

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON RULES

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Tuesday, September 20, 2022
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL

ALSO PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE

BILL: 220634

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
3 morning, everyone. I understand that
4 state law currently requires that the
5 following announcement be made at the
6 beginning of every remote public
7 hearing as follows: Due to the
8 current public health emergency, City
9 Council Committees are currently
10 meeting remotely. We are using
11 Microsoft Teams to make these remote
12 hearings possible.

13 Instructions for how the
14 public may view and offer public
15 testimony at public hearings of
16 Council Committees are included in the
17 public hearing notices that are
18 published in the Daily News, Inquirer
19 and Legal Intelligencer prior to the
20 hearing and can also be found at
21 PHLCouncil.com.

22 Will the Clerk please call
23 the roll to take attendance. Members
24 that are in attendance will please
25 indicate that they are present when

1 their names are called. Also, please
2 say a few brief words when responding
3 so that your image will be displayed
4 on the screen when you speak.

5 Will the Clerk please take
6 the roll.

7 THE CLERK: Councilmember
8 Mark Squilla.

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good
10 morning, Mr. Chair. Present.

11 THE CLERK: Councilmember
12 Cindy Bass.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
14 morning, Mr. Chair and colleagues. I
15 am present.

16 THE CLERK: Councilmember
17 Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
19 RICHARDSON: Good morning, Mr. Chair.
20 Good morning, colleagues. I am
21 present.

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember
23 Brian O'Neill.

24 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Good
25 morning to the Chair and all Members.

1 Present.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
3 you very much. A quorum of the
4 Committee is present and this hearing
5 is now called to order. This is the
6 public hearing of the Committee on
7 Rules regarding Bill No. 220634.

8 Will the Clerk please read
9 the title of the bill.

10 THE CLERK: Bill No. 220634,
11 establishing a neighborhood
12 improvement district to be known as
13 the North Broad Business Improvement
14 District in the area that generally
15 includes both sides of North Broad
16 Street from the north side of Spring
17 Garden Street to the south side of
18 Indiana Avenue, excluding 2700 to 2900
19 blocks on the west side of the
20 streets, beginning with 510 North
21 Broad Street and continuing to 2929
22 North Broad Street. It also includes
23 1300 Fairmount Avenue, 1406 Ridge
24 Avenue, 1408 Ridge Avenue, 1363 West
25 Seltzer Street, 1361 West Silver

1 Street and 1362 West Silver Street,
2 designating North Broad Renaissance
3 the legal name of which is Avenue
4 North Renaissance, which has organized
5 itself as a Pennsylvania nonprofit
6 corporation as the Neighborhood
7 Improvement District Management
8 Association for the District.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
10 you. Before we begin to hear
11 testimony from the witnesses we have
12 for today, everyone who has been
13 invited to the meeting to testify
14 should be aware that this public
15 hearing is being recorded. Because
16 the hearing is public, participants
17 and viewers have no reasonable
18 expectation of privacy. By continuing
19 to be in the meeting, you are
20 continuing to being recorded.

21 Additionally, prior to
22 recognizing Members for the questions
23 or comments they have for witnesses, I
24 will note for the record at this time
25 that we will use the chat feature

1 available in Microsoft Teams to allow
2 Members to signify they wish to be
3 recognized. In order to comply with
4 the Sunshine Act, the chat feature
5 must only be used for this purpose.

6 Will the Clerk please call
7 the panel for Bill No. 220634.

8 THE CLERK: We have Philip
9 Green.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
11 morning, Philip. State your name for
12 the record and begin your testimony.

13 MR. GREEN: My name is Philip
14 Green. Good morning, Chairman Johnson
15 and members of the Rules Committee.
16 My name is Philip Green. I'm the
17 Program Manager for Commercial
18 Corridor Improvements for the
19 Department of Commerce. I'm here to
20 testify in support of Bill No. 220634
21 to establish a North Broad Business
22 Improvement District.

23 The creation of Business
24 Improvement Districts aligns with
25 Commerce's mission to drive

1 neighborhood revitalization that
2 contributes to vibrant commercial
3 corridors. We support community-led
4 efforts to support the economic
5 vitality and quality of life in their
6 areas.

7 The North Broad Renaissance
8 organized a core group of stakeholders
9 to establish a BID in 2019. Their
10 efforts included multiple public
11 presentations, regular monthly
12 meetings, mailings and door-to-door
13 outreach, but hit a pause with the
14 pandemic and civil unrest of 2020.

15 The effort was reinvigorated
16 this year with a repeat of their
17 intensive outreach. This doubled
18 engagement effort has resulted in
19 today's legislation, which includes
20 boundaries along North Broad Street,
21 the North Broad Street corridor. A
22 five-year operations plan, a budget, a
23 method of assessing property owners
24 and organizational bylaws.

