COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
OPERATING BUDGET HEARINGS - CONTINUED

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
February, 29, 2000
1:30 p.m.

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BILL 000005 - An ordinance adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2001

PRESENT: COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA, Chair

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COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
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COUNCILMAN ANGEL L. ORTIZ
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO
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P R O C E E D I N G S

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon. Thank you all for your patience. This is a continued public hearing of the Committee of the Whole on the operating and tax bills. Our first witness today is from the Robin Hood Dell East. Miss Burnett. Good afternoon kindly identify for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. BURNETT: Good afternoon, President of Council Ann Verna, Honorable Members of City Council, distinguished guests, and commissioners.

Would the Family of the Dell East please stand?

(Family of the Dell East stands.)

MS. BURNETT: Thank you.

My name is Maya Burnett and I'm the president of the Family of the Dell East. We have a Council board of 12 hard-working members representing a citywide membership of 358 season ticket subscribers. My presence here today is to help continue the focussing of light on the need to support our wonderful institution that is the Robin Hood Dell East. We are presently in need of

a permanently increased appropriation of operating funds. Dell East is a summer treasure and oasis for inner-city residents and many thousands of regional patrons, many of those who grew up being entertained on hot summer nights in the cool of East Fairmount Park at the Dell East concerts and programs. The pass 28 years, which was the last quarter of the 19th century, the City of Philadelphia and the Department of Recreation has frugally and phenomenally programmed and funded the operation of the Dell East. The biggest names in the history of music, particularly rhythm and blues, jazz, gospel, and urban have performed for the City's most appreciative audience.

The Dell East is most known throughout the country as one of the most outstanding summer amphitheaters featuring the best family entertainment and talent at the most affordable cost. The Dell East essence of entertainment serves the cultural needs of a diverse population consisting of the Irish, the Ukrainians, the Latinos, and the African-American and Caribbean community.

There is a vibrant tradition at Dell

East. Its setting is most unique. The best acoustics in the region are evident as you listen to music at the Dell East. You feel the warm vibes and family presence. You know you are safe and comfortable. Most importantly, you feel as though you are most appreciates and valued at Dell East as a patron. It is this tradition that must continue to be protected and nurtured. Changes in our economy and the priorities of all time, schedules has done a double whamy on the Dell East. On one hand automation and efficiencies has increased our leisure time opportunities. Yet on the other, the high cost of doing business has restricted our purchasing power and reduced our ability to present higher quality events. For that reason and others, we are here asking you, City Council and the current City Administration, to continue to program outstanding events at the beautiful and loved Dell East. We would like to enter this new millennium with restored vigor and vitality knowing that we will continue to leave a legacy for the next generation, a legacy that we cared, we preserved, we protected the music and tradition that is known as the essence of the

entertainment at the Robin Hood Dell East.

The facts and figures of the increased operating appropriation is a modest figure of $135,000. The management of the Department of Recreation and the General Manager Warren Haskins of the Dell East can best elaborate on the details of our monetary requests. However, the Family of the Dell East is committed to focus on the light, on the communal and City government needs to support this worthwhile cultural tradition in this wonderful city of neighborhoods that is known as Philadelphia. This definitely is not the last time we will present to you here in Council. The Family of the Dell East is multiplying and we are ascending towards a much better program and venue.

We are currently training young talent in the disciplines of the business of music with an eye on preparing the next generation to assume leadership roles in preserving their music, culture, and institutions. A quality culture is evident by the diversity and acceptance of all preserved subcultures. Government throughout the world support and nuture their arts, as we know Council will do, in helping to perpetuate the

tradition of Dell East by your endorsement and vote of confidence.

Thank you to all of you for allowing me to speak in your Chambers and may God bless you and may blessings be upon all of you. I invite all of you to come to any of our meetings whenever its appropriate for you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions from members of the committee?

(No questions.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you so much for taking the time out coming out to come in to testify.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Over our next witness is Nancy Lavin.

(Witness comes forward.)

MR. WINTERS: Clearly, I'm not Nancy Lavin.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I was going to say...

MR. WINTERS: Ms. Lavin is out of the

country on family business. I'm Dennis Winters, and I'm on the Board of Philly Walks and I've been asked to enter testimony in her place.

President Verna and Honorable Members of Council, my name is Dennis R. Winters, Secretary of the Board of Directors of Philly Walks, Incorporated, Philadelphia's pedestrian advocacy group. I am also a policy analyst in the transportation area for the Clean Air Council. Thank you for this opportunity to address the Fiscal Year 2001 City budget.

The Philly Walks Board of Directors and members have asked me to appear before you today to express organization's frustration with the lack of enforcement of laws and regulations that impact directly on the safety and accessibility of people who walk in Philadelphia, namely, everyone. We are frustrated with adequate enforcement. Philadelphia is one of the most walkable cities in the nation. It's narrow colonial era streets and tight grid system beckon to visitors celebrating Philadelphia's historical significance as well as residents simply walking around the block for a quart of a milk. There is a persistent problem,

however, that greatly impedes those on foot, namely, the lack of adequate police enforcement of the laws and regulations that pertain to motorists and bicyclists.

Philly Walks is aware that Center City District Police have made sporadic attempts to educate and enforce laws designed to make it safe to walk on Philadelphia sidewalks and cross Philadelphia streets at intersections. But both the cyclists and motorists continue to use the former and latter, respectfully, carelessly at best, and more often with reckless disregard to pedestrians also occupying those spaces.

Philly Walks does appreciate the educational forays that Lieutenant Schmidt and his bicycle officers have made in Rittenhouse Square to apprise bicyclists of the prohibition of riding on the sidewalks if over 12 years of age. This effort has found that most older cyclists on the sidewalks are unaware that they are breaking the law and they react obediently when told. This educational effort must continue, even if implemented sporadically every few weeks or so. It also needs to take place at various locations

throughout the City. And where the offenders repeat or truly bicycle with abandon through pedestrians on the sidewalks, they should receive at a minimum a ticket carrying some kind of monetary penalty. Red-light running, including illegal right turns on red are pandemic in the Philadelphia area. So is speeding, a particularly hazardous activity given the City's narrow streets and curb parking.

Philly Walks would love to see enough funding set aside for traffic enforcement on an ongoing basis, here again, even if it is done only sporadically. Motorists might become a little more law-abiding if there was a realistic threat of occasionally getting caught. A similar strategy used by state law enforcement officials on heavy trucks using Philadelphia area highways has shown excellent results.

Philly Walks and other groups of pedestrians have been told by Commissioner Timoney and other high-ranking officials of the Philadelphia Police Department that the lack of funding has been the chief reason for non-enforcement of laws an regulations that will

not only save lives, but improve the quality of life in the City for anyone who has to walk anywhere.

Thank you for your time.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

How are you, sir? I have to ask you a question. Are you familiar with the City's policy on bump-outs at intersections.

MR. WINTERS: I'm familiar with the bump-outs, yes.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Has your organization participated in formulating that policy?

MR. WINTERS: Philly Walks has not. Clean Air Council has.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: What's your position on those?

MR. WINTERS: We think they're a great idea. But one thing, when you widen streets to

include a lane of park, which we may or may not support, providing the bump-outs keeps the distance that the pedestrians have to cross at a minimum, and we think that's a good thing.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. There are certain intersections that apparently bump-outs are being proposed and there's not a street widening project. I'll give you an example. One in particular, Broad and Cecil B. Moore, Temple just built its new complex and there's a bump-out there and the street was not widened and the bump-out was placed there to, obviously, shorten the distance that pedestrians had between the streets. But I'm hearing from vehicular traffic that there's an issue with respect to making those turns. That's why I was wondering were you involved in the policy of the locations of those bump-outs.

MR. WINTERS: Is the new bump-out into a travel lane or into a parking lane?

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: It traditionally was into a travel lane in that the parking was set back from the corner originally, so people obviously were coming around and cutting that

corner.

MR. WINTERS: Well, if it's an incursion into a travel lane, I can see where that might be a problem.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay, so in some instances it could potentially a problem based on where they're located? Because in talking to the individuals that requested that it be installed there, they felt that it wasn't an issue with respect to vehicular traffic.

