philadelphia, as "Johnny Sample Recreation
12 Center;"

13 And an Ordinance authorizing the
14 Commissioner of Public Property and the
15 Commissioner of Parks & Recreation, on behalf of
16 the City of Philadelphia, to acquire from the
17 Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority fee simple
18 title or a lesser interest in real estate to all
19 or a portion of a parcel of land located in and
20 about the area bounded by Montrose Street,
21 Carpenter Street, South 17th Street and South
22 18th Street, with any improvements thereon;

23 And an Ordinance authorizing the
24 Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of
25 the City of Philadelphia, to convey to the

1 Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority all or a
2 portion of a parcel or parcels of land in and
3 about the area bounded by West Thompson Street,
4 North Orianna Street, West Girard Avenue and
5 North 4th Street, for further conveyance;

6 And an Ordinance authorizing the
7 Commissioner of Public Property, on behalf of
8 the City of Philadelphia, to enter into a lease
9 agreement with Mount Airy Bethesda Manor CDC,
10 for use by the City of all or a portion of the
11 premises located at 7800 Ogontz Avenue, under
12 certain terms and conditions.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.

14 We will now begin and hear testimony on
15 Bill No. 190554. If anyone from the
16 Administration wishes to testify, please
17 approach.

18 (Witness approaches Witness Table.)

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: State your name for
20 the record, and you may begin with your
21 testimony.

22 MR. ARMSTRONG: Name is Robert
23 Armstrong.

24 Good morning, Chairman Henon and
25 Chairman -- and Members of the Committee on

1 Public Property and Public Works. My name is
2 Rob Armstrong. I'm the Trails and
3 Transportation Program Manager for the Office of
4 Transportation, Infrastructure and
5 Sustainability, OTIS.

6 I am here today to testify on behalf of
7 OTIS and the Department of Parks and Recreation
8 in support of Bill No. 190554: An Ordinance
9 authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property,
10 on behalf of the City of Philadelphia, to
11 acquire fee simple title or a lesser interest,
12 by purchase, dedication, donation, condemnation,
13 agreement in lieu of condemnation or otherwise,
14 in parcels of land generally bounded by South
15 Street, the Bulkhead Line of the Schuylkill
16 River and Grays Ferry Avenue for public
17 recreational purposes, under certain terms and
18 condition.

19 The acquisition of these property
20 interests for park purposes will enable the
21 construction of a section of trail, which will
22 allow direct access from Center City to the
23 community of Southwest Philadelphia, providing a
24 safe, direct and low cost connection to jobs,
25 educational institutions, stores, public

1 recreational places and health facilities in
2 University City and Center City. Once
3 completed, this section of trail will be part of
4 the 130-mile Schuylkill River Trail that will
5 eventually run through five counties in
6 Pennsylvania, allowing more Philadelphians
7 car-free access to the myriad of resources the
8 Commonwealth has to offer as well as to job and
9 retail centers.

10 The trail is also part of the circuit
11 trails, a planned network of 750 miles of trails
12 in the Greater Philadelphia region and New
13 Jersey and the East Coast Greenway, a planned
14 trail that will connect Maine to Florida.
15 Councilmember Johnson, in whose district this
16 parcel resides, is supportive of this
17 legislation.

18 The Department of Parks and Recreation
19 fully support this measure. And accordingly, I
20 respectfully request that City Council approve
21 Bill No. 190554. I am also requesting a
22 suspension of the rules so as to allow for first
23 reading at the next session of Council.

24 Thank you. I will be happy to answer
25 any questions you may have about this ordinance.

1 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you for your
2 testimony.

3 Chair recognizes Councilman Domb.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
5 Mr. Chairman. Just a quick question.

6 Who is the owner of this property now?

7 MR. ARMSTRONG: There are several
8 parcels right now that are under -- that we are
9 looking at. I believe there are about five.

10 Is that correct, John? I think there is
11 five. Four? Yes. There is five parcels, five
12 separate owners.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And is this costing
14 the City any money?

15 MR. ARMSTRONG: It will cost the City
16 money to acquire the parcels, yes. We go
17 through a process. This is a -- Federal highway
18 is PennDOT-funded project. And we go through
19 the PennDOT process of acquisition in which we
20 get appraisals, and then we have to get second
21 appraisals. And we go through that process.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm in favor of this
23 one. Just want to make sure I understand the
24 numbers.

25 What do you think the costs will be to

1 do this?

2 MR. ARMSTRONG: We don't have those
3 numbers yet because right now we are still going
4 through the process with the attorneys and the
5 Law Department at looking at the parcels and
6 getting the proper survey lines down that we
7 need for the trail. So, there is a whole
8 process and whole team working on it within City
9 government from several different departments.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And so, who pays for
11 this? Does the City pay for this? Or is it
12 state or federal?

13 MR. ARMSTRONG: Well, the acquisition, I
14 am not sur -- I am not quite sure where all the
15 funding is going to come from. There is
16 acquisition funding available from the
17 Commonwealth as well as the Federal Government
18 as well as City funds. But I don't have the
19 exact numbers on that.

20 One minute.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Will you be coming
22 back to us if City funds are needed for this?

23 MR. ARMSTRONG: I am sorry. I'm just
24 conferring with some of the Law Department
25 first.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure.

2 MR. ARMSTRONG: We don't have the budget
3 with us. We are not really at that point in the
4 process yet where we know where the money is
5 coming from or how much it's going to cost.

6 So, I can certainly have an attorney
7 from the Law Department, you know, work with you
8 when we get those numbers.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I guess my question
10 is, will it cost us once we determine and then
11 come back to this committee for approval?

12 MR. ARMSTRONG: I don't believe that
13 that's how it works, but I'm not quite sure.

14 (Witness confers with the Law
15 Department.)

16 No.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: No. You want us to
18 approve something that we don't know the costs
19 on.

20 (Witness approaches Witness Table.)

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: State your name for
22 the record.

23 MR. MONDLAK: John Mondlak, Planning and
24 Development.

25 No. At this time, we don't have a

1 budget. We have -- I believe we have a million
2 dollars of City pledged for this project. And
3 we have applications for state and federal
4 money. Approximate -- do we have an approximate
5 number?

6 MR. ARMSTRONG: I don't have the
7 approximate number with me. That would be the
8 Law Department.

9 MR. MONDLAK: But no. The approval
10 would be for us to file condemnation, follow the
11 PennDOT rules of condemnation, pay just
12 compensation or deposit into court if the owner
13 is not satisfied with that number. And they
14 would litigate for the balance of whatever the
15 court awards.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Is there any
17 way to just keep us informed as to what the
18 costs are going to come out. I would like to be
19 informed if possible.

20 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes. We can talk to the
21 Law Department about that.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is this property,
23 basically, next to Pennovation Works?

24 MR. ARMSTRONG: Some of it is. Not all
25 of it.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: It's the --

2 MR. ARMSTRONG: It's the long strip
3 along the river.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Right. Is this the
5 connector that will go --

6 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes. This goes from
7 Christian Street to the Grays Ferry crescent.
8 The connector across to Bartram's Garden is the
9 Swing Bridge, which is under construction right
10 now.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I think it's a great
12 project. I just want to make sure that we
13 control the expenses. We thank you for your
14 testimony today.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: So on that note,
16 because I represent half -- I represent
17 Riverfront North, all right, on the trails. And
18 we have to, you know, reauthorize and introduce
19 legislation to start the condemnation process.

20 So is this just a -- this is a process
21 in which you negotiate any kind of fair market
22 value for the land acquisition; is that correct?

23 MR. ARMSTRONG: Correct. This ordinance
24 gives us the authorization to be in the process.
25 As you know with the Riverfront North

1 legislation, we reauthorize that every year
2 because it has to be reauthorized every year,
3 correct, John? I believe so.

4 MR. MONDLAK: Yeah. You have a certain
5 amount of time under the PennDOT rules to get
6 your appraisals, your condemnation, everything
7 filed. And it's, typically, within one year of
8 Council authorization. And if you don't achieve
9 everything you need to achieve in that one year,
10 you need to come back to City Council.

11 So in theory, we may not be back. But a
12 lot of these projects do tend to come back.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, with five
14 different owners, I would imagine you will be
15 back here next year with reauthorizing as you go
16 through the -- I think. You know, I think -- it
17 could be a long process for condemnation,
18 especially with five different owners.

19 MR. MONDLAK: But many of the owners in
20 this situation are cooperative. So, there is
21 one or two that are still not necessarily sure
22 that they want to be amenable. But we have had
23 a couple property owners offer to donate the
24 property.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: And when we

1 eventually piece and parcel the trail, all
2 right, in the land acquisition, who would be the
3 receiver of --

4 MR. MONDLAK: The City.

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: The City would be.
6 Okay. The City would own it.

7 Would we be doing and operating in
8 agreement with somebody with, like,
9 Schuylkill -- Schuylkill River Trail or --

10 MR. ARMSTRONG: Yes. The Department of
11 Parks and Recreation would be the operating
12 department that would be managing the land that
13 the City would acquire. And then, they would go
14 into an agreement with the Schuylkill River
15 Development Corporation who is our non-profit
16 partner who also provided a letter of support,
17 which I believe Council already has.

18 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good. Now when we do
19 have the agreements in place, would that come
20 back to City Council for approval and finance?

21 MR. MONDLAK: They wouldn't necessarily.
22 No. I mean, I think this authorization would
23 allow us to close on those properties should
24 they sell them, donate them. And it allows us
25 to file condemnation. So I don't -- unless we

1 don't complete our work within a year, I don't
2 believe that it would come back here.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay. All right.
4 Again, for the record, this does -- this is the
5 needed piece to start for the acquisition of
6 that.

7 MR. ARMSTRONG: Correct.

8 MR. MONDLAK: Of the gap, yeah.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: Great. If you would,
10 please, keep Councilman Domb, myself and this
11 committee appraised of what the status is as we
12 go through the process of agreements throughout
13 the year.