25 The plan will fund cleaning

1 and safety, maintenance and greening,
2 marketing and communications, business
3 attraction, retention and development
4 capital improvements and personnel and
5 administration. North Broad as you
6 know is a heavily-used high profile
7 thoroughfare that serves as a backbone
8 for the City as a whole.

9 Creating a BID to serve this
10 area will benefit small, medium and
11 large-sized businesses, property
12 owners and long-time residents and
13 students contemplating a future in
14 Philadelphia's economy. It creates a
15 way for both long-time tenants and new
16 investors on North Broad to work
17 together. It also creates a fair way
18 for new property owners to contribute
19 to the services that benefit everyone.

20 As we've seen in other areas,
21 it is easier to address cleanliness,
22 public safety, business attraction and
23 retention in districts with an
24 organization dedicated to these issues
25 and representing its constituents. We

1 commend the North Broad Renaissance
2 and their stakeholders for that
3 collaboration on these issues by
4 championing for a BID.

5 Thanks so much for an
6 opportunity to testify. I'm happy to
7 take any questions at this time.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
9 you very much for your testimony. Any
10 questions or comments from members of
11 the Committee?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I do see
14 we have the Council President on.
15 Would he like to make a comment on
16 this particular bill?

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 Good morning, Mr. Chairman and members
19 of the Committee.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
21 morning, Council President.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
23 Thank you. Real brief, I just wanted
24 to also commend North Broad
25 Renaissance for their hard work. I

1 know it's been a challenge over a
2 number of times between fighting
3 COVID, fighting the naysayers and all
4 the other things we have to do when we
5 want to do something a little bit
6 different, but congratulations to them
7 for this process. Thank all of the
8 supporters and thank the Chair. And
9 I'd just like to say today my
10 enthusiastic support for the North
11 Renaissance BID.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
14 welcome, Council President. As
15 always, good job on focusing on
16 improving the quality of life in your
17 District. And I just want to say hats
18 off to you for always being innovative
19 and moving these types of initiatives
20 forward.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I watched
23 you and took note.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
25 you, Council President.

1 Any other questions or
2 comments from members of the
3 Committee?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
6 none, Philip, we want to thank you for
7 testimony.

8 Will the Clerk please call
9 any witnesses that are here to testify
10 on this particular bill whose name has
11 not been called.

12 THE CLERK: There are no
13 additional witnesses.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Hearing
15 none at this time, the Committee will
16 take a brief pause to allow members of
17 the public who have registered for the
18 public comment section to be called
19 into this virtual meeting.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:
21 Councilmember Johnson, also point of
22 information. Councilmember Oh is
23 present.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The
25 Chair recognizes Councilman Oh as

1 being present. Thank you, Councilman
2 Oh.

3 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you
4 very much, Chair.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: We will
6 now hear testimony of those who have
7 signed up for public comment.

8 The Clerk will call your name
9 and once called, please state your
10 name for the record and proceed with
11 your testimony. Will the Clerk please
12 call the first witness.

13 COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT:
14 Mr. Chair, we're going to need a short
15 break to get public comment in. We'll
16 need a few minutes to get that, sir.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
18 Understood. Just give me the signal
19 when you're ready, sir.

20 (Brief recess.)

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: We will
22 now go on to hear the testimony from
23 those who have signed up for public
24 comment. The Clerk will call your
25 name and once called, please state

1 your name for the record and proceed
2 with your testimony.

3 Will the Clerk please call
4 the first witness.

5 THE CLERK: First, we have
6 Tara Patrick Taylor.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
8 morning, Tara. Just state your name
9 for the record and begin your
10 testimony.

11 MS. PATRICK TAYLOR: Hi.
12 This is Tara Patrick Taylor.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
14 morning, Tara. You can start your
15 testimony.

16 MS. PATRICK TAYLOR: Hi. I
17 read over a bill that you guys had
18 proposed. It was something about a
19 homeless shelter. Can you elaborate
20 on it a little bit more because I
21 didn't read a lot on it over the
22 Internet?

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: This
24 particular bill is not about a
25 homeless shelter. This particular

1 bill deals with creating a Business
2 Improvement District.

3 MS. PATRICK TAYLOR: Oh,
4 okay. Yes, I do see that here in
5 Philadelphia in addition that I did
6 receive this notification in the mail.
7 It's pretty much what is needed here
8 is pretty much clear guidelines in
9 funding business start-ups for this
10 District, what is needed is the
11 funding, grant funding and partners
12 that's willing to partner with the
13 different organizations.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Is that
15 your testimony, ma'am?

16 MS. PATRICK TAYLOR: Yes.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Is that
18 your testimony you're saying?

19 MS. PATRICK TAYLOR: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
21 All right. Well, thank you very much.
22 Okay?

23 MS. PATRICK TAYLOR: Okay.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Have a
25 great day. Will the Clerk please call

1 the next --

2 MS. PATRICK TAYLOR: Okay.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: --

4 witness.

5 THE CLERK: Next to testify

6 we have Shalimar Thomas.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good

8 morning, Shalimar. Please state your

9 name for the record and begin your

10 testimony.