MR. WINTERS: I'd really have to see the application to know whether it was appropriate or not. It doesn't sound like it was.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: All right, thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me, sir. I just wanted you to know that one of the our deputy police commissioners is in the audience. I think he's heard everything you said. Maybe you would just like to have a side-bar conversation with him and maybe we can come up with something that would address your concerns.

MR. WINTERS: Thank you, Madam

President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Tom Cronin.

(Witnesses come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Good afternoon.

MR. CRONIN: Good afternoon, Madam President. This is Mike Walsh who's the secretary treasurer of AFSCME District Council 47.

MR. WALSH: Good afternoon, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.

MR. CRONIN: We do plan on submitting some written testimony, however, not today. I just wanted to use the two or three minutes allotted to make a couple of points that are very important to the people in District Council 47 concerning the whole budget process.

Those points, briefly, are the need for early negotiations with the City of Philadelphia. Two, our concern about health and welfare information. And three, our support of the City's efforts along with the union in RGI, the Redesigning Government Initiative that is now

working in a number of departments.

Madam President, first of all, with early negotiations, District Council 47 has a strong concern, and we have expressed this to the Mayor privately as well as we've expressed it publicly, that the need for early negotiations with the City unions has to be of paramount concern. When I say that traditionally, we start labor negotiations in the late spring. However, because we're dealing with a new Administration and we have all four municipal contracts are due, and as we know, also every major hospital contract in the City of Philadelphia, I think, expires as well this summer, we have the Republican National Convention coming in town, we have the AFSCME International Convention coming in town, we have the Teachers National Convention coming in town, and I know that you folks have a full legislative plate as well as the Mayor, I know, has a full plate in front of him. I have said to him and I'm urging City Council also to say to him that it is conceivable that nobody wants a problem, but unless we start sitting down and talking, you could stumble into a problem inadvertently. I

said that to the Mayor. I've also said that I think that we ought to start with the issue of the health and welfare benefits. And the reason I think that is because that is the most emotional, the most contentious, and the most difficult issue in front of, I believe, all four City unions for these contracts. I'm hoping that in the very, very near future that we are able to sit down because, again, I can see this crush of events and this competition, if you will, for dwindling dollars and I just think it's important that we start as early as possible, start talking about issues like health and welfare now rather than 4 a.m. in some smoke-filled hotel or motel room to get this decided. So I would urge the Council to join with us in urging the Mayor to sit down and bargain quickly.

With respect to the health and welfare issue, one of the difficulties that we have as a union when we review the five-year plan, we find that the figures are there for the FOP the, figures are there for the fire fighters, the figures are there for AFSCME, although it's not really broken down between District Council 33 and

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47. However, we see a lack of information, a lack of figures when it comes to the non-represented City employees, the managers, and we feel that really in order to make some decisions on a difficult issue, we need that additional information. So that would be really the second point I make.

And finally, with respect to RGI. With RGI, the union proposed the RGI program in 1992. It was rejected by the City Administration then. I'm talking about redesigning government. It was finally accepted in 1996 by the Rendell Administration with the -- and put in the contracts of District Council 33 and 47. Now, the results of the RGI initiative have been exactly what we said that they would be, that every place that it has been tried, it has either saved the City money or produced more services from City workers and it's been a win-win-win, a win for the City Administration, a win for the union, and most importantly, a win for the general public.

I was able the other day to catch the labor relations of the City of Philadelphia testifying, and the question of RGI came up and

they said that money was put in to continue the RGI project. And I'm delighted to hear that and we support that. The only thing that I would say about that is that I think it ought to be doubled. I think if it were doubled, what you would see is the ability to hire because we have hired two staff on grants now, federal grants. We'd be able to hire most staff, have more projects, I think improve services even more, and be able to show the City of Philadelphia that we can even save more money through the use of their own City employees. So I'm clearly here to support City's efforts. I just think it should be expanded, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions of Mr. Cronin?

(No questions.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are you going to testify, sir?

MR. WALSH: No, I don't have anything to add, ma'am.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Fine. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

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(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Shelly Yanoff.

(Shelly Yanoff comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Good afternoon.

MS. YANOFF: Good afternoon. I'm Shelly Yanoff, Executive Director of Philadelphia Citizens for Children Youth, the region's child advocacy organization. I want to thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

As you know, we advocate on behalf tens of thousands of children who are not here, but who need good public policy to improve the quality of their lives. While we do not seek at PCCY or receive funding from the City, we do seek funding for children and families of the City. As always, we ask that you deliberate and decide on issues with them in mind because they are all of our children. We will comment briefly on the budget.

We are delighted with the increased emphasis on children and family needs in this year Administration's budget. We believe that the City's future lies in its children an families, in families wanting to move here, to work and raise

children here, and to those who have always been continue to stay here. We commend the emphasis and many of the initiatives that have been announced. Specifically, we support the increased funding of after-school and summer programs to protect and support kids and help keep neighborhoods saver and families working. The creation of the Office of Child Care, the Child Health and Safety Fund, the attention to the critical role of child care in the City, the initiation of Welcome New Babies Program and other efforts to improve the beginnings of life for so many of our children. Finally, we commend the attention that is being paid to the importance of education to our city's future.

But the poets and philosophers tell us that between the idea and the reality falls the shadow. And the shadow here is figuring out and maximizing the funding. Before turning to individual departments, I want to underscore that in this year of the child, we need to do more to look harder to determine whether we are being as strategic as we can be to invest now to build a future.

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We begin with health. For the 412,000 young people in the City, we need to do our part to make sure they're born and grow up as healthy as possible. The City has shown that we can make a difference in lowering the number of babies born to mothers who have not had adequate and timely prenatal care. We have cut in half in this decade the number of mothers who had babies without having had adequate prenatal care. But we all know that there's much more to do to lower the number of babies who do not develop well during their infancy. Yet understanding that we as a City have an unacceptably high number of babies who die in their first year of life that we as a City still have far too many young teens giving birth. The early childhood branch of the Health Department is being provided only a minimal increase, less than $200,000 from the General Fund. That's not enough to save our babies, to help develop programs to assist new families, to provide good solid beginnings for our City, to build on the successes we've had. We can do better.

As children grow we should be able to

make sure that the environment is as safe as it can be for our kids. The Health Department reports that about 30,000 out of about 125,000 babies and young children were tested for lead last year. That's not enough. The CDC recommends all young children be tested at periodic intervals. While we are glad that only 1,000 of the children tested were shown to have been lead poisoned, far more must be done to test our children so that we really know how we're doing and what we can do to lower the incidence of lead poisoning. This Council's support in the past in developing fair ways to protect our children from the devastating effects of lead needs to be built upon. The lead safe house that was opened this month needs to be watched, provided necessary support and, if appropriate, funding must be allocated so that it can be replicated. We've had some success in fighting the lead epidemic. We must underline here what this Council knows well - investing and helping prevent lead poisoning from occurring or recurring is far less damaging to our wallet or to the child, family, and future than choosing not to do so. Like the budget for early

childhood services, the proposed budget ambulatory health services is pretty much a status quo budget. We we're to make sure kids get the health care they need, we've got to make it easier to use the centers. The City's health centers should all have Saturday hours so that parents can work and kids can go to school; they do not. Families should not have to wait for routine physical health or dental treatment; they do. The proposed budget for health centers will not provide them with pharmaceuticals nor the staffing they need to provide adequate support to the children and families who are their patients.

We do want to commend the Council's continuing funding support through Community Behavioral Health for preventive mental health services for our youngsters as an important addition to the resources that are being provided children. The history of health care in this City for children and families has shown that we can have an impact, but only if we focus and invest in the future. We need more support for early childhood programs for helping our babies thrive, for lead poison prevention and supports for

infants and families, and we need those health centers open when working and schooling families get to them.