14 MR. ARMSTRONG: We will do that,
15 Councilman.

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: Anyone else have any
17 questions?

18 Chair recognizes Councilwoman Gym.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you very much.

20 So just a point of clarification,
21 because I think my Councilmember was trying to
22 clarify this a little bit. You said that up to
23 a million dollars was pledged for this project,
24 correct?

25 MR. MONDLAK: I am aware of a million

1 dollars of City capital dollars that have been
2 pledged.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So, the understanding
4 would be that this is not a project that would
5 go to \$5 million or something. If it exceeded
6 that amount, there would be some discussion
7 internally?

8 MR. MONDLAK: Any more money coming from
9 the City would have to be authorized through
10 City Council.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you very much.
12 Okay. So, I think that's mostly the
13 clarification that there's been a budgeted
14 amount for this project.

15 MR. MONDLAK: Understood.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Things in excess of
17 the amount that was already preapproved by City
18 Council would have to then come through City
19 Council if it dramatically exceeded anything or
20 even somewhat exceeded that; is that correct?

21 MR. MONDLAK: Correct. True
22 appropriations.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: All right. Thank you
24 for that.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Great. Anyone else

1 here wish to testify on Bill No. 190554?

2 (Approaches Witness Table.)

3 MR. SELLERS: I do. Clinton Sellers.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: Please state your
5 name for the record.

6 MR. SELLERS: Clinton Sellers.

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: You may proceed.

8 MR. SELLERS: I'm public citizen of
9 Philadelphia. I walked South Street. And I
10 been up and down, up and down. You talking
11 about putting public trails through there? It's
12 a great idea. But the people there need the
13 parks to walk the children in more or less than.
14 Just not necessary --

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: Can you, please,
16 speak into the microphone. We need to
17 transcribe this and make sure that --

18 MR. SELLERS: The people there in South
19 Street more need the access to the parks that
20 they can have children play and make sure they
21 can have access to those different things. If
22 you want to put a trail around the park so that
23 they can have access, use those parks as a land
24 to make sure those kids can actually be
25 entertained and relaxed and enjoy the area, more

1 or less for the children, not necessarily for
2 the people walking around, we can enjoy the
3 parks more.

4 And since you have the money and the
5 availability, the availability to look at the
6 citizens that live there. There are families,
7 children relocating to South Street and moving
8 to South Street for the businesses and living
9 above those businesses. And because they live
10 above those businesses, they need the area they
11 can go to walk the children and be -- play with
12 their children. If they can't play with the
13 children, they can't be involved in that
14 situation. They going to protest that.

15 Thank you for letting me have my speech.

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you for your
17 testimony.

18 Anywhere else here wish to testify on
19 Bill No. 190554?

20 That being none, thank you all for being
21 here.

22 Is there anyone from Public Property
23 wishes to testify on Bill No. 190710.

24 (Approaches Witness Table.)

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good morning.

1 MS. CASIMIR: Morning.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: State your name for
3 the record, and you may proceed with your
4 testimony.

5 MS. CASIMIR: Good morning, Chairman
6 Henon and other Members of the Committee on
7 Public Property and Public Works. My name is
8 Dominique Casimir. And I'm the Deputy
9 Commissioner of Real Estate for the Department
10 of Public Property.

11 I am here today to testify in support of
12 Bill No. 190710, an ordinance authorizing the
13 Commissioner of Public Property on behalf of the
14 City of Philadelphia to enter into a lease
15 agreement with 2401 Walnut LP for use by the
16 Department of License and Inspection of all or a
17 portion of the premises located at 2401 Walnut
18 Street under certain terms and condition.

19 In response to the City's recent boom in
20 construction activity, L&I has been hiring new
21 inspectors and opening new district offices at
22 strategic locations around the City. With the
23 need to inspect more real estate development
24 projects and issue more building permits, L&I
25 has been concentrating on opening a new west

1 central district office. DPP and L&I have
2 determined that 2401 Walnut Street is an ideal
3 location for the district office and would give
4 L&I access to the communities and real estate
5 projects located west of Broad Street and east
6 of 41st Street.

7 2401 Walnut, essentially located between
8 University City, Fairmount and Francisville and
9 South to Grays Ferry. The proposed ten-year
10 lease term would give L&I the opportunity to
11 establish a presence in what is considered a
12 gateway between University City and the Central
13 Business District. Concentrating on building
14 community awareness, providing education aimed
15 to reduce City ordinances violations and
16 becoming more accessible to our communities is
17 an important goal to L&I.

18 The proposed 10,971 square feet district
19 office would allow L&I to focus on these goals
20 and neighborhoods that would remain prime for
21 continued growth and development. 2401 Walnut
22 has been recently renovated and designed with
23 new building systems that promote green
24 initiatives. The gold LEED-certified building,
25 which includes a green roof will give L&I

1 employees the opportunity to enjoy a more
2 modern, efficient and environmentally friendly
3 work space.

4 The Department of Public Properties
5 supports this measure. And accordingly, I
6 respectfully ask that City Council approve Bill
7 No. 190710. I am requesting a suspension of all
8 the rules so as to follow for first reading at
9 the next session of Council.

10 Thank you. And I'm happy to answer any
11 questions you may have.

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you for your
13 testimony.

14 Chair recognizes Councilman Domb.

15 MS. CASIMIR: Yes.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman. Good morning.

18 MS. CASIMIR: Good morning, Councilman
19 Domb.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you for your
21 testimony. Just a few quick questions.

22 MS. CASIMIR: Sure.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Do we have an L&I
24 office in University City?

25 MS. CASIMIR: We have L&I -- no, not at

1 this time. There is one located in West
2 Philadelphia, an L&I station. But it's not an
3 L&I office where they can interact with the
4 community.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Just as a thought.
6 Because we think Schuylkill Yards is definitely
7 going to happen and because it's 3.1 billion of
8 construction and 30-plus big buildings going in
9 there, would it make sense for this office which
10 would be at 24th and Walnut to be already in
11 Schuylkill Yards and actually new developments
12 they are doing for a couple reasons?

13 One, it's already a KOZ, so they are not
14 paying taxes. So when we rent 2401 Walnut, we
15 are taking taxes away from the City I believe.
16 I'm not sure, but I think so. But I'm just
17 asking that question because most of your
18 development, I agree by the way, from 20th to
19 the river is going to be exploding. But
20 Schuylkill Yards is going to be -- maybe we have
21 to look at another office. That is going to be
22 a big area for L&I down the road.

23 MS. CASIMIR: So at the time when we
24 were looking for a location, they didn't have
25 something that was readily available for our

1 space needs because the demand is so high and
2 it's been on the books for L&I for quite some
3 time. We thought that it was prudent to execute
4 something now versus waiting till later.

5 However, your point is well taken.
6 There is another establishment that we are
7 looking at for the West Philadelphia area where
8 we are looking at doing something in that
9 area --

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.

11 MS. CASIMIR: -- to accommodate to your
12 point exactly.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Great. Because that's
14 going to be probably one of the biggest
15 construction sites we are going to have in the
16 City for a while.

17 MS. CASIMIR: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: The other question is,
19 on this lease, are they giving us any -- is this
20 ground floor space or is this up in the
21 building?

22 MS. CASIMIR: It is -- the building is a
23 quirky. You have ground floor space if you come
24 in on Chestnut Street, but also if you come off
25 on the backside, it goes below. So you go up, I

1 would say, two on the elevator. So, it's
2 accessible.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. It's not ground
4 floor.

5 MS. CASIMIR: It is not ground floor.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is this an existing
7 office that is built?

8 MS. CASIMIR: That is correct. So, we
9 are taking the space as is. There's thirteen
10 offices, one conference room and one break room
11 already in place. All we need to do is,
12 literally, plug in our furniture.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: There is no TI
14 allocation here?

15 MS. CASIMIR: No, not at this point.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is there any free rent
17 in the deal?

18 MS. CASIMIR: Yes. We have over 120
19 days free rent. Our starting base rent is at
20 2334 square foot, and it locks in for three
21 years.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Refresh my memory,
23 Dominique. Do we -- does the owner have to pay
24 taxes if we are using the space?

25 MS. CASIMIR: So, whenever the City

1 takes over a space, we are obligated to pay real
2 estate taxes. So whatever the landlord is
3 responsible for in real estate taxes, the City
4 is also responsible for. Our proportionate
5 share is 7.36 percent on this billing.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Are there any other
7 expenses on top of the monthly rent?

8 MS. CASIMIR: Besides the real estate
9 taxes, our op-ex is capped. So our op-ex is
10 capped at \$6.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And did we have a real
12 estate firm represent us on this and review it?

13 MS. CASIMIR: Yes. There were real
14 estate agent involved on this transaction. I
15 forgot the actual company. But yes, we can
16 follow up on that with this.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Only because I have
18 seen in the market for every two years of a
19 lease, usually get one month's free rent. I see
20 this is a ten-year lease with four months. I
21 wondering why we didn't get six?

22 MS. CASIMIR: It's really a five-year
23 lease with a five-year option. The way that we
24 state it was a ten-year lease so we can firm in
25 the --

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. That's why.

2 MS. CASIMIR: But it's really a five
3 year.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: It's five year.

5 MS. CASIMIR: Five year with a five-year
6 option.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. I don't have
8 any other questions. Thank you. Thank you very
9 much.

10 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.

12 Anyone else here wishes to testify on
13 Bill No. 190710?

14 There being none, thank you for your
15 testimony.

16 We will now move to Bill No. 190744. If
17 anyone is here to testify, please, approach.
18 And state your name for the record, and you may
19 begin with your testimony.

20 (Approaches Witness Table.)