11 MS. THOMAS: Good morning.

12 Good morning, everyone. My name is

13 Shalimar Thomas and thank you,

14 Chairman Johnson and members of the

15 Rules Committee, for allowing me to

16 present at today's hearing in support

17 of Bill 220634 regarding the North

18 Broad Business Improvement District.

19 As I mentioned, my name is

20 Shalimar Thomas. I'm the Executive

21 Director for the North Broad

22 Renaissance. The North Broad

23 Renaissance currently operates at the

24 Special Service District between City

25 Hall and Butler Street. Our coverage

1 area connects seven zip codes and more
2 than 50,000 residents and over 2,000
3 businesses.

4 The North Broad corridor
5 connects several pedestrians, bike and
6 transit-friendly neighborhoods between
7 City Hall and Butler Street. North
8 Broad also plays host to over 30,000
9 cars daily and eight subway stations.

10 The North Broad Renaissance
11 supports an improved quality of life
12 for this growing demographic by
13 executing on four programs, Clean and
14 Safe, Marketing and Communications,
15 Maintenance and Landscaping and
16 Economic Development. With more than
17 2 billion in valued real estate along
18 North Broad Street, the corridor has
19 become one of the most hottest
20 economic development opportunities in
21 the City.

22 With new developments
23 happening, there is unlimited
24 potential for further economic
25 vitalization along North Broad. But

1 if you drive or walk along the
2 corridor, you know there's a real need
3 for enhancing the municipal services.
4 That means more public safety or more
5 police services, more street cleaning,
6 more marketing to help the corridor
7 realize its economic potential and
8 strategic retention and business
9 attraction needs.

10 Overall North Broad Street is
11 in a prime position to leverage this
12 development in a way that is inclusive
13 and can create a real employment
14 opportunity for the community and
15 improve the overall quality of life
16 for residents, workers, businesses and
17 visitors.

18 The North Broad Renaissance
19 and our community partners have been
20 working diligently to create a
21 cleaner, greener and safer North Broad
22 Street. For the last seven years, we
23 have improved the litter index. And
24 one of our partners indicated North
25 Broad is the cleanest they've seen in

1 10 years.

2 Our landscaping program has
3 worked to maintain green space and
4 afford the community all the benefits
5 of vital green spaces. Our
6 partnerships with organizations like
7 Visit Philly work to make sure the
8 North Broad corridor was a part of the
9 hospitality and tourism conversation,
10 working to bring those dollars into
11 the community.

12 We've established the North
13 Broad Business Roundtable to provide a
14 space for North Broad businesses to
15 meet and share resources to help them
16 grow. In addition, we formed the
17 North Broad Real Estate Commission, a
18 collaboration of North Broad
19 developers working together and
20 sharing information to help promote
21 strategic and impactful development.

22 The contracts we award are
23 done so with intent. And nearly every
24 dollar we raise is reinvested back
25 into the North Broad community, with

1 their largest contract being awarded
2 to a Black-owned, woman-owned business
3 that operates in North Philadelphia.
4 As a matter of fact, nearly 90 percent
5 of our spend is with Black-owned
6 businesses. I'm sharing this because
7 this is only the beginning.

8 With the dedicated resources,
9 the North Broad Business Improvement
10 District will allow the North Broad
11 Renaissance to sustain and enhance
12 these services that vitalize the
13 community, create opportunities and
14 improve the overall economic power and
15 quality of life along North Broad
16 Street by doing the following: As I
17 mentioned, keeping North Broad Street
18 clean and safe, maintaining and
19 improving green space along Broad
20 Street, working with members of the
21 community to share updates about the
22 corridor, undertaking innovative,
23 strategic and diverse economic
24 development efforts that include
25 business attraction and working

1 collaboratively to attract businesses
2 that can promote sustainable
3 employment opportunities, tourism and
4 excitement, all of which provide a
5 ripple effect on employment
6 opportunity and job growth, also
7 business retention and working with
8 partners and City agencies to ensure
9 current businesses are updated on the
10 current market, trends and
11 opportunities to grow their business,
12 while sustaining the historical
13 significance of the corridor.

14 And lastly, job equity,
15 providing employment opportunities for
16 a wide range of stakeholders, from the
17 high school graduates to college
18 graduates. We understand that we
19 operate in an educational hub, and
20 it's important for those students who
21 attend Ben Franklin; SLA; Mathematics,
22 Civics and Science Charter School;
23 Franklin Learning Center; Parkway
24 Center City; TECH Freire and Masterman
25 to see the opportunities that exist

1 when they graduate in the same manner
2 that students from Temple University
3 see opportunity, as well as students
4 finishing programming at OIC.

5 We are excited to see one of
6 Philadelphia's most prominent
7 corridors continue to grow in a way
8 that's inclusive and impactful, and we
9 strongly believe the North Broad
10 Business Improvement District is key
11 to ensuring that this momentum
12 continues. Thank you again for
13 allowing me to present at today's
14 hearing.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
16 you very much. And as always,
17 Shalimar, great job with your
18 leadership improving the quality of
19 life of North Broad Street, so great
20 job.