Turning to the Department of Human Services' Children and Youth Division again, we commend the direction, proposed initiatives and prevention, in outcome-focused efforts, in after-school programs, in home visits, and in adoption. Again, the number of children being adopted today shows that with focused and concentrated staff and adequate resources, we can make a difference in the lives of many very vulnerable children. The record also shows that family preservation efforts in Philadelphia have paid off. We should make sure we are able to take some of the elements that work in these programs and spread them. The ability to draw on resources to help families, for example, should be provided many workers, even those not working in family preservation programs. Family centers and the prevention and truancy prevention work that accompanies them must be supported as well. We, again, support the proposed rate increase for providers, the continuing neighborhood work, and

the outcome focus, but we are concerned that there is not enough support for the group homes and semi-independent living needs that older youngsters, pregnant and parenting teens coming into care need. Our further cautions about the child welfare budget are found in our urging that a way be found to actually hire the workers needed and proposed. Every year, the budget proposes case workers for families who are then not hired, not trained, and not able to assist families. The City must be able to do better than that. If resources are needed to attract applicants or to facilitate the training, the budget should reflect and respond to that need. We cannot lower the caseload to worker ratio or to improve training and support without developing and supporting new strategies for attracting and maintaining staff.

In juvenile justice, our budget comments are three-fold. First, we believe the Administration has struggled to improve the situation of the Youth Study Center, but it continues to be overcrowded and in need of repairs. We agree with new Commissioner that we must repair an rebuild and do both with all

deliberate speed. Second, we commend the ongoing efforts to use scientific measures of treatment interventions to analyze, identify, and support the programs that are working and to decrease the use of those programs that are not. We commend and urge the expansion of this effort. Third, we're concerned that there appears to be a serious drop in after-care programming which meets neither our understanding of the demand nor of accepted practice or legal standards of care. We believe we need to continue and expand juvenile justice prevention and step-down efforts, work toward helping the number of females in the system and provide support to truancy and after-school efforts.

In Recreation, we are pleased that there's more funding to support the current after-school programs being carried over into summer programs for young people. We need the summer opportunities, but we also need more support for improving the quality of the after-school programs that are currently existing and we need to expand them. Again, the sites in which are they are situated in many instances need

more staffing and general improvement. We urge that the department receive the funding to allow these accommodations. We thus urge that there be an increase in staffing for the popular after-school programs that currently exist, more support for improving quality, and generally improved facilities support for the recreation centers.

The library presents the same issues. We support the library's after-school programs expansion with LEAP and other supports and urge that the City not defer the improvements to the library facilities that mean so much and have been models to communities around the country. A closed in a neighborhood is a symbolic and real loss to the surrounding community. It is not regained.

The Office of Emergency Services' new emphasis on children is commendable. The new coordinator of children's programs and the emphasis on improving the programs supporting children are important and critical at this very vulnerable time in too many of our children's lives.

The new Administration has proposed a bold plan to heighten awareness in response to children's needs. We urge this Council to underscore that emphasis by not conducting business as usual. We urge you to ask in every arena, what will this budget action mean to the children and families of this City? How can we help to make sure that babies are born healthier, that they get the health care and protection and support they need when they need it? How can we help to get to scale in quality after-school programs and child care opportunities, in family support, abuse and neglect prevention? What would happen if before you voted on any budgetary item, you asked, what will it mean to kids and families? And then answer the question, whether it's about stadiums or SEPTA or tokens or libraries or hospitals or schools or streets, by voting to make sure there's a priority for kids and families. When this Council and this Administration ask and answer the impact on children question, you would then have created a budget economically sound and filled with hope for the future.

Thank you.

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(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Shelly, it seems that every year we go through this process and some of us here in Council do listen and then we propose certain recommendations. And the aspect of making health care more accessible by, one, keeping the centers open later and on Saturdays. And it seems that it is such a rational recommendation, such a common-sense recommendation. Because if we are going to make it available to -- and now that with welfare to work legislation in place, people that are going to work really are not there to go during the morning and they cannot miss work because if you miss work in those programs you don't go back the next day.

So that it makes sense, and I don't understand why we are not following up. And I hope that the new Commissioner of the Health Department when he or she comes in would look at

this recommendation and begin implementing a plan that goes towards that, but we need to help to be able to mobilize the people to be able to get that plan off the ground.

Once again, I thank you for your agenda because it becomes our agenda here in Council.

MS. YANOFF: Thank you very much for all you do for children.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon.

MS. YANOFF: Good afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me echo the sentiments of my colleague Angel Ortiz with regards to us to doing more for kids, and you have been at least hearing the dialogue around school tokens and what the City can do better. Answer for me two things: Who do you believe the stakeholders should be at the table? And what proposed solutions need to be talked through and worked through with those stakeholders?

MS. YANOFF: I think clearly this

Council and its chosen leadership on this issue and a member of the Administration and SEPTA and some representation from the State. I see that SEPTA is proposed down for a $2.8 million increase in this budget. We have discussed over the last several months a proposal that would have SEPTA just not charge the School District for transfers which would safe the City and the School District $2.3 million. It seems to me that there's a lot of -- there should be a lot of give so that our kids can get to school without the kind of burden that so many of them have to face.

Councilman DiCicco held meetings last year and held a hearing about this and heard there were so many students who we were encouraging to stay in school but who had to confront very hard issues in their family about what they could do, because $9 a week per child is just too much. We can at least begin by cutting the high cost by not either not charging the School District for transfers which would make it $5.50 instead of $9 a week, and then we can turn to the State and say, "You should support with TANF dollars that you have that are excess at least the amount of

children whose families are cycling off welfare should be then supported." But we've got to take first step here.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do you think an opportunity exists and we may need seize the moment with regards to the tobacco settlement and registering where we view some of those dollars can be targeted?

MS. YANOFF: Well, I would like to believe that the tobacco settlement would be used to help a lot more children. But this state, unlike some others, has chosen to only use the tobacco dollars for specific health care, and we think health care is good, but it doesn't -- it's not broadly -- the State is not currently broadly interpreting health care.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: One final follow-up, we heard clearly from SEPTA that, and I quote, "Someone has to pay for it." So given that and given the pilot program currently in place at University of Pennsylvania, what's your thinking behind that program as a considered option?

MS. YANOFF: Well, I think if SEPTA provides a 5 percent discount to the University of

Pennsylvania students, then Philadelphia schools, public and parochial, should get a 5 percent discount. That should be the basic minimum.

(Applause.)

MS. YANOFF: That $750,000, that is a beginning. That would lower the costs right away.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: My colleague, Angel, we're on the same page. Thank you very much.

MS. YANOFF: Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Kim Nicholas and Susan Gobreski Pennsylvania Clean Air Council, you're next.

(Pennsylvania Clean Air Council witnesses come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome. Would you identify yourselves for the record and begin your testimony. Thank you.

MS. VAN STORY: Good afternoon, Council. My name is Vivian Van Story, President of Community Land Corporation. I'm here on behalf of the Recycle Alliance of Philadelphia.

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The chronic neglect of North Philadelphia communities by all levels of government has resulted in blighted deteriorated communities that suffer from health and safety issues because of these recycling and -- because of this recycling and education of the communities are essential components to improving the quality of life. We asking the support of the City Council and all its politicians to establish an effort of a variety of programs that will overcome these problems. We trust that the problems will be implemented with a deliberate speed.

Thank you for your attention in allowing Community Land Trust Corporation to testify. Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. CRANE: Hi, I'm Claudia Crane. I'm with this group because we're concerned about the same issue. I'm scheduled to speak a little later probably, but I'll be quick. My name is Claudia Crane. I'm a member of the Recycling Advisory Committee and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee as a representative of Philadelphians for recycling. Also, in the '80s and early '90s I ran

a partnership with the City in PhilaPride (ph) to do a highly successful community recycling program in my neighborhood.

I fear for the future of recycling in Philadelphia, particularly curbside recycling. With the abrupt departure of the City's recycling coordinator, the lack of an appointed Streets Commissioner, I fear that recycling may become a bit of a stepchild in Mayor Street's Administration. Joan Bitori (ph), the City's most recent recycling coordinator did great job. Denied the funds by the City for education promotion for the weekly pilot areas, she raised her own funds when recycling rates increased in those areas, an average of 24 percent in the first 7 months. That seven months' data is how we got so far on weekly collection. Until we get an appointed, not acting, Streets Commissioner and Recycling Coordinator, those who clearly champion recycling as the best way to handle our City's waste or any waste, I fear that the promising data from the first seven months of the weekly recycling pilot will be disregarded.