21 MS. PALANTINO: Aparna Palantino, Deputy
22 Commissioner Parks and Recreation.

23 Good morning, Chairman Henon and Members
24 of the Committee on Public Property and Public
25 Works. My name is Aparna Palantino. And I am

1 the Deputy Commissioner for Infrastructure and
2 Land Management for Philadelphia Parks and
3 Recreation. I am here today to testify in
4 support of Bill No. 190744, an ordinance
5 authorizing the Commissioner of Public Property
6 and the Commissioner of Parks and Recreation on
7 behalf of the City of Philadelphia to acquire
8 from the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority,
9 fee simple title or a lesser interest in real
10 estate to all or a portion of the parcel of land
11 located in and about the area bounded by
12 Montrose Street, Carpenter Street, South 17th
13 Street and South 18th Street with any
14 improvements thereon, under certain terms and
15 condition.

16 The site in question was an abandoned
17 lot and a target for short dumping and an
18 eyesore for the community. PRA acquired the
19 parcel and worked with South of South
20 Neighborhood Association, otherwise known as
21 SOSNA, the local neighborhood group which
22 oversees this area, to enter into an agreement
23 which allowed SOSNA to make improvements to this
24 parcel. Once finished, these improvements will
25 allow the residents of the surrounding area to

1 enjoy this beautiful new passive space as a
2 passive park.

3 Now that the improvements have been
4 substantially completed by SOSNA, PRA is
5 initiating the process to transfer this parcel
6 to PPR inventory. Councilmember Johnson, in
7 whose district this parcel resides, is
8 supportive of this legislation.

9 The Department of Parks and Recreation
10 also supports this measure. And accordingly, I
11 respectfully request that this committee approve
12 Bill No. 190744. I'm also requesting suspension
13 of the rules to allow for first reading at the
14 next session of Council.

15 Be happy to answer any questions you
16 might have.

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 Anyone on the Committee like to comment
20 on Bill No. 190742[sic]?

21 There being none, thank you for your --

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: You jumped to 744
23 first.

24 MS. PALANTINO: That was 744.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay. Great, 744.

1 We will now move to Bill No. 190742.

2 (Approaches Witness Table.)

3 MS. THURMAN: Good morning, Chairmember
4 Henon and Members of the Committee on Public
5 Property and Public Works. My name is Tiffany
6 Thurman. And I'm the Chief of Staff for the
7 Philadelphia Parks and Recreation.

8 I'm here today to testify in support of
9 Bill No. 190742, an ordinance authorizing the
10 Commissioner of Public Property to officially
11 name and designate the Cobbs Creek Recreation
12 Center located at 280 Cobbs Creek Parkway in the
13 City of Philadelphia as the Johnny Sample
14 Recreation Center.

15 Johnny Sample was a defensive back who
16 played in the National Football League for ten
17 years. He began his career with an NFL
18 championship in 1958 with the Colts and ended it
19 with a victory against the New York Jets in
20 Superbowl III in 1968. He's the only person in
21 the history of professional football to win
22 championships in the NFL, AFL and Superbowl.

23 Mr. Sample was inducted into the Black
24 College Football Hall of Fame in 2012. After
25 retiring from the NFL, Mr. Sample became widely

1 known in tennis, and was rated the number one
2 men's player in 45 and over category by the
3 United States Tennis Association.

4 During the 1980s and 1990s, he served as
5 a tennis official, linesman and umpire chair for
6 events including the U.S. Open, Wimbledon, the
7 French Open and Australia Open. Mr. Sample
8 was -- also found time to host tennis clinics
9 for neighborhood children. Because of his
10 successful career on the field and his strong
11 commitment to the Cobbs Creek community off the
12 field, in 2015 we partnered with Mural Arts to
13 unveil a mural on the brick wall in front of the
14 recreation center which illustrated his talents
15 as a sports and radio icon and role model for
16 children.

17 Mr. Sample passed away on April 26,
18 2005. Renaming Cobbs Creek Recreational Center
19 will honor his legacy in sports as well as his
20 contribution to the West Philadelphia community
21 for many years to come.

22 Before I end my testimony, I would like
23 to thank Councilwoman Blackwell for introducing
24 this much needed bill. And I would also like to
25 recognize Mr. Sample's daughter who is here with

1 us today, Ms. Evelyn Sample-Oates. Therefore,
2 the Department of Parks and Recreation fully
3 supports this measure. And accordingly, I
4 respectfully requests that City Council approve
5 Bill No. 190742.

6 Thank you. And I'm happy to answer any
7 questions that you may have.

8 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you for your
9 testimony.

10 Chair recognizes Councilman Domb.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman. I think it's a great idea, and
13 thank you for your testimony. A few comments,
14 though.

15 He played in the game against -- with
16 Johnny Unitas against Joe Namath in the big
17 famous game.

18 And then number two, where -- wish you
19 would have been here yesterday to help us
20 against the Patriots.

21 (Laughter)

22 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Can I get an amen on
24 that.

25 For the record, want to note that we are

1 joined by Councilman Squilla. Also,
2 Councilwoman Parker has joined us here in this
3 hearing.

4 Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 Just to show my sports history here.

8 Just one -- Johnny Sample was a great football
9 player. And I know all about his -- also his
10 activities with the tennis association, so this
11 is certainly an appropriate bill. But it does
12 say in the testimony he ended with a victory
13 against the New York Jets.

14 New York Jets won that game, just for
15 the record, okay? That was a Joe Namath
16 guarantee game, correct?

17 Okay. All right. I didn't expect you
18 to know that. I just --

19 MS. PALANTINO: Definitely didn't know
20 that.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: I am going to have to
23 go back to my office and get my playing cards so
24 I can check this out.

25 Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very
2 much. We are so pleased to be here today to
3 speak on behalf of this bill, to certainly ask
4 the Committee for its support and to thank them
5 in advance.

6 This is really quite an honor.
7 Everybody who knew Johnny Sample and of his work
8 in my district and beyond were so pleased. We
9 hope you will allow Evelyn Sample-Oates, his
10 daughter, to say a few words on his behalf.

11 Let me say, we did check with those --
12 the community. We checked with those who are
13 part of the community association and the
14 recreation center. And everybody, of course,
15 was happy to support this as they were when we
16 created the mural right on the center walls, as
17 well.

18 So, we say thank you very much.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
20 Councilwoman.

21 Is there anyone else here that wishes to
22 testify on Bill No. 190742?

23 (Approaches Witness Table.)

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good morning. Thank
25 you for being here. Please, state your name for

1 the record. And you may begin with your
2 testimony.

3 MS. SAMPLE-OATES: Thank you, Chairman.
4 My name is Evelyn Sample-Oates. And I am the
5 daughter of Johnny Sample. And I thank you,
6 Chairman Henon, the Members of the Committee on
7 Public Property and Public Works for the
8 opportunity just to take a minute to testify
9 without getting too emotional about a man that,
10 I think, has made a big impact not only on
11 Philadelphia and in the West Philadelphia
12 community; but quite frankly, on the world of
13 sports both in football and in tennis.

14 My father was known as a great football
15 player, and he was. He is the only, only
16 football player to ever play in three
17 championship games for NFC, the AFC and the
18 Superbowl III championship team when, yes, New
19 York Jets did win. An unprecedented win that
20 Joe Namath did guarantee.

21 So, everybody knows that about him. But
22 I just want to talk a minute about the man that
23 I know who was -- who wrote a book called
24 Confessions of a Dirty Football Player. On the
25 football field, he was tough. He may have did

1 some things that after the whistle was blown he
2 probably shouldn't have done, but he wanted to
3 make an impact and let the players know that he
4 was there and he was serious. But I knew him as
5 this man with a big heart who cared about his
6 family, who cared about his community, who cared
7 about children who wanted the opportunity to
8 play sports that did not have that opportunity,
9 both in football and in tennis.

10 My father loved West Philadelphia.
11 Although he was not born and raised in
12 Philadelphia, he loved West Philadelphia. He
13 loved Cobbs Creek Parkway. When it would snow
14 in Philadelphia, he would shovel the entire
15 driveway out so our neighbors could just get out
16 of their driveways. And he would do that
17 because he knew it was important for people to
18 get out, for people to get food, for people to
19 get their medication. He knew that children had
20 to go to school. And he was an advocate for
21 public education.

22 He was a -- he was just a great man who
23 cared about people. Although on that football
24 field, you may not have known it, but he did
25 really love people. He had a wonderful radio

1 show on WHAT radio for many, many years. And
2 gave people the platform to talk not only about
3 sports but about other areas for -- and human
4 rights and civil rights. And it was something
5 he was very passionate about.

6 So today, I just come to you. I -- he
7 was my hero. He was my go-to person. And I
8 miss him dearly. And I think this would be a
9 wonderful way to honor his work, to honor his
10 legacy, to honor the man that he was. He will
11 be on the NFL Hall of Fame Ballot for 2021.
12 They have already told us that.

13 We are going to work very hard to make
14 sure he gets those approvals from that
15 committee, and he is entered into the Hall of
16 Fame in 2021. But in the meantime, it would be
17 wonderful to have the Cobbs Creek Rec Center
18 named the Johnny Sample Rec Center.

19 Thank you so much. And thank you for
20 this opportunity to talk about my hero. And
21 thank you. I must say before I leave here, I
22 have to thank Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell who
23 has always been, just a wonderful, wonderful
24 advocate for me, for other people, for the West
25 Philadelphia community.

1 She -- I can't even -- I can't even
2 think about this City without Councilwoman
3 Jannie Blackwell. I can't think about West
4 Philadelphia without having Councilwoman Jannie
5 Blackwell. And I just have to say on the
6 record, I think it is just a great loss that we
7 can no longer refer -- I will always refer to
8 her as Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell. And I
9 know she will always advocate for the people of
10 Philadelphia, especially West Philadelphia.

11 So, I want to say, Councilwoman, I love
12 you. I thank you. Thank you for things you do
13 for everybody in the City of Philadelphia.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.
15 Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: So nice, and thank
17 you. You had mentioned your father loved
18 Philadelphia. And you should be proud because
19 his legacy will live on because Philadelphia is
20 going to love you back here today. So, thank
21 you so much for being here.