21 MS. THOMAS: Thank you.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
23 welcome.

24 Will the Clerk please call
25 the next witness.

1 THE CLERK: Next we have Ruth
2 Birchett.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Ruth,
4 are you there?

5 MS. BIRCHETT: Good morning.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
7 morning.

8 MS. BIRCHETT: Good morning,
9 Councilman. My name is Ruth Birchett.
10 I'm a lifelong resident of
11 Philadelphia, North Philadelphia where
12 my family has resided nearly a
13 century. And I want to begin by
14 commending our Council President and
15 District Councilperson Darrell Clarke
16 for his foresight and for finally
17 bringing this resource to our
18 community.

19 This is something I looked
20 for since the early '90s when Mayor
21 Rendell appointed his wife to head the
22 Avenue of the Arts effort and that
23 revitalization. And many of us said
24 then what about North Broad, what
25 about the Uptown, what about Freedom

1 Theater, what about the Blue Horizon.

2 And now, we have the North

3 Broad Renaissance which under the

4 leadership of Shalimar Thomas has

5 reached out to our community. I've

6 participated in listening sessions

7 where we were able to see drawings and

8 listen to the consultants tell us

9 about the vision and just the

10 stewardship that they have had and

11 that we can see realtime improvements

12 on North Broad Street. Finally, that

13 it is clean, that it looks nice. The

14 greenery is just uplifting to the

15 spirit.

16 I also want to commend

17 Dr. Kenneth Scott for his just always

18 being on point in trying to do

19 everything that they can over at the

20 Beech Corporation to help our

21 community. I fully support the

22 Business Improvement District and look

23 forward to the resilience that we will

24 regain in our community which has

25 suffered economic loss and so many

1 other things since the riots of last
2 century. But I'm hopeful and
3 appreciative and internally grateful
4 to the North Philadelphia -- the North
5 Renaissance.

6 And Shalimar Thomas, I just
7 appreciate her being from North
8 Philadelphia and having the spirit to
9 do the best that she can to uplift us
10 homeowners in particular who will have
11 a chance to go and shop on Broad
12 Street again and even more. So thank
13 you for hearing my testimony and I
14 look forward to seeing the passage of
15 this ordinance in City Council soon.
16 Thank you very much.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
18 you very much for your testimony.

19 Will the Clerk please call
20 the next witness.

21 THE CLERK: Next we have
22 Queen Judith Robinson.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
24 Ms. Robinson, state your name for the
25 record and please go ahead and get

1 started.

2 MS. ROBINSON: Yes. Yes.

3 Good morning.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
5 morning.

6 MS. ROBINSON: Good morning
7 all. I am Queen Judith Robinson and
8 I'm here to testify on Bill 220634.
9 This is regarding the North Broad
10 Street Business Improvement District,
11 and I'm going to call it the second
12 time, okay.

13 I want to start off by saying
14 trust, but verify. I love my people.
15 I'm born and raised in North Philly
16 too. I am from Strawberry Mansion
17 originally and I presently am a
18 homeowner in North Central. I'm a
19 grandmother. I'm a real estate
20 broker. I'm a tour guide. I'm a
21 docent at the historic Church of the
22 Advocate.

23 It's a whole lot going on
24 y'all, and I want to make sure, make
25 sure as a grandmother that my youth

1 are included in this future of our
2 City. YouthBuild will be in the old
3 PECO building on Broad Street. I want
4 to include Strawberry Mansion. If you
5 don't include all the schools -- let's
6 make sure we include Strawberry
7 Mansion. I got some ideas y'all to
8 show what I'm working with, okay.

9 But I'm here this morning as
10 all those things I mentioned prior,
11 but I'm here as the representative,
12 just a representative, with my fellow
13 committee members of the 32 Ward RCO.
14 And our area of boundaries per this
15 BID, Business Improvement District,
16 Business Improvement District, will
17 radiate all over our whole community,
18 our area is between -- on the west
19 side between Susquehanna and
20 Montgomery and on Broad, okay. That's
21 the very beginning of the 32nd Ward.

22 So we're the 32nd Ward RCO.
23 We're vetting all of the developers,
24 okay, who are coming to build on our
25 corridor and in our ward, which is a

1 very large ward. I believe it's the
2 largest ward in North Philly. So when
3 I come to this forum, I've been to
4 pretty much every meeting that's ever
5 been held in North Philly about
6 anything because that's what I do.

7 But I want to raise some concerns
8 here, because we're not going to lose
9 every time -- Black people I want to
10 say, because I like to keep it real --
11 we're not going to lose every time
12 billions of economic development
13 happens in our community.