I think I understand the attitude that

believe is afoot in certain sectors of the City Administration. I believe it goes something like this: It's cheaper to pick up and dispose of waste as trash. Why bother with recycling? We've got other more pressing problems competing for attention.

That attitude is wrong for many reasons, but I'll only mention two and I won't even bother getting into the environmental reasons. I could go on and on and on about that. But the two reasons are this: The first one is, the genie's out of the bottle. Whether the Administration likes it or not, recycling is here to stay. Citizens like it and they want it weekly. Can you imagine the cry that would arise if the Administration decided to stop recycling collection tomorrow? Secondly, recycling costs can effectively compete with the cost of trash collection disposal. Figures in the first seven months of the weekly pilot in Center City area particular are promising. But to show real cost effectiveness, we have to expand weekly recycling citywide and promote it so citizens know what to do and when to do it.

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At the Solid Waste Advisory Committee meeting yesterday, we were told that the money for continuing the weekly pilots as they are now is in the Fiscal Year 2001 budget. I was also told that in June the Streets Department will be evaluating the weekly collection pilot with eye toward possible expansion in Fiscal Year 2002. This is fairly good news, but plans, just plans, to continue weekly pilots as they are now and plans to evaluate for expansion guarantee nothing. It's a critical time, time to push harder and make it better. City Council must see to it that the weekly recycling continues, thrives, and expands with properly appointed recycling champions at the head of the recycling office in the Streets Department.

In the recycling office the appointee must receive a salary commensurate with recycling coordinators in other major cities and have a well-defined budget to spend and the authority to spend it. Right now City Council, especially in the absence of an appointed recycling coordinator, must demand regular reports about the progress of weekly collection, including education promotion

efforts using the reporting framework so well defined and developed by Joan Bitori.

Assurances that I get from the meeting that the money for continuing pilot is, quote/unquote, in the budget, is not enough. City Council should know where the money is for the recycling program, you know, where it is buried in the Streets Department budget, how much is allocated for each line item including education and promotion, and should track Streets Department's spending on the recycling program to see to it that the money allocated is actually spent.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MS. NICHOLAS: Good afternoon Madam Vice Chair and Members of City Council. My name is Kimberly Nicholas, I'm a policy analyst at Clean Air Council here in Philadelphia.

Clean Air Council was founded in 1967 as a citizen-based nonprofit to address pollution in the Delaware Valley. The council works through a combination public education, community advocacy, and oversight of government enforcement

of clean clear air laws. There is participation in the City of Philadelphia's Recycling Economic Development Consortium, the Recycling Advisory Committee, and the Solid Waste Advisory Committee. The council has worked over past 13 years to monitor and advise the City on plans to ensure implementation of environmentally and fiscally sound waste reduction and management policy.

I'm also here on behalf of the Recycling Alliance of Philadelphia, a coalition of neighborhood and environmental groups working to improve recycling in our City. The alliance believes that there are four goals that must be achieved for recycling in Philadelphia to be a success: Hiring a full-time professional coordinator for the Philadelphia Recycling Office, expanding weekly recycling to cover all of Philadelphia's neighborhoods, developing an effective and comprehensive plan to meet the City's waste reduction and recycling goals that includes an educational focus, and implementing institutional recycling for businesses, city-owned and operated premises, the airport, the sports complex in South Philadelphia, and schools.

The average American generates 4.5 pounds of waste per day, much of which is thrown away. But there really is no away. This waste has to go somewhere, and its disposal causes tremendous problems for society. Throwing away may means that waste accumulates in rapidly filling landfills leaching toxic chemicals and releasing the greenhouse gas methane. Alternately, it may be incinerated and release large quantities of dangerous pollutants into our air. Much of what is now thrown away, including paper, cans, bottles, plastic, and yard and food waste can and should be recycled. Recycling saves energy and natural resources, creates jobs, and reduces pollution.

Many major cities have adopted a curbside weekly recycling collection program. Weekly recycling collection is a municipal service that all Philadelphians deserve. The pilot program to test weekly recycling has been tremendously successful. When weekly recycling is offered, recycling rates increase substantially.

Weekly collection is one critical component to make our recycling program succeed

in Philadelphia, but the City also needs a long-term recycling plan as a guideline to reduce wastes and increase household and commercial recycling efforts to meet the rate targets set by the City and State law.

City Ordinance 1251A established mandatory recycling in Philadelphia in 1987 and set the goal of recycling 50 percent of waste by 1991. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania passed Act 101 in 1988 which set the goal at 25 percent by 1997, increasing to 35 percent in the year 2002. According to the City Recycling Office, the total recycling rate for commercial and residential combined today is 29 percent, yet the residential recycling rate is only 6.5. The strong strategic plan that will help the City to determine how to increase its rates to meet its targets.

Philadelphia cannot sustain an increased recycling rate without an educated group of recyclers. Residents need to know exactly what, when, and how to recycle their wastes. The also need to be informed about the reasons to recycle and the benefits of doing so. The City needs a sustained, comprehensive, fully-funded

education plan to ensure a successful recycling program. Residents need ongoing education to make recycling a convenient habit. Education must include media broadcasts, neighborhood level information campaigns and curricula directed at school students. Schuylkill Center for Environmental Education has developed a lesson plan for elementary school students for the recycling office of the City of Philadelphia. This colorful, interactive plan to teach kids how and why to recycle is an example of education that must be supported to make recycling a success.

In conclusion, Clean Air Council respectfully urges City Council to support a budget that funds a full-time recycling coordinator, supports an expansion of weekly recycling to cover all of Philadelphia, makes a long-term strategic recycling plan, including education, a top priority, and implements institutional recycling. Recycling is a municipal service that residents demand and deserve. The City must ensure that the tools are in place to make a successful recycling program in Philadelphia a reality.

Thank you very much for your time. I'll be glad to answer any questions.

(Applause.)

MS. GOBRESKI: Good afternoon, Council President Verna, Vice President Blackwell, and others Members of Council. I'm sorry to be redundant but it is a message that bears repeating. I'm here today to talk to you about recycling being right, it being smart and it working.

I work with Clean Water Action which is a grassroots environmental organization with about 5,000 members here in Philadelphia. Clean Water Action a founding member of the recycling Alliance, which has brought together environmental groups, neighborhood community and civic organizations across the City to support recycling. I am also a resident of Philadelphia. I am a homeowner and I am a mother. I'm here today to ask for your support of our City's recycling program which is now at a crossroads.

Two years ago I sat here and we spoke at the abysmal residential recycling rate of 6.5 percent, the need for weekly recycling to improve

this rate, the need for a coordinator and educational efforts and the need for a strategic plan to improve recycling in the commercial, residential, and municipal sectors. And today I'm here again to talk to you about the need for citywide weekly recycling, a coordinator, expanded educational efforts by the Streets Department, and a need for a plan that outlines strategies to improve recycling throughout the City. However, in the past two years, much has changed. The City searched for and hired a recycling coordinator Joan Bitori with a professional background in recycling and a clear commitment to improve the recycling rate.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Excuse me one moment. We need your name for the record.

MS. GOBRESKI: I'm sorry. Susan Gobreski, G-O-B-R-E-S-K-I, and it's written here as well.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. GOBRESKI: Joan Bitori had a professional background. She implemented a weekly pilot program. She teamed with area educators to develop educational programs for schools and

worked actively to increase visibility and accessibility of the City's program. Also as Committee Members of Council remember, prior to Ms. Bitori's arrival, the City had lost hundreds of thousands of dollars in funding for its program from State 101 grants, a fact that Councilmembers commented on at the time. Miss Bitori made sure to apply and obtain the full measure available grants. Unfortunately, Ms. Bitori has resigned and the position is now filled in staff in an acting capacity with resumes that are not as impressive as that of Ms. Bitori.