22 Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Just very quickly.
24 As somebody who is old enough to have seen your
25 father play on TV many times -- first of all, I

1 am surprised he's not in the Hall of Fame
2 already. He was quite -- quite a player. And I
3 kind of remember those hits he gave, you felt it
4 through the TV. He was tough, but I also heard
5 him on radio many times. And he was clearly
6 somebody that made Philadelphia look very good.

7 So, be glad to vote for this bill.

8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
10 Councilman.

11 Chair recognizes Councilwoman Gym.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. I also want to
13 say Evelyn, what a beautiful testimony you gave
14 to your father and to the story of West
15 Philadelphia, as well. Someone who is not only
16 a hero on the national stage but someone who is
17 a local hero in every sense of the word and just
18 really invested in young people, in the
19 neighborhood and Cobbs Creek which, you know, we
20 are here to bring to life.

21 And I, also, want to thank Councilwoman
22 Jannie Blackwell for her incredible devotion to
23 memorializing the history of the City through
24 the people who made it come to life. And it
25 would be an absolute pleasure to vote for the

1 bill, as well.

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Chair recognizes
4 Councilman Squilla.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
6 Mr. Chair. And I also want to say that it's
7 true, apples don't fall far from the tree. And
8 so, we are blessed to have you also for your
9 advocacy for the City of Philadelphia. It means
10 a lot to see that. I am sure he is looking down
11 and proud on what you have given us also.

12 Thank you so much.

13 MS. SAMPLE-OATES: Thank you,
14 Councilman.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you for being
16 here.

17 Anyone else here wish to testify on Bill
18 No. 190742?

19 (Approaches Witness Table.)

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: You can state your
21 name for the record, and you may proceed with
22 your testimony.

23 MR. JOHNSON: My name is Terrence
24 Matthew Johnson.

25 MR. CHARLES: Good morning. My name is

1 Niri Charles. I'm here -- we are here, rather,
2 to testify. It kind of seems like we are going
3 to be the bad guys now after all that love and
4 praise was heaped. But we are here, actually,
5 to testify on behalf to not name Cobbs Creek
6 after Johnny Sample.

7 Not because he doesn't deserve it, not
8 because he's not clearly a worthy, you know,
9 member of the Philadelphia community. It's not
10 because he's not a great Hall of Fam -- or
11 should be Hall of Famer, as you've all said, or
12 he wasn't great in tennis. Rather, we are here
13 to represent the members of the Cobbs Creek
14 community who we have spoken to personally, who
15 we also are, who did not want this change.

16 It's not to say that he shouldn't have a
17 recreation center named for him. Sure. I
18 absolutely believe he should. Somebody with
19 those kind of accolades and that kind of
20 achievement absolutely deserves something in
21 Philadelphia named after him.

22 However, in my ten-year affiliation, my
23 younger cousin's, you know, life living there,
24 my older cousin who has lived there and -- for
25 over, what, 40 years, none of us have that

1 connection with Mr. Sample's legacy, the tennis
2 program, all those things that he did that's so
3 great. None of it seemed to necessarily fall on
4 Cobbs Creek specifically.

5 I am going to let Mr. Terrence Johnson
6 also testify on that.

7 MR. JOHNSON: Last week we started a
8 petition just --

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: Can you state your
10 name for the record.

11 MR. JOHNSON: Terrence Matthew Johnson.
12 Last week we started a petition, last
13 Wednesday to be exact, to see how many people
14 are up for the change or oppose the change. We
15 had 730 signatures within three days. And then
16 we had a number of people just coming to us
17 saying we are doing a good job for the
18 community. That they don't want this change
19 happen. The place has been their home for a
20 number of years, a number of generations before
21 mine, as well.

22 We just think that it would be a
23 disservice to us who have come from there.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay. Thank you for
25 your testimony.

1 Any questions from the panel?

2 (No further questions.)

3 Thank you. Thank you for being here.

4 Anyone else on Bill No. 190742?

5 That being none, we will now -- oh,

6 Chair recognizes Councilwoman Parker.

7 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank you,

8 Mr. Chairman. I, too, just want to commend

9 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell for her leadership

10 on this issue.

11 And as I sit here and I listened to all

12 of the comments, as an English teacher, a quote

13 that I would always share with my students is

14 that: A people without knowledge of their

15 history are like trees without their roots.

16 And just -- it just came to my mind,

17 Mr. Chairman. Just wanted to share that for the

18 public record.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: Great. Thank you.

21 Thank you, gentleman.

22 Is there anyone from the Administration

23 wish to speak on Bill No. 190827? 190827.

24 (Approaches Witness Table.)

25 MS. CASIMIR: Good morning, Chairman

1 Henon and other Members of the Committee on
2 Public Property and Public Works. My name is
3 Dominique Casimir. And I am the Deputy
4 Commissioner of Real Estate for the Department
5 of Public Property.

6 I am here today to testify in support of
7 Bill No. 190827, an ordinance authorizing the
8 Commissioner of Public Property on behalf of the
9 City of Philadelphia to convey to the
10 Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority all or a
11 portion of parcel or parcels of land in and
12 about the area bounded by West Thompson Street,
13 North Orianna Street, West Girard Avenue and
14 North 4th Street for further conveyance, under
15 certain terms and conditions.

16 Department of Public Property supports
17 this measure. And accordingly, I respectfully
18 ask that the City Council approve Bill No.
19 190827, and requesting a suspension of all the
20 rules as to follow the first reading at the next
21 Council session. And I am happy to answer any
22 questions that you may have.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 Anyone on the Committee wishes to speak

1 on Bill No. 190827?

2 Anyone here joining us have any further
3 testimony on 190827?

4 That being none, we will move onto Bill
5 No. 190862.

6 MS. CASIMIR: Okay. Good morning,
7 again, Chairman Henon and other Committee
8 members of the Public Property and Public Works.
9 My name is Dominique Casimir. And I am the
10 Deputy Commissioner of Public Property Real
11 Estate Division.

12 I'm here today to testify in support of
13 Bill No. 190862, an ordinance authorizing the
14 Commissioner of Public Property on behalf of the
15 City of Philadelphia to enter into lease
16 agreement with Mt. Airy, Bethesda Manor, CDC of
17 the premises located at 7800 Ogontz Avenue,
18 under certain terms and conditions.

19 The Fire and Health Departments will be
20 relocating to use this location for
21 administrative and fire recruitment purposes.
22 The City recommends the property at 7800 Ogontz
23 Avenue for relocation. The lease for the
24 property will commence no later than April 1,
25 2020 for the term of five years, under certain

1 terms and condition.

2 The Department of Public Property
3 support this measure. And accordingly, I
4 respectfully ask that City Council approve Bill
5 No. 190862. I am requesting a suspension of all
6 rules so as to follow first reading at the next
7 session of Council.

8 Thank you. And I will be happy to
9 answer any questions you may have.

10 I would also be remiss to say that I'm
11 very excited for this opportunity. This is the
12 first time that we are opening a center in this
13 location of the City, which would expose
14 explorers to this area. So, we are very
15 excited. I have to commend the staff of
16 Councilwoman Parker along with -- Councilwoman
17 Cherelle Parker in regards to really creating an
18 opportunity here in this district.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Great. Thank you.

20 Anyone on the Committee have any
21 questions for Bill No. 190862?

22 Anyone else here today joining us have
23 any questions or testimony on Bill No. 190862?

24 That being none, we will now hear -- or
25 we have written testimony for Bill No. 190554

1 and 190744 for the record. Thank you for --

2 MS. CASIMIR: Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- your testimony
4 here this morning.

5 We will now leave our Public Hearing of
6 Public Property and Public Works, move into our
7 Meeting of Public Property and Public Works.
8 And be reminded that we are holding Bill No.
9 190824 in our hearing.

10 (Public Hearing adjourns.)

11 - - -

12 (Public Meeting commences.)

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: We are now in our
14 meeting.

15 Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chairman.

18 I move that Bill Nos. 190554, 190710,
19 190742, 190744, 190827 and 190862 be voted out
20 of this Committee with a favorable
21 recommendation; and I move further, the Rules of
22 Council be suspended to allow for first reading
23 of these bills at our next session of Council.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: It's been moved.

25 (Duly seconded.)

1 COUNCILMAN HENON: And properly
2 seconded. Bill Nos. 190554, 190710, 190742,
3 190744, 190827, 190862 all be reported out of
4 Committee with a favorable recommendation, with
5 the suspension of the rules as to be heard at
6 our next session of Council.

7 All those in favor, signify by saying
8 aye.

9 (Ayes.)

10 COUNCILMAN HENON: Opposed?

11 (No opposition.)

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: The ayes have it.

13 This will conclude our Public Meeting of
14 Public Property and Public Works.

15 Thank you all for your testimony here
16 today.

17 (At this time, the Public Meeting
18 concluded at 10:55 a.m.)