14 So I'm going to keep it
15 straight with you all. I ain't going
16 to beat around the bush and give
17 everybody credit. I'll give you
18 credit when I see those contracts for
19 the 50,000 people who you're depending
20 on our money, even our EBT cards to
21 further your goals. You're claiming
22 every dime that's in the Black
23 community. But when it comes to being
24 at the table, look, I'm on the email
25 list. I love my Shalimar Thomas,

1 okay.

2 I just went down there to the
3 foundation and won all their swag, so
4 I'm ready for big time, okay. But you
5 can't play us out of position. You
6 cannot put my dear friend Shalimar at
7 the front of this big economic
8 development and then put her like the
9 queen at the top, okay, and then
10 you're doing all the shenanigans
11 behind the background. It ain't going
12 to happen like that.

13 We got Temple's Board, the
14 Trustee Board. Where are they? Let's
15 talk to them because they got a lot of
16 power, okay. So I don't want to
17 digress too much. But I want to say
18 this BID would from Fairmount Avenue
19 to Indiana Avenue all the way --
20 that's a whole lot of poverty there
21 that we could include, so I'm speaking
22 from the west side.

23 I'm the best negotiator.
24 Don't be afraid because I say I'm
25 Queen Judith Robinson. Bring me to

1 the table so you can know. Listen,
2 those meetings that were held with the
3 roundtable, they were not inclusive.
4 I didn't feel comfortable in going to
5 those meetings. They said it was only
6 for the businesses of Broad Street.

7 So you cannot have meetings
8 and not include the community. How
9 you not going to include me. I'm
10 sorry, I'm just pretty vocal like
11 that. Take grandmom's wisdom. I
12 ain't going be around forever. I
13 ain't going to keep testifying 99
14 times for y'all to turn around and
15 give all the money to the White man.
16 Come on, y'all. Please stop. So I'm
17 a negotiator.

18 So let's get to it. Safety,
19 we're catching hell in Philadelphia as
20 it relates to safety. We're in the
21 22nd District. We got the Temple
22 police. We got SEPTA police. We got
23 PHA police, and the parents of the
24 Temple students ordered their own
25 police, y'all, because they scared.

1 So we're not going to play games with
2 safety and act like we got it covered.
3 We got to have a real safety plan.
4 Y'all read the article that's in the
5 Inquirer February of this year about
6 how many of our officers in the 22nd
7 District are out on sick leave. Read
8 it and weep. I'm going to go there.

9 All right, sanitation. Now,
10 this is my area of expertise. We're
11 the only environmental justice
12 organization, and somebody can correct
13 me if I'm wrong, Susquehanna, clean
14 up, pick up. Check us out. We
15 started years ago cleaning up the
16 corridor because I brought a business
17 to the corridor and I said, let's
18 clean it up.

19 I sent my young bulls down
20 the corridor with my money, a rolling
21 trash can, some brooms. Come find out
22 about my story. It's in Grid
23 Magazine, so that's the sustainability
24 magazine, but I'm not going to belabor
25 this because we're about cleaning and

1 safety, but we need a whole sanitation
2 plan, you all. Maybe now we can get
3 Temple to clean up after their
4 students --

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Queen
6 Judith.

7 MS. ROBINSON: All right.
8 Let me finish it up. All right.
9 Gotcha. I know y'all would push me.
10 But tourism, we got to do tourism. We
11 got to be inclusive of Black people.
12 People don't want to say that. You
13 cannot take all those jobs and give
14 them to Temple students and then our
15 community has nothing.

16 We have an excellent program
17 of hospitality and tourism at Temple.
18 We would like to make sure the Black
19 children that I'm going to be
20 training, okay, even if I have to pay
21 a penny out of my own money to train
22 our youth to take advantage of
23 hospitality. We got a whole history
24 in our neighborhood.

25 All right. So If you're not

1 at the table -- I'm going to
2 paraphrase something that I heard
3 former Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds
4 Brown say, if you're not at the table,
5 you're on the menu. I'm going to say
6 if you're not at the hearings, you
7 will not be heard. So I'm here to
8 amplify.

9 Condolences, I must say last
10 but not least because this brought a
11 lot to the Broad Street -- condolences
12 to the family of Reverend Herb Lusk
13 and all those who knew of his work,
14 that brother worked very hard for
15 North Broad Street. And it's just
16 ironic that he passed. It must have
17 been recently. Brother Damon Jones
18 from West Philly, I verified it from
19 him. He put it on Facebook y'all.
20 Have a moment of prayer before we
21 continue this hearing. Thank you very
22 much.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
24 you very much, Dr. Queen Judith
25 Robinson. You have a good day.

1 Will the Clerk please call
2 the next witness.

3 THE CLERK: Next we have
4 Idalia Adan.

5 MS. ADAN: Hi. Can you hear
6 me?

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, I
8 hear you. Yes.

9 MS. ADAN: Okay. Great. Hi.
10 Good morning, Chairman Johnson and
11 members of the Rules Committee. Thank
12 you for hearing my testimony.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good
14 morning.