The weekly collection pilot was stunningly successful. The results were thrilling, showing increases of 25 to 32 percent on average and over 50 percent increases in some cases. Deputy Commissioner Tolson testified here last week that the overall collection rate in areas with weekly recycling is 8.9 percent, which is a 37 percent improvement in the City average. In areas without weekly collection using the old cumbersome blue-green every other week the day before trash day, the rate is 5.75 percent. What this means is that where there is weekly

recycling, the rate is 55 percent greater than in places without weekly collection. This is the simple answer to the question of whether or not the program worked, which the Streets Department testified that it needed a year to figure out. The weekly pilot proves what advocate and experts have been saying. When provided with the opportunity and appropriate information, people will participate diversion increase. This is not to say that there are not costs. The recycling costs some money as it currently run. However, experts say that recycling can become cost-competitive when diversion rates of 25 percent are reached. The question is not are you spending money for this program. For sure, we spend money on programs all the time. We spend money to treat our sewage and take our trash away and attract business and tourists and provide children with the opportunity to read and play where live. The question is, what are you spending your money on, is it smart, is it right, are the people running the program committed to making the program work and giving the taxpayers full measure for their dollar?

Weekly recycling is smart. Greater diversion will reduce our reliance on costly landfills and incinerators. Recycling creates jobs and promotes economic development. Weekly recycling promotes neighborhoods and provides communities with service and everybody knows that support for all of our neighborhoods is smart. It is one of the benchmarks of smart urban policy. Weekly recycling is right. In addition to being expensive, landfills and incinerators cause pollution that goes into all of our water and air, and these facilities are disproportionately sited in low-income and minority communities. Weekly recycling also saves valuable natural resources. We need weekly recycling right now. We need strong leadership. We need to search for and hire a new coordinator with the will to make recycling work right away.

An effective recycling program, as I surely do not need to remind you, is the expressed will of Council. We need a coordinator with the ability and the support to pull together an active educational program, work with innovators and regional leaders to ensure good commercial

participation and attract business with an interest in recycling and get full participation in municipal facilities. We need to include at least some funding for some expansion of weekly recycling in the coming fiscal year. We need City Council to send a strong message to the Streets Department. Tell them that you know weekly recycling is right, it's smart, and it works. Ask the Streets Department what their plan is to expand weekly recycling citywide this year and tell them to tell you and your constituents when weekly recycling is coming to your district. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I wanted to thank all three speakers for appearing here because what we need is a total rebirth of interest and activity on behalf of recycling. There was a time when the City of Philadelphia ranked first among

all major cities in the United States on the recycling rate. Today, we rank nearly at the very bottom, and it is no accident because there has never been an official City policy that favored recycling. The original recycling program was developed by community groups who organized tremendous support throughout the City, got it enacted, and it has been fought ever since its inception by the Streets Department. The Streets Department has always regarded it as a toy, as a waste of money that could be better used for other purposes. The position of the Streets Department has been consistent over the years. And we depended, all of us, the community thought that there was good faith on the part of Streets Department and of the City administrations. It's not just the Streets Department alone that's to blame. Their culture never accepted it, but the mayors of the City in all these terms also accepted the notion that we ought not to spend money. Most of the money that's been spent on recycling has not been City money; it has come through grants. City has invested very, very little. Everybody knew you didn't have to be a

recycling expert to know that when you cut down from weekly recycling, which the City began as a policy, and substituted for it biweekly coverage, you didn't have to be any kind of an expert to know that the rate was going to drop sharply, and it did. And still the City didn't believe it so for years been going on biweekly rates and then slowly said "Let's have a pilot program to see whether or not weekly recycling is better than biweekly." They didn't need that kind. That was a stalling tactic by the Streets Department to not spend any City money or as little as they possibly could.

I note from your presence here today and your vigorous presentation that you intend to awaken the people of Philadelphia.

MS. GOBRESKI: I thing they're awake, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: So the notion that recycling is in everybody's interest from every point of view, from an environmental point of view, from a clean water, from a clean air point of view, from a taxpayers' point of view, from every viewpoint we're stronger and a better city

and a smarter city and a healthier city and maybe even a world-class city in considerations that are importance as the people who live here. So I hope this means that there's going to be a very active lively citizen program throughout the whole City to say "Remember the people who live here. They are entitled to clean air and clean water and to help save the environment." Thank you so much for being here today.

MS. GOBRESKI: Thank you, Councilman.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you. I am of the mind-set that Philadelphia will never regain its status as No. 1 if we don't begin to think carefully about how we can change the mind-set or cultivate the mind-set of young people in the schools. So to that end, I am interested in hearing more about the Schuylkill center for environmental education, how old the program is based on your own criteria, is it working, have you come up with some way of measuring impact, and what clusters are participating?

MS. GOBRESKI: Actually, Miss Bitori did -- they did run the first training session in January, I believe.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: This January.

MS. GOBRESKI: This past January. The program is developed and ruled out for activists, teachers, and members of the City and some of the members of the Streets Department went to the training. It was late, like the last week in January or so.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So it's extremely new.

MS. GOBRESKI: It's brand new.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What schools or areas of the City are participating?

MS. GOBRESKI: Actually, it's my understanding that it's a voluntary sign-up program.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Voluntary?

MS. GOBRESKI: And that they can call the Streets Department and they will be referred to and hooked up with a trainer who will arrange to go out and do it. Kim and I are both attended the training and are available for schools to

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call.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Even those volunteers are funded? It is not?

MS. GOBRESKI: I'm not sure in what way it will be funded. It was funded in the sense that the recycling coordinator helped develop the program, but other than that, we got a packet of materials and we went to an afternoon training session. We're good to go. I mean, you should have 'em call us.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Trust that our office will follow up on that.

MS. GOBRESKI: That would be great.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Could you make sure that through the Chair you sends us packet that your referring to, the packet of materials for the --

MS. NICHOLAS: You'd like to see the curriculum itself for the recycling program?

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

MS. NICHOLAS: I could send you that.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

Thank you Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very

much. Thank you, ladies.

Mr. Rick Butler.

(Rick Butler comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you for coming. Good afternoon.

MR. BUTLER: Yes, good afternoon, Madam Chairperson Blackwell and President Anna Verna as well as other Councilmembers and concerned citizens of Philadelphia. My name is Rick Butler. I'm chairperson of the Dogtown Civic Association.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Say that again. I'm sorry. And talk directly into the mike.

MR. BUTLER: My name is Rick Butler. I'm the Chairperson of the Dogtown Civic Association which is located in Germantown. We also are affiliated with Men United Against Violence Network as well as the Chestnut Hill Breaking Bread Association. I'm here on behalf of behalf of Pleasant Street Playground located in Germantown which I grew up in. We're here -- I have some information to read and to give out to all the Councilpersons.

We're here on behalf -- I'm here on

behalf of Pleasant Street playground for need of improvement of the center itself. I'd like to read to you some of the concerns of the neighbors.

The number-one concern with Pleasant at this time is lack of staffing. In October 1999 the assistant recreation center leader ceased to work at the playground, leaving the Leader II to run the playground, two school gyms, the after-school program, and basketball teams alone. As the spring progresses, there will be more activities, including baseball league, public swimming pool, summer camp, basketball league, summer jazz programs, tennis drill teams, football, for starters. The Leader II was told that no one would be hired to replace the ARL until at least July, but in the reality will not occur until August or September. Apparently on paper it states that Pleasant Playground has an ARL, but if that is the case, then someone needs to rewrite the paper. This workload for this one Recreation center person is unacceptable.

The second major issue is a new building. Pleasant Street has been passed over many times for an acceptable facility, while other

recreation centers which are newer and in better shape being replaced before ours. Pleasant Recreation Center is built in such a way that our traffic must go over the baseball field to get the to building. This includes deliver and maintenance trucks. The consequence is that the baseball is full of ruts and is completely a mess. Nevertheless, Pleasant sponsors four Phillies baseball leagues for ages 8 to 18, youth football, after-school sports activities, track, drill team, adult and senior football, all of which use the field which at this point is in a dangerous condition.

The facility has no indoor bathroom except for the staff bathroom, and the staff bathroom, you have to turn the light on by standing on the toilet which is dangerous because the toilet was not until recently screwed in so that when you stood on it, it would almost tip over.