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

ANGELA M. KING, RPR,
Court Reporter, Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)

Committee on Public Property an Public Works
November 18, 2019

Page 1

A	39:22	25:20 28:2	authorizing	39:18	bring 37:20	35:17,18	16:13,20
a.m 1:6 46:18	AFL 28:22	32:23 38:19	2:19 3:2,13	Bethesda 4:9	Broad 19:5	39:17 44:12	17:1,7,11
abandoned	agent 24:14	41:24	3:23 4:6 5:9	43:16	budget 9:2	centers 6:9	17:12,13
26:16	agree 21:18	appropriate	18:12 26:5	beyond 32:8	10:1	central 19:1	29:9,16
absolute	agreement	31:11	28:9 42:7	big 21:8,22	budgeted	19:12	34:7,19
37:25	2:22 3:5 4:9	appropriati...	43:13	30:16 33:10	15:13	certain 4:12	Christian
absolutely	5:13 13:8	15:22	availability	34:5	building	5:17 12:4	11:7
39:18,20	13:14 18:15	approval	17:5,5	biggest 22:14	18:24 19:13	18:18 26:14	circuit 6:10
access 5:22	26:22 43:16	9:11 10:9	available	bill 2:12,14	19:23,24	42:15 43:18	citizen 16:8
6:7 16:19	agreements	13:20	8:16 21:25	2:18 4:15	22:21,22	43:25	citizens 17:6
16:21,23	13:19 14:12	approvals	Avenue 3:1	5:8 6:21	buildings	certainly 9:6	City 1:1,5
19:4	aimed 19:14	35:14	4:4,11 5:16	16:1 17:19	21:8	31:11 32:3	2:20 3:4,6
accessible	Airy 4:9	approve 6:20	42:13 43:17	17:23 18:12	built 23:7	certification	3:10,16,25
19:16 23:2	43:16	9:18 20:6	43:23	20:6 25:13	Bulkhead	47:13	4:8,10 5:10
accolades	ALLAN 1:11	27:11 30:4	awards 10:15	25:16 26:4	2:25 5:15	certify 47:3	5:22 6:2,2
39:19	allocation	42:18 44:4	aware 14:25	27:12,20	Business	certifying	6:20 7:14
accommoda...	23:14	approximate	awareness	28:1,9	19:13	47:19	7:15 8:8,11
22:11	allow 5:22	10:4,4,7	19:14	29:24 30:5	businesses	chair 1:10 7:3	8:18,22
accurately	6:22 13:23	April 29:17	aye 46:8	31:11 32:3	17:8,9,10	14:18 20:14	10:2 12:10
47:4	19:19 26:25	43:24	ayes 46:9,12	32:22 37:7		29:5 30:10	13:4,5,6,13
achieve 12:8	27:13 32:9	area 3:20 4:3		38:1,17	C	31:4,25	13:20 15:1
12:9	45:22	16:25 17:10	B	41:4,23	C 47:1,1	36:22 37:11	15:9,10,17
achievement	allowed 26:23	21:22 22:7	back 8:22	42:7,18	call 2:14	38:3,6 41:6	15:18 18:14
39:20	allowing 6:6	22:9 26:11	9:11 12:10	43:1,4,13	called 33:23	45:15	18:22 19:8
acquire 2:20	allows 13:24	26:22,25	12:11,12,15	44:4,21,23	capital 15:1	Chairman	19:12,15
3:16 5:11	amen 30:23	42:12 44:14	13:20 14:2	44:25 45:8	capped 24:9	4:24,25 7:5	20:6,24
7:16 13:13	amenable	areas 35:3	28:15 31:23	45:18 46:2	24:10	18:5 20:17	21:15 22:16
26:7	12:22	Armstrong	36:20	billing 24:5	car-free 6:7	25:10,23	23:25 24:3
acquired	amount 12:5	4:22,23 5:2	backside	billion 21:7	cards 31:23	30:12,22	26:7 28:13
26:18	15:6,14,17	7:7,15 8:2	22:25	bills 1:19 2:17	cared 34:5,6	31:6 33:3,6	30:4 36:2
acquisition	and/or 47:18	8:13,23 9:2	bad 39:3	45:23	34:6,23	41:8,17,25	36:13 37:23
5:19 7:19	ANGELA	9:12 10:6	balance 10:14	bit 14:22	career 28:17	43:7 45:17	38:9 42:9
8:13,16	47:11	10:20,24	Ballot 35:11	Black 28:23	29:10	Chairmem...	42:18 43:15
11:22 13:2	answer 6:24	11:2,6,23	Bartram's	Blackwell	Carpenter	28:3	43:22 44:4
14:5	20:10 27:15	13:10 14:7	11:8	1:16 2:8	3:21 26:12	champions...	44:13
activities	30:6 42:21	14:14	base 23:19	29:23 31:25	Casimir 18:1	28:18 33:17	City's 18:19
31:10	44:9	Arts 29:12	basically	32:1 35:22	18:5,8	33:18	civil 35:4
activity 18:20	Aparna	asking 21:17	10:23	36:3,5,8,14	20:15,18,22	champions...	clarification
actual 24:15	25:21,25	association	beautiful	37:22 41:9	20:25 21:23	28:22	14:20 15:13
adjourns	apples 38:7	26:20 29:3	27:1 37:13	blessed 38:8	22:11,17,22	change 39:15	clarify 14:22
45:10	applications	31:10 32:13	becoming	blown 34:1	23:5,8,15	40:14,14,18	clearly 37:5
Administra...	10:3	attorney 9:6	19:16	BOBBY 1:10	23:18,25	Charles	39:8
4:16 41:22	apply 47:15	attorneys 8:4	began 28:17	book 33:23	24:8,13,22	38:25 39:1	Clerk 2:16,18
administrat...	appraisals	Australia	behalf 2:20	books 22:2	25:2,5	check 31:24	clinics 29:8
43:21	7:20,21	29:7	3:3,15,24	boom 18:19	41:25 42:3	32:11	Clinton 16:3
advance 32:5	12:6	Authority	4:7 5:6,10	born 34:11	43:6,9 45:2	checked	16:6
advocacy	appraised	3:17 4:1	18:13 26:7	bounded 2:24	category 29:2	32:12	close 13:23
38:9	14:11	26:8 42:10	32:3,10	3:20 4:3	CDC 4:9	Cherelle 1:16	Coast 6:13
advocate	approach	authorization	39:5 42:8	5:14 26:11	43:16	44:17	Cobbs 3:9,10
34:20 35:24	4:17 25:17	11:24 12:8	43:14	42:12	center 3:9,12	Chestnut	28:11,12
36:9	approaches	13:22	believe 7:9	break 23:10	5:22 6:2	22:24	29:11,18
AFC 33:17	4:18 9:20	authorized	9:12 10:1	brick 29:13	28:12,14	Chief 28:6	34:13 35:17
affiliation	16:2 17:24	15:9	12:3 13:17	Bridge 11:9	29:14,18	children	37:19 39:5
			14:2 21:15		32:14,16		

Committee on Public Property an Public Works
November 18, 2019

Page 2

39:13 40:4 College 28:24 Colts 28:18 come 8:15 9:11 10:18 12:10,12 13:19 14:2 15:18 22:23 22:24 29:21 35:6 37:24 40:23 coming 8:21 9:5 15:8 40:16 commence 43:24 commences 45:12 commend 41:8 44:15 comment 27:19 comments 30:13 41:12 Commissio... 2:19 3:3,14 3:15,24 4:7 5:9 18:9,13 25:22 26:1 26:5,6 28:10 42:4 42:8 43:10 43:14 commitment 29:11 committee 1:2 2:4,10 4:25 9:11 14:11 18:6 25:24 27:11 27:19 28:4 32:4 33:6 35:15 42:1 42:25 43:7 44:20 45:20 46:4 Commonwe... 6:8 8:17 communities 19:4,16 community 5:23 19:14 21:4 26:18	29:11,20 32:12,13 33:12 34:6 35:25 39:9 39:14 40:18 company 24:15 compensati... 10:12 complete 14:1 completed 6:3 27:4 concentrati... 18:25 19:13 conclude 46:13 concluded 46:18 condemnati... 2:22,23 5:12,13 10:10,11 11:19 12:6 12:17 13:25 condition 5:18 18:18 26:15 44:1 conditions 4:12 42:15 43:18 conference 23:10 conferring 8:24 confers 9:14 Confessions 33:24 connect 6:14 connection 5:24 40:1 connector 11:5,8 considered 19:11 construction 5:21 11:9 18:20 21:8 22:15 contained 47:4 continued 19:21 contribution	29:20 control 11:13 47:17 convey 3:25 42:9 conveyance 4:5 42:14 cooperative 12:20 Corporation 13:15 correct 7:10 11:22,23 12:3 14:7 14:24 15:20 15:21 23:8 31:16 47:6 cost 5:24 7:15 9:5,10 costing 7:13 costs 7:25 9:18 10:18 Council 1:1 6:20,23 12:8,10 13:17,20 15:10,18,19 20:6,9 27:14 30:4 42:18,21 44:4,7 45:22,23 46:6 Councilman 1:10,10,11 1:12 2:2,6,7 4:13,19 7:1 7:3,4,13,22 8:10,21 9:1 9:9,17,21 10:16,22 11:1,4,11 11:15 12:13 12:25 13:5 13:18 14:3 14:9,10,15 14:16 15:25 16:4,7,15 17:16,25 18:2 20:12 20:14,16,18 20:20,23 21:5 22:10	22:13,18 23:3,6,13 23:16,22 24:6,11,17 25:1,4,7,11 27:17,22,25 30:8,10,11 30:23 31:1 31:4,5,21 31:22 32:19 32:24 36:16 36:22,23 37:9,10 38:3,4,5,14 38:15,20 40:9,24 41:20 42:23 44:19 45:3 45:13,15,16 45:24 46:1 46:10,12 Councilme... 6:15 14:21 27:6 Councilwo... 1:11,16,16 2:6,8 14:18 14:19 15:3 15:11,16,23 29:23 31:2 31:25 32:1 32:20 35:22 36:2,4,8,11 36:14 37:11 37:12,21 41:6,7,9 44:16,16 counties 6:5 couple 12:23 21:12 course 32:14 court 10:12 10:15 47:11 cousin 39:24 cousin's 39:23 created 32:16 creating 44:17 Creek 3:9,10 28:11,12 29:11,18 34:13 35:17	37:19 39:5 39:13 40:4 crescent 11:7 D daughter 29:25 32:10 33:5 days 23:19 40:15 deal 23:17 dearly 35:8 dedication 2:22 5:12 defensive 28:15 definitely 21:6 31:19 demand 22:1 department 5:7 6:18 8:5 8:24 9:7,15 10:8,21 13:10,12 18:9,16 20:4 27:9 30:2 42:4 42:16 44:2 departments 8:9 43:19 deposit 10:12 Deputy 18:8 25:21 26:1 42:3 43:10 deserve 39:7 deserves 39:20 designate 28:11 designating 3:9 designed 19:22 determine 9:10 determined 19:2 development 9:24 13:15 18:23 19:21 21:18 developments 21:11 devotion	37:22 different 8:9 12:14,18 16:21 direct 5:22,24 47:17 Dirty 33:24 discussion 15:6 disservice 40:23 district 6:15 18:21 19:1 19:3,13,18 27:7 32:8 44:18 Division 43:11 doing 13:7 21:12 22:8 40:17 dollars 10:2 14:23 15:1 15:1 Domb 1:11 2:7 7:3,4,13 7:22 8:10 8:21 9:1,9 9:17 10:16 10:22 11:1 11:4,11 14:10 20:14 20:16,19,20 20:23 21:5 22:10,13,18 23:3,6,13 23:16,22 24:6,11,17 25:1,4,7 30:10,11 Dominique 18:8 23:23 42:3 43:9 donate 12:23 13:24 donation 2:22 5:12 DPP 19:1 dramatically 15:19 driveway 34:15 driveways	34:16 Duly 45:25 dumping 26:17 E E 47:1 east 6:13 19:5 education 19:14 34:21 educational 5:25 efficient 20:2 elevator 23:1 emotional 33:9 employees 20:1 enable 5:20 ended 28:18 31:12 English 41:12 enjoy 16:25 17:2 20:1 27:1 enter 3:4 4:8 18:14 26:22 43:15 entered 35:15 entertained 16:25 entire 34:14 environmen... 20:2 especially 12:18 36:10 essentially 19:7 establish 19:11 established 2:5 establishme... 22:6 estate 3:18 18:9,23 19:4 24:2,3 24:8,12,14 26:10 42:4 43:11 Evelyn 30:1 32:9 33:4 37:13 events 29:6	eventually 6:5 13:1 everybody 32:7,14 33:21 36:13 evidence 47:4 exact 8:19 40:13 exactly 22:12 exceeded 15:5 15:19,20 excess 15:16 excited 44:11 44:15 execute 22:3 existing 23:6 expect 31:17 expenses 11:13 24:7 exploding 21:19 explorers 44:14 expose 44:13 eyesore 26:18 F F 47:1 facilities 6:1 fair 11:21 Fairmount 19:8 fall 38:7 40:3 Fam 39:10 Fame 28:24 35:11,16 37:1 Famer 39:11 families 17:6 family 34:6 famous 30:17 far 38:7 father 33:14 34:10 36:17 36:25 37:14 favor 7:22 46:7 favorable 45:20 46:4 federal 7:17 8:12,17 10:3 fee 2:20 3:17 5:11 26:9
--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--