15 MS. ADAN: I just want to
16 just like -- before I begin my
17 testimony, I do want to concur with
18 Ms. Judith. I agree with her
19 sentiments in regard to being
20 inclusive in regards to the existing
21 community and also a big shout-out to
22 Shalimar. We appreciate all the hard
23 work that she does and the fact that
24 she's gotten us here.

25 Again, my name is Idalia

1 Adan. I am the cofounder of Beyond
2 the Seams. We are a custom apparel
3 company. We do embroidery, screen
4 printing and other custom apparel
5 processes. We are located at 828
6 North Broad Street. We've been here
7 since 2018 as a business.

8 We just started, just my
9 husband and I, and we just recently
10 brought in our friend as a partner.
11 His name is Mustafa Muhammad. In
12 addition to providing low-cost
13 customer apparel services, we mentor
14 young brand entrepreneurs from the
15 neighborhood to jumpstart their small
16 businesses.

17 My position and involvement
18 is I'm a business owner here in the
19 corridor and has been involved with
20 NDR since the day my doors opened on
21 September 8th. Literally since day 1,
22 Shalimar and her crew came, knocked on
23 my door, gave me a small business
24 package kit for Small Business
25 Saturdays and just really making us

1 feel welcome in the community.

2 My personal reasons for
3 becoming involved in this development
4 is that my husband and I have lived in
5 this community longer than we have had
6 the privilege of owning a small
7 business. As someone who grew up in a
8 highly developed area, I grew up in
9 Northern Liberties.

10 I'm 33 years old, so my
11 grandmother and my grandfather moved
12 from Puerto Rico. When they came from
13 Puerto Rico the early '60s, late '50s,
14 they moved to that area, Northern
15 Liberties and they've been there ever
16 since. My whole family has been there
17 ever since. And so, as someone who
18 grew up in an underdeveloped area that
19 turned highly developed, I know how
20 important it is for the existing
21 community to be a part of and benefit
22 from the betterment of the
23 neighborhood.

24 So although I'm a huge
25 proponent of this BID, Bill No.

1 200634, I forgot to mention that, I do
2 want to emphasize the need to make the
3 current existing community a part of
4 it. I think what makes this District
5 unique is that so many institutions
6 like mentioned before surround us.
7 I'd like to say we are like a vital
8 artery that connects from organ to
9 organ.

10 I don't need to give a list,
11 but there's Community College, there's
12 Temple, Masterman, Einstein Hospital,
13 the MET. You have other community
14 organizations like Project HOME,
15 Philly Restart, so you know how it is.
16 We're like a big vital artery that
17 connects to all other successful
18 communities around us.

19 This area is super important
20 because due to the variety of
21 institutions surrounding us, we
22 facilitate the community and existence
23 of significantly diverse demographics.
24 We have students, families,
25 professionals like administrators,

1 teachers, nurses, doctors, et cetera,
2 and what's more important to a city
3 than their people.

4 I feel like you can't develop
5 without anyone to use development, so
6 it's important that we take care of
7 our people, not just the ones that
8 want to move over here and create.

9 And yes, the potential impact is great
10 I think. This is addressing important
11 issues like cleanliness,
12 beautification, public safety,
13 maintenance and greening. All things
14 are entitled to the growth and
15 sustainability of a community, a
16 community that our City needs.

17 Our current challenges I
18 would say are a lack of, as I think
19 Judith mentioned it, a lack of I call
20 it casual exploratory for traffic,
21 which I mean as people who are just
22 walking through the neighborhood to
23 explore, see what's here to shop. I
24 feel like there's not a lot of that
25 because of the underdevelopment of it

1 and the lack of attention that's given
2 to the area.

3 But I will say changes that I
4 have seen since NDR has been
5 established is specifically the
6 cleanliness. I can't express how
7 grateful we are to their street
8 cleaning crew that comes after the
9 trash guys, and sometimes the trash
10 people don't come or our recycling
11 doesn't come pick up, and I don't
12 understand why that is as we are on
13 Broad Street, but the recycling crew
14 comes through and makes sure that it
15 doesn't get out of hand and kind of
16 keeps it together.

17 They've also established
18 itself as a resource center.

19 That's --

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The
21 time, Ms. Adan.

22 MS. ADAN: Oh, okay. I'll
23 close it up to -- I'll skip to my
24 personal statement. It says, why do I
25 support the BID, and it's basically we

1 want to succeed. We want our
2 businesses to flourish into the
3 community that it was borne into. A
4 community that we have built a
5 relationship with and love.

6 We started this business with
7 literally almost nothing. We got a
8 small \$10,000 loan. Most of that went
9 to first, last and security for rent.
10 With the determination, perseverance
11 and a beautiful idea, we are here
12 today. I think it's a grave
13 disservice to others like us to be
14 outbid on space that we nurtured and
15 created.