Since the oil deliver truck has to deliver over the ball field to make deliveries, when ther is snow or mud, the truck can't get there. Therefore, the past winter the playground

went for three weeks without heat. The heating system cannot be changed with the building where it sits.

The building itself has no storage, is old and dilapidated, it is located in a remote and dark spot, is not set up activities in a proper way, but nonetheless, there is an after-school program, sports and cultural programs which are being attempted as much as possible.

Anyone is welcome to make a tour of the premises with the recreation supervisor, Beverly Rolfsmeyer. Her phone number is listed here also.

These are many of the concerns. I guess many other playgrounds are like this or recreation centers and we are trying to work as a community group and organizations to help, but we just can't do it all ourselves. And we would like support for the next budget or, like we have stated, we'd like for Councilpeople to tour the facility to see what conditions that we have talked about they're in.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr. Butler.

Councilman Ortiz, do you have

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questions?

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Since the gentleman has come down, I wonder if we have somebody from the Recreation Department that can address these problems. It seems that this is a problem toe take place on by the Recreation Department and he might get his answer here before leaves for home this afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Is there anyone here from Recreation?

(Mr. Carapucci comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Mr. Butler?

MR. BUTLER: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We have an acting director who will speak with us.

MR. CARAPUCCI: Good afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. Good afternoon. Please identify yourself for the record.

MR. CARAPUCCI: Bill Carapucci, I'm the Acting Commissioner of the Recreation Department.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Mr. Butler, would you please give Mr. Carapucci a copy of Mr. Butler's testimony. He's here about Mt. Pleasant

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Park or Recreation Center.

MR. BUTLER: Pleasant Street Playground.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Playground. Do you have any information about that, Mr. Carapucci?

MR. CARAPUCCI: Well, off the top of my head, I couldn't answer all of these questions right now, but I will get back to him within a day.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. Would you also get back to the Chair?

MR. CARAPUCCI: Absolutely.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Mr. Butler, he will get back to you, the Acting Director of Recreation.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you all. Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Lauren Bornfriend.

(Lauren Bornfriend comes forward.)

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COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Executive Director, Friends of Fairmount Park. Welcome.

MS. BORNFRIEND: Good afternoon, Honorable Members of Council and guests.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Hold on one moment please.

Her mike is not on.

All right, thank you.

MS. BORNFRIEND: My name is Lauren Bornfriend, and I'm the Executive Director of Friends of Philadelphia Parks. And I'd actually like to indicate that on your schedule it says Friends of Fairmount Park.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And you're Friends of?

MS. BORNFRIEND: Philadelphia Parks.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. We'll note it, and the correction will be made. Again, this is Friends of Philadelphia Parks.

MS. BORNFRIEND: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: For all of those who have listing, it's listed incorrectly. Thank you.

MS. BORNFRIEND: I am here today to

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request increases to the operating budgets of the Fairmount Park Commission and the Department of Recreation. There are numerous ways in which increased budgets will ensure better care and maintenance of our parks and recreation centers. Today I will focus on a few.

As you know, Fairmount Park --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Excuse me. Would you pull the mike a closer. You're hard to hear. Thank you.

MS. BORNFRIEND: As you know Fairmount Park is the recipient of the largest grant ever given to a park in the United States by a private foundation. The Natural Lands Restoration and Environmental Education Program, NLREEP, is a national model and people around the country are paying attention to its successes.

Among the many achievements of this program is the enlistment OF thousands of new volunteers to do essential preservation work in our natural areas. The energy and momentum of these children and adults must be sustained. The Friends strongly urge Council to increase the budget of Fairmount Park to ensure that all of the

remarkable work made possible by this private funding will continue.

There are currently 24 Fairmount Park rangers. One hundred fifty are needed to adequately service the park. The rangers are a positive, powerful, and effective presence in our parks. They are the eyes and ears of the police department. They provide outreach and education to our children in the parks through their school programs and serve as models to our teenagers of a potential career path. Yet their future survival is tenuous. We ask you to support safety and education in the parks that weave throughout Philadelphia by preserving and expanding the Ranger Corps.

In 1999, the Department of Recreation hired 31 Seasonal Maintenance Attendants, SMAs, who for the first time were assigned to specific parks for 20 hours per week to do basic trash pickup and removal and preparation for department mowing crews. Although the SMAs did make an impact, in order to be truly efficient, the department needs to recruit, hire, and train greater number of permanent part-time attendants

at a higher wage to do basic maintenance and greening. Funds allocated to maintain the required number of stable, permanent, and skilled positions will have an enormous impact on the morale and appearance of our neighborhoods.

There are thousands of folks in Philadelphia with visions and dreams of what our parks and City can be. They work tirelessly day after day to revitalize the parks near their homes and workplace, the parks they drive and walk through and the parks where they take visitors from out of town. In the face of often daunting challenges, they continue to turn their neighbors around and to improve the quality of life for their families and schools. They bring economic vitality to businesses, historic sites, tourism, and cultural programming. They create beauty and serenity in our urban environment.

Throughout the year see individuals and families in our parks strolling, power-walking, painting, cycling, pushing strollers and wheelchairs, picnicking, bird-watching, taking pictures, running; the list goes on and on.

I have been privileged to share the

amazement of people on hikes with historian and architect Bob Thomas as they discover the hidden treasures of Fairmount Park. I have also been blessed with the friendship of folks in small and large neighborhood parks overseen by both the Department of Recreation and Fairmount Park. These people continuously bring me back to what is important. What they all have in common is persistent dedication and the pride and passion that causes them to glow when they show off a new trash can or drainage pipe, a drug-free tot lot, a mosaic column made by neighborhood children or newly planted seedlings in their park. They could not feel more joyous about a home they owned or built themselves.

The Friends of Philadelphia Parks ask our City government not to abandon these citizens. We ask City Council and Mayor Street to partner with us to preserve Philadelphia's extraordinary resources. Please allocate funds to fight blight and to provide improved care and maintenance in our parks.

As our open space and neighborhoods thrive, so will the education, pride, fellowship,

and health of our City and region. Please increase the operating budgets of the Department of Recreation and the Fairmount Park Commission. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

MS. BORNFRIEND: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Certainly.

Sally Kennedy, Greater Germantown Recreation Network.

(Sally Kennedy comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good afternoon.

MS. KENNEDY: Good afternoon, City Council President and Members of City Council. Thank you for this opportunity to testify regarding Mayor John Street's budget for fiscal year 2001. I particular wish to focus on those parts that pertain to recreation in the City of Philadelphia.

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My name is Sally Kennedy and I'm Convener of the Greater Germantown Recreation Network, which for those of you who are new to City Council is cosponsored by the Germantown Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends and Advisory Council representatives from some of the centers and playgrounds of Recreation Districts 3 and 4. The network's mission to promote peace and eliminate violence in the Greater Germantown area by advocating for the children and recreation centers and playgrounds of Greater Germantown and in collaboration with other civic groups and government entities by working to develop an effective citywide recreation system. The intent is to provide children and youth with supervision, nurturance, and opportunities for growth and socialization in a safe, supervised, and attractive environment during times when they are not at home or in school.

First, I would hike to congratulate you for the City Council's resolution to support a moratorium on executions in Pennsylvania. It is said that the justice system in this country is in chaos. I would like to suggest that the chaos

starts much earlier in our schools, in our communities, and in our homes. I am pleased to support a mayor who has made neighborhood revitalization and children starting with public education and after-school programs major priorities. I have found it edifying to attend Mayor Street's budget presentation and two of his community meetings, including one on public education. I listen to the budget testimony of Acting Recreation Commissioner William Carapucci. Over the past year I have visited 22 of the 29 centers and playgrounds located in Recreation District 3 and 4 and currently the Network's office is located in the Waterview Recreation Center. The Network actively supported Martin Luther King Day activities in Districts 3 an 4, and last September with 320 volunteers from Bryn Mawr College organized a day of service in three centers. So we have learned something about recreation in this City.