Committee on Public Property and Public Works
November 18, 2019

Page 3

feet 19:18	24:19	21:8,19,20	half 11:16	high 22:1	18:16		leave 35:21
felt 37:3	French 29:7	21:21 22:14	Hall 1:5	highway 7:17	inspectors	K	45:5
Ferry 3:1	friendly 20:2	22:15 31:22	28:24 35:11	hiring 18:20	18:21	K 1:10	LEED-certi...
5:16 11:7	front 29:13	35:13 36:20	35:15 37:1	history 28:21	institutions	keep 10:17	19:24
19:9	fully 6:19	39:2 40:5	39:10,11	31:7 37:23	5:25	14:10	left 2:5
field 29:10,12	30:2 47:4	gold 19:24	happen 21:7	41:15	interact 21:3	kids 16:24	legacy 29:19
33:25 34:24	funding 8:15	good 2:2 4:24	40:19	hits 37:3	interest 2:21	kind 11:21	35:10 36:19
file 10:10	8:16	13:18 17:25	happy 6:24	holding 2:14	3:18 5:11	37:3 39:2	40:1
13:25	funds 8:18,22	18:5 20:17	20:10 27:15	45:8	26:9	39:19,19	Legal 28:16
filed 12:7	furniture	20:18 25:23	30:6 32:15	home 40:19	interests 5:20	KING 47:11	legislation
finance 13:20	23:12	28:3 32:24	42:21 44:8	honor 29:19	internally	knew 32:7	6:17 11:19
finished	further 4:5	37:6 38:25	hard 35:13	32:6 35:9,9	15:7	34:4,17,19	12:1 27:8
26:24	41:2 42:14	40:17 41:25	health 6:1	35:10	introduce	know 9:4,7,18	lesser 2:21
fire 43:19,21	43:2 45:21	43:6	43:19	hope 32:9	11:18	11:18,25	3:18 5:11
firm 24:12,24		government	heaped 39:4	host 29:8	introducing	12:16 31:9	26:9
first 6:22 8:25	G	8:9,17	hear 2:11	human 35:3	29:23	31:18,19	letter 13:16
20:8 27:13	game 30:15	Grays 2:25	4:14 44:24		inventory	33:23 34:3	letting 17:15
27:23 36:25	30:17 31:14	5:16 11:7	heard 37:4	I	27:6	36:9 37:19	License 18:16
42:20 44:6	31:16	19:9	46:5	icon 29:15	invested	39:8,23	lieu 2:23 5:13
44:12 45:22	games 33:17	great 11:11	hearing 2:3,9	idea 16:12	37:18	knowledge	life 37:20,24
five 6:5 7:9	gap 14:8	14:9 15:25	2:11 31:3	30:12	involved	41:14	39:23
7:11,11,11	Garden 11:8	16:12 22:13	45:5,9,10	ideal 19:2	17:13 24:14	known 26:20	Line 2:25
12:13,18	gateway	27:25 30:12	heart 34:5	III 28:20	issue 18:24	29:1 33:14	5:15
25:2,4,5	19:12	31:8 33:14	held 2:15	33:18	41:10	34:24	lines 8:6
43:25	generally	34:22 36:6	HELEN 1:11	illustrated		knows 33:21	linesman
five-year	2:24 5:14	39:10,12	help 30:19	29:14	J	KOZ 21:13	29:5
24:22,23	generations	40:3 41:20	Henon 1:10	imagine	Jannie 1:16		listened 41:11
25:5	40:20	44:19	2:2 4:13,19	12:14	35:22 36:3	L	literally
floor 22:20,23	gentleman	Greater 6:12	4:24 7:1	impact 33:10	36:4,8	L 1:16,16	23:12
23:4,5	41:21	green 19:23	9:21 11:15	34:3	37:22 41:9	L&I 18:20,24	litigate 10:14
Florida 6:14	getting 8:6	19:25	12:13,25	important	Jersey 6:13	19:1,4,10	little 14:22
focus 19:19	33:9	Greenlee 1:10	13:5,18	19:17 34:17	Jets 28:19	19:17,19,25	live 17:6,9
follow 10:10	Girard 4:4	2:6 27:22	14:3,9,16	improvement...	31:13,14	20:23,25	36:19
20:8 24:16	42:13	31:4,5,21	15:25 16:4	3:22 26:14	33:19	21:2,3,22	lived 39:24
42:20 44:6	give 19:3,10	36:22,23	16:7,15	26:23,24	job 6:8 40:17	22:2	living 17:8
food 34:18	19:25	45:15,16	17:16,25	27:3	jobs 5:24	land 2:24	39:23
foot 23:20	given 38:11	Greenway	18:2,6	includes	Joe 30:16	3:19 4:2	local 26:21
football 28:16	gives 11:24	6:13	20:12 25:11	19:25	31:15 33:20	5:14 11:22	37:17
28:21,24	giving 22:19	ground 22:20	25:23 27:17	including	John 7:10	13:2,12	located 3:6,10
31:8 33:13	glad 37:7	22:23 23:3	27:25 28:4	29:6	9:23 12:3	16:23 26:2	3:19 4:11
33:14,16,24	go 7:16,18,21	23:5	30:8,23	incredible	Johnny 3:11	26:10 42:11	18:17 19:5
33:25 34:9	11:5 12:15	group 26:21	31:22 32:19	37:22	28:13,15	landlord 24:2	19:7 21:1
34:23	13:13 14:12	growth 19:21	32:24 33:6	inducted	30:16 31:8	Laughter	26:11 28:12
foregoing	15:5 17:11	guarantee	36:16 37:9	28:23	32:7 33:5	30:21	43:17
47:5,13	22:25 31:23	31:16 33:20	38:3,15,20	informed	35:18 39:6	Law 8:5,24	location 19:3
forgot 24:15	34:20	guess 9:9	40:9,24	10:17,19	Johnson 6:15	9:7,14 10:8	21:24 43:20
found 29:8	go-to 35:7	guys 39:3	41:20 42:1	Infrastruct...	27:6 38:23	10:21	44:13
four 7:11	goal 19:17	Gym 1:11 2:6	42:23 43:7	5:4 26:1	38:24 40:5	leadership	locations
24:20	goals 19:19	14:18,19	44:19 45:3	initiating	40:7,11,11	41:9	18:22
Francisville	goes 11:6	15:3,11,16	45:13,24	27:5	joined 2:7	lease 3:4 4:8	locks 23:20
19:8	22:25	15:23 37:11	46:1,10,12	initiatives	31:1,2	18:14 19:10	long 11:2
frankly 33:12	going 8:3,15	37:12	hero 35:7,20	19:24	joining 43:2	22:19 24:19	12:17
free 23:16,19	9:5 10:18		37:16,17	inspect 18:23	44:22	24:20,23,24	longer 36:7
	17:14 21:7	H		Inspection	jumped 27:22	43:15,23	