16 With this declaration, I
17 think the North Broad Business
18 Improvement Development would give us
19 small businesses a fighting chance to
20 stay and not only to survive, but
21 thrive in it. And that's the end of
22 my testimony. Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
24 you very much for your testimony.

25 Will the Clerk please call

1 the next witness.

2 THE CLERK: Next, we have
3 Robert Del Femine.

4 MR. DEL FEMINE: Good
5 morning, Chairman Johnson and
6 members --

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: State
8 your name for the record and begin.

9 MR. DEL FEMINE: Okay. I'm
10 Robert Del Femine. Everyone calls me
11 Del. Good morning, Chairman Johnson
12 and members of the Rules Committee.
13 I'm a lifelong Philly OG that loves
14 our City. I attended Central High
15 School and proudly serve as a Vice-
16 president for the Alumni Board. I
17 graduated from Penn State, worked at
18 Hahnemann Hospital and retired from a
19 29-year career as a sales and
20 marketing executive at Johnson &
21 Johnson.

22 Along the way since '78, I
23 continue to DJ locally and abroad and
24 I bike every day around our great
25 City. I'm one of two partners in

1 Underground Concepts at the Divine
2 Lorraine. The other is Natalie
3 Maronski. She grew up in Virginia.
4 She was the daughter of a Vietnamese
5 immigrant, but definitely calls Philly
6 her city.

7 She's a culinary arts ad
8 business honors graduate of Drexel.
9 She was a popular participant on
10 Bravo's Top Chef, and she's really
11 highly respected in the industry.
12 She's a proud member of the LGBTQ
13 community, is in love with her doggies
14 and bikes everywhere. So you don't
15 see very many women of color, women of
16 color queer that have this much
17 responsibility and own this much in
18 our City. I appreciate the
19 opportunity to speak today because
20 North Broad Business Improvement
21 District needs to become a reality for
22 many reasons, but mostly because the
23 people, community and businesses in
24 this corridor deserve it.

25 I just want to focus today on

1 three words that underscore this
2 rationale: Vision, revitalization and
3 engagement. We believe that our story
4 with Underground Concepts can really
5 help illustrate what can happen when
6 vision results in revitalization
7 through local engagement to build
8 something out of nothing.

9 In June of 2017, we had a
10 spark of an idea to create this
11 curated intersection of food, music
12 and culture in the iconic,
13 historically registered and first
14 racially integrated hotel in America,
15 the Divine Lorraine.

16 As most of you on this call
17 today know, it had been vacant. It's
18 a destination for urban explorers and
19 it was stripped down to its
20 foundational bones first laid in 1894.
21 We were undaunted, well, maybe a
22 little bit. But our vision fit
23 perfectly with the Divine owner, my
24 longtime friend, Eric Blumenthal's
25 vision for the revitalization of North

1 Broad Street.

2 Underground Concepts was
3 formed in 2019, and we've partnered
4 and engaged with a great team of local
5 builders, designers, artists,
6 strategists and others to execute our
7 ambitious plan. One of our key
8 engagements was with North Broad
9 Renaissance and you heard Shalimar
10 speak a little while ago.

11 We have been partners with
12 them since the beginning, and they
13 have unwaveringly supported us always,
14 10 in always, from promotion to
15 safety, from brainstorming as you
16 heard some of the other folks testify
17 to community business connections.

18 Well, after getting the last
19 Health Department approval in the
20 City, everything closed down. That
21 was March of 2020. We all remember
22 that. But in October 2020, and it's
23 about resilience, we're
24 Philadelphians, we come back, we
25 rallied back and the Daily, our coffee

1 shop, opened for business.

2 In March of '21, Broad Hall,
3 an event space opened. And we tried
4 to do food. We've done music events.
5 We've done art events, local artists,
6 women, people of color, queer
7 community and other events.

8 Foundation, a cocktail bar with a
9 recording studio, opened in 2021.

10 We're still trying to get that
11 recording studio and bring the young
12 talent in the City.

13 The Annex, an all-day
14 restaurant bar with a retail line
15 craft beer, a local artist and shop,
16 we're going to open very shortly. We
17 currently employ over 20 part-time
18 employees with an estimated 30 full
19 and part-time employees when fully
20 operational, and all those people are
21 within two miles of the Divine
22 Lorraine.

23 We continue to engage,
24 another one of those three words, with
25 North Broad Renaissance, because they

1 were all about revitalization,
2 community engagement and the vitality
3 of this corridor. We all know, I
4 mean, we're Philadelphians, the
5 corridor was home to incredible
6 economic community and cultural impact
7 in Philadelphia in the early stages of
8 the 20th century. But it has
9 progressively deteriorated, all under
10 the eyes of Billy Penn's statue, which
11 let's face it, is just a few blocks
12 south.

13 Children, our true future,
14 study in numerous schools and the
15 universities that you've heard about
16 along the corridor, but worry about
17 safety on the way to and from it.
18 Stunning architecture, music, art,
19 houses of worship and other Philly
20 flavor, and I'm intentionally using
21 that P-h there, are present but are
22 underused, undervalued and at a
23 minimum, underappreciated. Why?
24 Greed, racism, lack of vision, too
25 hard to do. The answer's probably yes

1 to all these and many others. It does
2 not matter.