The Mayor is encouraging us to set higher standards for our children and for ourselves with regard to the public education system. I commend him. He points out that if we

do so, we will certainly run out of money and perhaps very soon, but we should insist on quality nevertheless. His strategy is that the State has a responsibility to provide more funding for education in Philadelphia and that in the end the State cannot afford to let the whole system stop in a major urban setting, especially one that has housed the Republican National Convention. I don't believe that the State has same responsibility for the recreation system, but I urge us to have the same high standards for recreation, nevertheless. The Recreation Department is expected to be a partner through its after-school programs in the achieving of the City's educational goals. Mr. Carapucci's budget asks for a little over $612 million to expand the after-school program. Why expand the after-school program from 130 centers to 150 until we are sure that the program we already have is effective, especially in the communities that need it the most? There are some very dedicated people working in these programs, but there are also many programs which start and stop all during the year. Check out whether the average monthly attendance

of 3,190 happens on a consistent basis. Community people are hired at $8 hour and you hope for a person with a high school diploma who will stick with it. There are many troubled youngsters in our communities, and because the programs are understaffed with people with limited qualifications, there is a tendency to exclude these children. Just for the after-school program alone, not including summer, the budget should have an increase of $1.5 million for 130 centers to cover a slight increase in pay for community workers -- people pay more than $10 an hour to have their houses cleaned -- plus $20 an hour to hire a person in each center program asking for higher qualifications and relevant experience, plus $50 per center for additional supplies.

I urge a $1.5 million increase for the after-school program alone. That is intended to serve ages 5 through 14. Councilwoman Donna Reed-Miller asked Mr. Carapucci what about programs for teenagers? We echo her question. There is a lot of advertising now for people to become mentors. Why not a program developing and paying teenagers a stipend, especially in low

income neighborhoods, to become mentors? There is evidence that needy children who are taught to nurture become nurtured in the process. Councilman Kenney urges us not to shortchange centers and hard-working blue collar neighborhoods who volunteer for their children. His point is well taken. However, I urge him to join in developing a strategy not to shortchange those children whose neighborhoods and families are not so well organized. Right now all centers and playgrounds are understaffed. Back in the '80s I'm told there was much more staff a lot of dynamic programing. Two and a half program staff members in an A center in a rough neighborhood just doesn't cut it. Staff ends up baby-sitting the building instead of being free to organize the number of programs that building could handle if there were more staff. There are designated 45 A centers, 73 B centers, 31 C playgrounds, and 41 playgrounds without buildings or staff except perhaps in summer, if I have counted correctly. Some may need to be re-designated. Councilman Nutter is correct, Venice Island certainly should qualify for a B designation. There is a lot going

on that small island that compares with other B centers with large empty ball fields. You need more staff for youth programs, more staff to handle a variety of programs at the same time, and more staff to be able to promote more volunteer involvement and more senior citizens programs. I figure that to add one and a half more staff to A centers, one to B centers, and a half a staff member to C playgrounds, plus something more for training and supplies, you would need to increase the program budget by 5 million.

I will leave the discussion of capital an maintenance to others except to say that Councilman Nutter's questions regarding the coordination between the sub-units of the maintenance division of Recreation Department are right on. The length of time spent to proceed with construction and reconstruction of Lonnie Young since the State funding was first mentioned in October 1997 is disgraceful. We appreciate Councilwoman Miller's recent efforts to move this project along. We commend Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds-Brown for calling for hearings on recreation maintenance and capital expenditures.

Please be sure to look at what is or is not happening with the Waterview Recreation Center with regard to capital and preventive maintenance. One important action to support the Recreation Department's maintenance division would be to get the City to pay its bills on time. When a subcontractor does not get its payments in a reasonable matter, it simply stops working until it does, thereby messing up the scheduling of others dependent upon subcontractor first completing its work. I observed this phenomenon myself at Waterview. Other areas that need attention and additional funding include the preparation, protection, and oversight the swimming pools.

You can see that what I'm seeking is probably a budget increase of at least $7 million. I know that is a joke, but not a very funny joke. In closing I would like to encourage an increase not in the number of after-school programs, but in the quality of what we are doing with $1.5 million added to the budget probably to come from more than 4 million that Mayor Street says he plans to allocate for after-school programs. For the

remaining Recreation Department programs, if you cannot see your way to adding the full amount needed, please try to add at least 3 or $4 million to support the rest of the Recreation Department's program responsibilities.

Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Hold on would you, please. Miss Kennedy, hold on. Councilwoman Reynolds Brown wanted to address your statement.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good afternoon. How are you?

MS. KENNEDY: Fine.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You need to be assured that Members of Council, first of all, are very supportive and excited about the tremendous increase with regards to after-school programs and already there is an understanding that this has to be some collective thinking with regards to developing standards to ensure quality after-school programs, and so we need to say that for the record that we're working forward to

working with you to be a part of that dialogue.

MS. KENNEDY: Terrific.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay?

MS. KENNEDY: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're welcome.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Miss Jennie Borgerhoff, Victim Services Agencies.

(Witnesses come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I see you have a lot of support here this afternoon.

MS. BORGERHOFF: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome.

MS. BORGERHOFF: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please identify yourself for the record and begin your testimony.

MS. BORGERHOFF: My name is Jane Borgerhoff, B-O-R-G-E-R-H-O-F-F. I'm director of Center City Crime Victim Services. Good afternoon Members of City Council. I'm here on behalf of a network of City-funded Victim Services Agencies, a

network of neighborhood-based agencies and specialized citywide agencies to see provide support to victims of violence in the City of Philadelphia. At this time, I'd like to ask the members of the agencies who are a part of this Class 250 grant to stand and read the name of your agency.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We heard North Central, Center City, Northeast, East Division, West Southwest Victims Services, and Women Against Abuse and Action Alliance for Senior Citizens for whose who could not hear. Thank you all very much for coming. It's an excellent agency, excellent, all of you.

MS. BORGERHOFF: Our goal as a network is to provide healing support to those who have suffered from a trauma of violence and to work toward creating neighborhoods where all our neighbors, your constituents, can live and work together in peace.

I'd like now to introduce Jackie Kemp who will address you -- I'm sorry. I'm going to be introducing Chalynn Harris who will speak first on her experience as a victim and her experience

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with Victim Services.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. Would you identify yourself for the record? Spell your name for us, please.

MS. HARRIS: My name is Chalynn, C-H-A-L-Y-N-N, Harris, H-A-R-R-I-S.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. HARRIS: Good afternoon. My name is Chalynn Harris and I was a victim of crime. I would just like to take a brief moment to tell you about the services that help me become a survivor. I was referred by Carol Park Community Council in my neighborhood to West Southwest Victim Services who referred me to Women Against Abuse who both stuck by me through my trial. Then I was given guidance through Women Against Rape. I am now receiving counseling with women in transition. I just wanted everyone to know you don't choose to be a victim, but if you are chosen, these services help you and your family get through it. I would just like to say that as a victim all of these services mentioned have, are, and will mean a lot to people like myself. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

(Applause.)

MS. KEMP: Good afternoon. My name is Jacqueline Kemp and I'm the Executive Director of Northwest Victim Services. As a lifelong Philadelphian, I can only wish Chalynn that my experience was as good as yours. As a victim of an assault in 1992, I was left feeling empty and angry. If I knew then about what was available to me in terms of support and information, my encounter with the criminal justice system would have been more favorable. And this is why I am working now to try to make sure that that happens.

We all know that crime is an unfortunate reality. However, we all stand as a solution which embodies diversity at its best. Our agencies are different. We serve differing communities, but we're in the heart of these communities every day reaching people when they need it most. We also are helping people who have been affected by various crime types, from automobile thefts to homicides every day, and we know that there's a lot of crime in our community. So we do however, although diverse, we share a common goal, and that is helping people to regain

a sense of normalcy in their lives and we are working for the victims' interest.

We also want to make sure that people know that victims have rights and services that are mandated to them by law, and we believe that this is an education awareness process that must continue and be expanded. People do have a right to things like crime victims compensation, which all of these agencies before you are helping to make sure that people who have had serious injuries as a result of crime be made whole financially through this crime victims compensation.

We also are on site every day of the preliminary hearings, which is many times the first encounter that crime victims have with the criminal justice system. Many people have a lot of questions and concerns, and these agencies before you are the ones that are there to help them through that process.