Committee on Public Property and Public Works
November 18, 2019

Page 4

look 17:5 21:21 37:6	42:1 43:8	mural 29:12	28:25 35:11	op-ex 24:9,9	42:11	35:7	32:8
looking 7:9	memorializi...	29:13 32:16	nice 36:16	Open 29:6,7	park 5:20	personally	pleasure
8:5 21:24	37:23	myriad 6:7	Niri 39:1	29:7	16:22 27:2	39:14	37:25
22:7,8	memory		non-profit	opening	Parker 1:16	petition 40:8	pledged 10:2
38:10	23:22	N	13:15	18:21,25	31:2 41:6,7	40:12	14:23 15:2
loss 36:6	men's 29:2	N 47:1	North 4:4,5	44:12	44:16,17	Philadelphia	plug 23:12
lot 12:12	mentioned	Namath	11:17,25	operating	parks 3:15	1:1,5 3:4,11	point 9:3
26:17 38:10	36:17	30:16 31:15	42:13,14	13:7,11	5:7 6:18	3:16,17,25	14:20 22:5
love 34:25	microphone	33:20	Nos 2:12	opportunity	13:11 16:13	4:1,8 5:10	22:12 23:15
36:11,20	16:16	name 4:19,22	45:18 46:2	19:10 20:1	16:19,23	5:23 6:12	portion 3:6
39:3	miles 6:11	5:1 9:21	Notary 47:11	33:8 34:7,8	17:3 25:22	16:9 18:14	3:19 4:2,10
loved 34:10	million 10:1	16:5 18:2,7	note 11:15	35:20 44:11	26:2,6 27:9	21:2 22:7	18:17 26:10
34:12,13	14:23,25	25:18,25	30:25	44:18	28:7 30:2	26:2,7,8	42:11
36:17	15:5	28:5,11	noted 47:4	oppose 40:14	Parkway	28:7,13	possible
low 5:24	mind 41:16	32:25 33:4	notes 47:5	Opposed	3:10 28:12	29:20 33:11	10:19
LP 3:5 18:15	mine 40:21	38:21,23,25	November	46:10	34:13	33:11 34:10	PPR 27:6
	minute 8:20	39:5 40:10	1:6	opposition	part 6:3,10	34:12,12,14	PRA 26:18
	33:8,22	42:2 43:9	number 10:5	46:11	32:13	35:25 36:4	27:4
M	model 29:15	named 35:18	10:7,13	option 24:23	partner 13:16	36:10,10,13	praise 39:4
M 47:11	modern 20:2	39:17,21	29:1 30:18	25:6	partnered	36:18,19	preapproved
Maine 6:14	Monday 1:6	naming 3:8	40:16,20,20	ordinance	29:12	37:6,15	15:17
man 33:9,22	Mondlak	national	numbers 7:24	2:19 3:2,8	passed 29:17	38:9 39:9	premises 3:6
34:5,22	9:23,23	28:16 37:16	8:3,19 9:8	3:13,23 4:6	passionate	39:21 42:9	4:11 18:17
35:10	10:9 12:4	necessarily	O	5:8 6:25	35:5	42:10 43:15	43:17
Management	12:19 13:4	12:21 13:21	O 47:1	11:23 18:12	passive 27:1	Philadelphi...	presence
26:2	13:21 14:8	17:1 40:3	obligated	26:4 28:9	27:2	6:6	19:11
Manager 5:3	14:25 15:8	necessary	24:1	42:7 43:13	Patriots	piece 13:1	PRESENT
managing	15:15,21	16:14	offer 6:8	ordinances	30:20	14:5	1:9,15
13:12	money 7:14	need 8:7 12:9	12:23	19:15	pay 8:11	place 13:19	prime 19:20
Manor 4:9	7:16 9:4	12:10 16:12	office 5:3 19:1	Orianna 4:4	10:11 23:23	23:11 40:19	probably
43:16	10:4 15:8	16:16,19	19:3,19	42:13	24:1	places 6:1	22:14 34:2
MARK 1:12	17:4	17:10 18:23	20:24 21:3	OTIS 5:5,7	paying 21:14	planned 6:11	proceed 16:7
market 11:21	month's	23:11	21:9,21	oversees	pays 8:10	6:13	18:3 38:21
24:18	24:19	needed 8:22	23:7 31:23	26:22	PennDOT	Planning	proceedings
matter 47:6	monthly 24:7	14:5 29:24	offices 18:21	owner 7:6	7:19 10:11	9:23	47:3
Matthew	months 24:20	needs 22:1	23:10	10:12 23:23	12:5	platform 35:2	process 7:17
38:24 40:11	Montrose	negotiate	official 29:5	owners 7:12	PennDOT-f...	play 16:20	7:19,21 8:4
mean 13:22	3:20 26:12	11:21	officially 3:8	12:14,18,19	7:18	17:11,12	8:8 9:4
means 38:9	morning 2:2	neighborho...	28:10	12:23	Pennovation	33:16 34:8	11:19,20,24
47:16	4:24 17:25	26:20,21	Ogontz 4:11	P	10:23	36:25	12:17 14:12
measure 6:19	18:1,5	29:9 37:19	43:17,22	Palantino	Pennsylvania	played 28:16	27:5
20:5 27:10	20:17,18	neighborho...	oh 41:5	25:21,21,25	1:5 6:6	30:15	professional
30:3 42:17	25:23 28:3	19:20	okay 10:16	27:24 31:19	people 16:12	player 29:2	28:21
44:3	32:24 38:25	neighbors	13:6 14:3	panel 41:1	16:18 17:2	31:9 33:15	program 5:3
medication	41:25 43:6	34:15	15:12 22:10	parcel 3:19	34:17,18,18	33:16,24	40:2
34:19	45:4	network 6:11	23:3 25:1,7	4:2 6:16	34:23,25	37:2	project 7:18
meeting 45:7	Mount 4:9	new 6:12	27:25 31:15	13:1 26:10	35:2,24	players 34:3	10:2 11:12
45:12,14	move 25:16	18:20,21,25	31:17,21	26:19,24	36:9 37:18	playing 31:23	14:23 15:4
46:13,17	28:1 43:4	19:23 21:11	40:24 43:6	27:5,7	37:24 40:13	please 2:16	15:14
member 39:9	45:6,18,21	27:1 28:19	old 36:24	42:11	40:16 41:14	4:16 14:10	projects
members	moved 45:24	31:13,14	older 39:24	parcels 2:23	percent 24:5	16:4,15	12:12 18:24
4:25 18:6	moving 17:7	33:18	once 6:2 9:10	4:2 5:14 7:8	permits 18:24	25:17 32:25	19:5
25:23 28:4	Mt 43:16	NFC 33:17	26:24	7:11,16 8:5	person 28:20	pleased 32:2	promote
33:6 39:13		NFL 28:17,22					

Committee on Public Property an Public Works
November 18, 2019

Page 5

19:23 proper 8:6 properly 46:1 properties 13:23 20:4 property 1:2 2:4,10,20 3:3,14,24 4:7 5:1,9,19 7:6 10:22 12:23,24 17:22 18:7 18:10,13 25:24 26:5 28:5,10 33:7 42:2,5 42:8,16 43:8,10,14 43:22,24 44:2 45:6,7 46:14 proportion... 24:4 proposed 19:9,18 protest 17:14 proud 36:18 38:11 provided 13:16 providing 5:23 19:14 prudent 22:3 public 1:2,2 2:4,4,9,10 2:10,19 3:1 3:3,14,24 4:7 5:1,1,9 5:16,25 16:8,11 17:22 18:7 18:7,10,13 20:4 25:24 25:24 26:5 28:4,5,10 33:7,7 34:21 41:18 42:2,2,5,8 42:16 43:8 43:8,10,14 44:2 45:5,6 45:6,7,7,10 45:12 46:13	46:14,14,17 47:11 purchase 2:21 5:12 purpose 2:11 purposes 3:1 5:17,20 43:21 put 16:22 putting 16:11 Q question 7:5 9:9 21:17 22:18 26:16 questions 6:25 14:17 20:11,21 25:8 27:15 30:7 41:1,2 42:22 44:9 44:21,23 quick 7:5 20:21 quickly 36:23 quirky 22:23 quite 8:14 9:13 22:2 32:6 33:12 37:2,2 quorum 2:5 quote 41:12 R R 47:1 radio 29:15 34:25 35:1 37:5 raised 34:11 rated 29:1 read 2:16 readily 21:25 reading 6:23 20:8 27:13 42:20 44:6 45:22 real 3:18 18:9 18:23 19:4 24:1,3,8,11 24:13 26:9 42:4 43:10 really 9:3 24:22 25:2 32:6 34:25	37:18 44:17 reasons 21:12 reauthorize 11:18 12:1 reauthorized 12:2 reauthorizing 12:15 Rec 35:17,18 receiver 13:3 recognize 29:25 recognizes 7:3 14:18 20:14 30:10 31:4,25 36:22 37:11 38:3 41:6 45:15 recommend... 45:21 46:4 recommends 43:22 record 2:13 4:20 9:22 14:4 16:5 18:3 25:18 30:25 31:15 33:1 36:6 38:21 40:10 41:18 45:1 recreation 3:9,11,15 5:7 6:18 13:11 25:22 26:3,6 27:9 28:7,11,14 29:14 30:2 32:14 39:17 recreational 3:1 5:17 6:1 29:18 recruitment 43:21 Redevelop... 3:17 4:1 26:8 42:10 reduce 19:15 refer 36:7,7 Refresh 23:22 regards 44:17 region 6:12	relaxed 16:25 relocating 17:7 43:20 relocation 43:23 remain 19:20 remember 37:3 reminded 45:8 remiss 44:10 Renaming 29:18 renovated 19:22 rent 21:14 23:16,19,19 24:7,19 reported 46:3 reporter 47:11,19 represent 11:16,16 24:12 39:13 reproduction 47:15 request 6:20 27:11 requesting 6:21 20:7 27:12 42:19 44:5 requests 30:4 residents 26:25 resides 6:16 27:7 resources 6:7 respectfully 6:20 20:6 27:11 30:4 42:17 44:4 response 18:19 responsible 24:3,4 retail 6:9 retiring 28:25 review 24:12 right 2:7 7:8 8:3 11:4,9 11:17 13:2 14:3 15:23	31:17 32:16 rights 35:4,4 river 2:25 5:16 6:4 11:3 13:9 13:14 21:19 Riverfront 11:17,25 road 21:22 Rob 5:2 Robert 4:22 role 29:15 roof 19:25 room 1:5 23:10,10 roots 41:15 RPR 47:11 rules 6:22 10:11 12:5 20:8 27:13 42:20 44:6 45:21 46:5 run 6:5 S safe 5:24 Sample 3:11 28:13,15,23 28:25 29:7 29:17 31:8 32:7 33:5 35:18 39:6 Sample's 29:25 40:1 Sample-Oa... 30:1 32:9 33:3,4 38:13 satisfied 10:13 saying 40:17 46:7 school 34:20 Schuylkill 2:25 5:15 6:4 13:9,9 13:14 21:6 21:11,20 second 7:20 seconded 45:25 46:2 section 5:21 6:3 see 24:19	38:10 40:13 seen 24:18 36:24 sell 13:24 Sellers 16:3,3 16:6,6,8,18 sense 21:9 37:17 separate 7:12 serious 34:4 served 29:4 session 6:23 20:9 27:14 42:21 44:7 45:23 46:6 share 24:5 41:13,17 short 26:17 shovel 34:14 show 31:7 35:1 signatures 40:15 signify 46:7 simple 2:21 3:17 5:11 26:9 sit 41:11 site 26:16 sites 22:15 situation 12:20 17:14 six 24:21 snow 34:13 somebody 13:8 36:24 37:6 39:18 somewhat 15:20 sorry 8:23 SOSNA 26:21,23 27:4 South 2:24 3:21,21 5:14 16:9 16:18 17:7 17:8 19:9 26:12,13,19 26:19 Southwest 5:23 space 20:3	22:1,20,23 23:9,24 24:1 27:1 speak 16:16 32:3 41:23 42:25 specifically 40:4 speech 17:15 spoken 39:14 sponsor 2:14 sports 29:15 29:19 31:7 33:13 34:8 35:3 square 19:18 23:20 Squilla 1:12 31:1 38:4,5 staff 28:6 44:15 stage 37:16 start 2:3 11:19 14:5 started 40:7 40:12 starting 23:19 state 4:19 8:12 9:21 10:3 16:4 18:2 24:24 25:18 32:25 38:20 40:9 States 29:3 station 21:2 status 14:11 stenographic 47:5 stores 5:25 story 37:14 strategic 18:22 Street 2:24 3:7,20,21 3:21,22 4:3 4:4,5 5:15 11:7 16:9 16:19 17:7 17:8 18:18 19:2,5,6 22:24 26:12 26:12,13,13	42:12,13,14 strip 11:2 strong 29:10 students 41:13 substantially 27:4 successful 29:10 Superbowl 28:20,22 33:18 supervision 47:18 support 5:8 6:19 13:16 18:11 26:4 28:8 32:4 32:15 42:6 43:12 44:3 supportive 6:16 27:8 supports 20:5 27:10 30:3 42:16 sur 8:14 sure 7:23 8:14 9:1,13 11:12 12:21 16:17,20,24 20:22 21:16 35:14 38:10 39:17 surprised 37:1 surrounding 26:25 survey 8:6 suspended 45:22 suspension 6:22 20:7 27:12 42:19 44:5 46:5 Sustainabili... 5:5 Swing 11:9 systems 19:23 T T 47:1,1 Table 4:18 9:20 16:2 17:24 25:20
---	---	--	---	--	--	---	---