3 The North Broad Business
4 Improvement District, I'm going to
5 call it NB BID -- we always need a new
6 acronym -- will enable more of that
7 vitality that we need and deserve, the
8 economic and community recovery that
9 we need and deserve, the safety,
10 comfort and beauty that we need and
11 deserve. And in the City that the
12 recent data showed 51.7 percent under
13 34 years old and 66.3 percent people
14 of color, it will provide a clear and
15 realistic path forward to a future
16 that is realistically hopeful that we
17 need and deserve.

18 Natalie and my vision for
19 North Broad includes a stewardship and
20 resurgence of a great Philly
21 neighborhood. We are trying to be
22 good citizens, support good work,
23 charities, while bearing our fair
24 share of taxes. At the same time we
25 strive to maintain the property we are

1 privileged to use and protect our
2 environment.

3 In the end, Natalie and I
4 want to create joy and job. That NB
5 BID No. 17 I believe in the City will
6 definitely help to enable that vision.
7 I really appreciate all that you do
8 and your time and consideration today.
9 So thank you very much for allowing me
10 to share.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
12 you very much for your testimony.

13 Is there anyone else here to
14 testify whose name has not been
15 called?

16 THE CLERK: There's actually
17 one additional individual, Mr. Chair.
18 And we have Michael Sterin as our last
19 public commenter.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Sure.

21 COUNCIL TECH SUPPORT: Pardon
22 me, Mr. Chair. He dropped the line.

23 THE CLERK: Never mind. If
24 that is the case, there are no more
25 commenters for public comment,

1 Mr. Chair.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. I
3 want to thank all the panels of
4 witnesses for their participation
5 today. We value your input.

6 I now invite all panels of
7 witnesses to please disconnect from
8 the meeting before we go into --
9 please disconnect from the hearing
10 before we go into our public meeting.
11 We will now pause the proceedings
12 briefly as multiple participants leave
13 the hearing.

14 This concludes the public
15 hearing of the Committee. We will now
16 go into a public meeting to consider
17 the action to be taken on the bill
18 before this Committee today. We will
19 now convene the public meeting.

20 Will the Clerk please call
21 the roll to take attendance. Members
22 that are in attendance will please
23 indicate they are present when their
24 names are called. Also, please say a
25 few brief words when responding so

1 that your image will be displayed on
2 screen when you speak.

3 THE CLERK: Councilmember
4 Mark Squilla.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good
6 morning, Mr. Chair, colleagues.
7 Present.

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Cindy Bass.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
11 morning, Mr. Chair and colleagues. I
12 am still present as well.

13 THE CLERK: Councilmember
14 Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
16 RICHARDSON: Good afternoon or good
17 morning, Mr. Chair. Good morning,
18 colleagues. I am present.

19 THE CLERK: Councilmember
20 Brian O'Neill.

21 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Present.

22 THE CLERK: And,
23 Councilmember David Oh.

24 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning,
25 Chair and colleagues. I'm present.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
2 you, everyone. We will now go into
3 our public meeting.

4 The Chair recognizes the
5 great gentleman from South
6 Philadelphia, Councilman Mark Squilla,
7 for a motion on Bill No. 220634.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
9 you, Mr. Chair. It takes one to know
10 one.

11 But I move that Bill No.
12 200634 be reported from this Committee
13 with a favorable recommendation and I
14 further move that the rules of Council
15 be suspended as to permit the first
16 reading of this bill at the next
17 session of Council.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
19 RICHARDSON: Second.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The
21 Chair notes for the record that
22 Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore
23 Richardson seconds the motion. It has
24 been moved and properly seconded that
25 Bill No. 220634 be reported from this

1 Committee with a favorable
2 recommendation and further move that
3 the rules of Council be suspended to
4 permit first reading of this bill at
5 the next session of Council.

6 All those in favor of the
7 motion will signify by saying aye.

8 (Aye.)

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Nays?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The ayes
12 have it and the motion carries.

13 If there aren't any
14 additional comments for this meeting,
15 I want to thank everyone for taking
16 time out of your schedule and
17 participating on this bill. Thank you
18 very much, everyone, and have a great
19 and blessed day. Enjoy that weather
20 out there too.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
22 you, Mr. Chair.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
24 you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

1 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're

3 welcome. Thank you.

4 (Committee on Rules concluded

5 at 10:51 a.m.)

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

2
3 I, hereby certify that the
4 proceedings and evidence noted are contained
5 fully and accurately in the stenographic
6 notes taken by me in the foregoing matter,
7 and this is a correct transcript of the
8 same.

9

10

11

12

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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20 (The foregoing certification of this
21 transcript does not apply to any reproduction
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24 certifying reporter.)

25

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