Committee on Public Property an Public Works
November 18, 2019

Page 6

28:2 32:23 38:19 41:24 take 33:8 taken 22:5 47:5 takes 24:1 talents 29:14 talk 10:20 33:22 35:2 35:20 talking 16:10 target 26:17 taxes 21:14 21:15 23:24 24:2,3,9 teacher 41:12 team 8:8 33:18 ten 28:16 ten-year 19:9 24:20,24 39:22 tend 12:12 tennis 29:1,3 29:5,8 31:10 33:13 34:9 39:12 40:1 term 19:10 43:25 terms 4:12 5:17 18:18 26:14 42:15 43:18 44:1 Terrence 38:23 40:5 40:11 testify 4:16 5:6 16:1 17:18,23 18:11 25:12 25:17 26:3 28:8 32:22 33:8 38:17 39:2,5 40:6 42:6 43:12 testimony 2:11 4:14 4:21 7:2 11:14 17:17 18:4 20:13 20:21 25:15 25:19 27:18	29:22 30:9 30:13 31:12 33:2 37:13 38:22 40:25 42:24 43:3 44:23,25 45:3 46:15 thank 4:13 6:24 7:1,4 11:13 14:19 15:11,23 17:15,16,20 20:10,12,16 20:20 25:8 25:8,10,11 25:14 27:17 27:21 29:23 30:6,8,11 30:13,22,22 31:5,21 32:1,4,18 32:19,24 33:3,5 35:19,19,21 35:22 36:12 36:12,14,15 36:16,20 37:8,9,21 38:2,5,12 38:13,15 40:24 41:3 41:3,7,19 41:20,21 42:23 44:8 44:19 45:1 45:2,16 46:15 theory 12:11 thereon 3:22 26:14 things 15:16 16:21 34:1 36:12 40:2 think 7:10,25 11:11 12:16 12:16 13:22 14:21 15:12 21:6,16 30:12 33:10 35:8 36:2,3 36:6 40:22 thirteen 23:9 Thompson	4:3 42:12 thought 21:5 22:3 three 23:20 33:16 40:15 Thurman 28:3,6 TI 23:13 Tiffany 28:5 till 22:4 time 9:25 12:5 21:1 21:23 22:3 29:8 44:12 46:17 times 36:25 37:5 title 2:16,21 3:18 5:11 26:9 today 2:8 5:6 11:14 18:11 26:3 28:8 30:1 32:2 35:6 36:20 42:6 43:12 44:22 46:16 told 35:12 top 24:7 tough 33:25 37:4 trail 5:21 6:3 6:4,10,14 8:7 13:1,9 16:22 trails 5:2 6:11 6:11 11:17 16:11 transaction 24:14 transcribe 16:17 transcript 47:6,14 transfer 27:5 Transporta... 5:3,4 tree 38:7 trees 41:15 true 15:21 38:7 trying 14:21 TV 36:25	37:4 two 12:21 23:1 24:18 30:18 typically 12:7 U U.S 29:6 umpire 29:5 understand 7:23 understand... 15:3 Understood 15:15 Unitas 30:16 United 29:3 University 6:2 19:8,12 20:24 unprece... 33:19 unveil 29:13 use 3:5 4:10 16:23 18:15 43:20 usually 24:19 V value 11:22 versus 22:4 VICE 1:10 victory 28:19 31:12 violations 19:15 vote 37:7,25 voted 45:19 W waiting 22:4 walk 16:13 17:11 walked 16:9 walking 17:2 wall 29:13 walls 32:16 Walnut 3:5,7 18:15,17 19:2,7,21 21:10,14 want 7:23 9:17 11:12 12:22 16:22	30:25 33:22 36:11 37:12 37:21 38:6 39:15 40:18 41:8 wanted 34:2 34:7 41:17 wasn't 39:12 way 10:17 21:18 24:23 35:9 Wednesday 40:13 week 40:7,12 west 4:3,4 18:25 19:5 21:1 22:7 29:20 33:11 34:10,12 35:24 36:3 36:10 37:14 42:12,13 whistle 34:1 widely 28:25 WILLIAM 1:10 Wimbledon 29:6 win 28:21 33:19,19 wish 16:1 17:18 30:18 38:17 41:23 wishes 4:16 17:23 25:12 32:21 42:25 Witness 4:18 4:18 9:14 9:20,20 16:2 17:24 25:20 28:2 32:23 38:19 41:24 won 31:14 wonderful 34:25 35:9 35:17,23,23 wondering 24:21 word 37:17 words 32:10 work 9:7 14:1 20:3 32:7	35:9,13 worked 26:19 working 8:8 works 1:2 2:4 2:10 5:1 9:13 10:23 18:7 25:25 28:5 33:7 42:2 43:8 45:6,7 46:14 world 33:12 worthy 39:8 wouldn't 13:21 written 44:25 wrote 33:23 X Y Yards 21:6 21:11,20 yeah 12:4 14:8 year 12:1,2,7 12:9,15 14:1,13 25:3,4,5 years 23:21 24:18 28:17 29:21 35:1 39:25 40:20 43:25 yesterday 30:19 York 28:19 31:13,14 33:19 young 37:18 younger 39:23 Z 0 1 1 43:24 10,971 19:18 10:14 1:6 10:55 46:18 120 23:18 130-mile 6:4	17th 3:21 26:12 18 1:6 18th 3:22 26:13 190554 1:19 2:12,18 4:15 5:8 6:21 16:1 17:19 44:25 45:18 46:2 190710 1:19 2:12 17:23 18:12 20:7 25:13 45:18 46:2 190741 2:12 190742 1:19 28:1,9 30:5 32:22 38:18 41:4 45:19 46:2 190742[sic 27:20 190744 1:19 2:12 25:16 26:4 27:12 45:1,19 46:3 190824 1:19 2:15 45:9 190827 1:19 2:12 41:23 41:23 42:7 42:19 43:1 43:3 45:19 46:3 190862 1:19 2:13 43:5 43:13 44:5 44:21,23 45:19 46:3 1958 28:18 1968 28:20 1980s 29:4 1990s 29:4 2 2005 29:18 2012 28:24 2015 29:12 2019 1:6 2020 43:25 2021 35:11	35:16 20th 21:18 2334 23:20 2401 3:5,7 18:15,17 19:2,7,21 21:14 24th 21:10 26 29:17 280 3:10 28:12 3 3.1 21:7 30-plus 21:8 4 40 39:25 400 1:5 41st 19:6 45 29:2 4th 4:5 42:14 5 5 15:5 6 6 24:10 7 7.36 24:5 730 40:15 744 27:22,24 27:25 750 6:11 7800 4:11 43:17,22
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