We also make sure that people know they have a right to impact statements so that the judges know the impact of the crime on the individuals and how it has affected their lives.

Restitution in another effort to be made whole financially as a result of the devastation of the crime. And also, to be accompanied to court, to know that the victim does not have to be alone as travel through the criminal justice process.

So these are the kind of things that these agencies that are before you are doing on a daily basis. Our work is very important, but we know that we don't and cannot do it alone. We're in touch with each other on a daily basis. We also work very closely with the police department. They have victim assistance officers in each district of the police department that also work with us to serve victims of crime. The DA's Office has a victim witness unit that we work with very closely, probation and parole, the juvenile justice system, together we're a web of service that can help crime victims through the trauma. So it's important to know that we do collaborate and that we are together on this thing of trying to help crime victims get better. We are advancing for crime victims who are unable to make those well-placed calls. We kind of know who to call within a system at a time when many victims

are unable to pick up the phone because either for emotional reasons or physical. So we connect victims with where they need to be. We help our community have a broader, more improved view of agencies like the police department and the DA's Office, which sometimes, you know, has a challenge in having the best perception in our communities. So by knowing that the victims are served through these institutions, that helps people to have a better perception of the organizations.

Conversely, although we know that crime is ever-prevalent, we are working to do outreach to the community and to heighten their awareness of services that are available, rights that they have a right to, but also how to not be a victim. So we're all engaged in crime prevention efforts that can proactively help people to not be a victim. So these are efforts that we urge your support for.

Mayor Street had expressed his support for Victims Services at a recent South Philadelphia celebration. And we would ask that the charged-up Councilpersons who are committed to Victim Services to be in contact with District

Attorney Lynne Abraham to support our first budgetary increase in several years to the Class 250 budget so that we can expand our reach to the community on services that are available to people who have a need to know.

(Applause.)

MR. CERVONE: Good afternoon, Madam Chair, I'm Frank Cervone, I'm the director of the Support Center for Child Advocates. We provided to each Member of Council at their office a statement of need and we provided some additional copies to the Sergeant-at-Arms here for the reference of Members in Chambers. We need $557,000 to begin to meet the demand for our service, and we seek that support from you in the District Attorney's budget this year.

We want to assure you that in seeking your support, we aggressively raise funds on our own. Our total budgets exceed this number by 10 or 20 times. We urge you recognize our contributions, more than 40,000 victims whom we serve, 23,000 hours in volunteer service, a combined return on your investment in excess of $2.2 million. I think we helped you take a hard

look this year at how the sex crimes cases were being handled, but most of our work is not of that very high profile kind at all. Our work is much more with brave young women like Chalynn and Jackie, with the young girl Judy who we wrote about whom I worked with myself for the better part of the past week and to a successful jury verdict. We're helping the City citizens, really like the advertisement says, one person at a time. In the horrible police district courtrooms around the district, if you want a sense of justice in Philadelphia for our victims, go some early morning to Broad and Champlost. You'll find Victim Services agencies elbow-to-elbow with defendants and victims and prosecutors and defense counsel. Go to the Criminal Justice Center where it's crowded in the elevators for an hour each morning and the courtrooms wait. Go to Family Court where some of these kids are forced to stop in their lives. We're bursting at the seams of our capacity. We need your faith in our work, we need your increased support. We know that you like us; you've all demonstrated that well and we thank you. We ask you to continue to show your

love for us in your dollars. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Are they finished?

MR. CERVONE: We are. You want us to keep going?

(Laughter.)

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: No. I want to thank all of you for your help in the hearings that we had in City Council to really try to begin to deal with this situation. And I want to know from you, for the record, have we made progress in terms of how the police are handling the cases, organizing the situation, and what is the next step? I know that we talked about a centralized unit. And what to we need for us to begin putting those final pieces in the centralized unit into place? How do we need as a Council to proceed? And what progress has been made in terms of the handling of the cases of telling the individuals, the victims, what their rights are and not just shoving them

off to the corner when cases become difficult?

MR. CERVONE: Perhaps I could start to take that up and share with our colleagues as well. The police department was bold and courageous in sending its entire cadre of new recruits to the sex crimes, to the police special victims unit, 49 detectives to review old cases. I know my office has received at least one of those cases which was mishandle and now we hope will be handled better. When those cases get reopened, our agencies will be invited in, just as we are very often by law enforcement. So you'll see a positive face to the handling of those.

We need a different structure --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Have they restructured the unit?

MR. CERVONE: Not yet.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Okay.

MR. CERVONE: Other than to say for the short term those 49 officers are, in a sense, a separate command. They're all under the captain, but under a separate subordinate command for their own efficiency sake.

Each of the commissioners and District

Attorney have commit to do a collocated investigative facility for sex crimes. Council needs to make its own commitment in that direction, and that commitment will surely come in the form of some dollars, commitment of some City dollars. Building a collocated facility would --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: We'd like to find out what the recommendations in terms of dollars is and what would be needed for a facility of that type.

MR. CERVONE: The Philadelphia Children's Alliance is in the process of creating a planning process to put a face on the center.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Okay.

MR. CERVONE: And to put some numbers. It will be cheaper than building a stadium.

(Applause.)

MR. CERVONE: Being a baseball fan, I like the stadium idea, but I got to tell you, a collocated facility is as important to us all.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I think this is more important to the citizens of Philadelphia.

MR. CERVONE: Lastly, I think that we've seen a commitment in the several

administrations at DHS, at the police, and in the District Attorney's Office to work together to collaborate in these cases to try to do better in these cases, and I'm impressed by that.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I think we were plan to go take a trip to see the facility in Brooklyn that has been put up as example. I'd like to be able to sit down and see if we can get a group of the Council Committee on Public Safety and maybe arrange to do this with Timoney, with the Police Commissioner.

MR. CERVONE: From personal experience, I can tell you that the visit to Brooklyn was eye-opening for how the place should be built and how the folks might work together. So I'd encourage Councilmembers and their staff to join us on that tour. You'll learn a lot.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Maybe we should sit down and plan that as soon as possible.

MR. CERVONE: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We thank the victims for their courage and all of you for what you do. It's such a wonderful, wonderful work

that you do, and we work very closely with your counterparts in West Philadelphia. Thank you all for your service.

MR. CERVONE: Thank you.

MS. BORGERHOFF: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Mike McCrea. Mike McCrea. After Mike McCrea, the Mural Arts will be next.

(Mike McCrea comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome.

MR. MCCREA: Thank you. I appreciate you getting me a little earlier. I tried to get down here early enough today to let my younger members speak here first.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right. Identify yourself for the record and your young, quote/unquote, member as well.

MS. MCCREA: My name is Esther McCrea, and I am 10 years old. My friends and I spend a lot of time at the Fountainville Rec Center. There we do lots of things. During summer we have summer camp where we go on lots of trips, go swimming and have potluck lunch where everyone

brings in different kinds of food and then we have a picnic to share with our families. We also have arts and crafts. Also, I have been playing rookie league,. I also have my swim team. Now that we are in school, we have our after-school program where we get help with our homework, studying, and we get to use our new computers. That's lots of fun. And the new computer teacher buys CDs for the computers between two and three weeks when we are good.

Last year I turned 10 and joined the 4H Club at the Manotonas Farm (ph) here in Philadelphia. Each member gets an animal that they take care of and prepare for different shows throughout the year. Last year at the show Butterscotch, my dairy cow, finished first in her class and also won overall grand champion of the entire show. In January our whole club went to the Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg for a week. We took 11 animals: 8 pigs, 2 cows and 1 sheep. We brought home two champions, four reserved champions, and one reserved grand champion. My pig only finished fifth, but that's okay 'cause next year I'll try to get grand

champion.

We were competing against kids from all over the state. I have a nephew who just turned 2. My older sister and I take him to the playground. He loves to swing and slide down the slide. As I look around the playgrounds, sometimes I feel very sad 'cause two of the adult swings are broken. I don't think that there should be only four swings. I think that there should be six swings so that everyone has a chance. When my nephew Antonio is big enough to swing on the bigger swings, I would like him to feel as though he's flying the same way I do when I swing on the swing. If we don't have enough money to fix these playgrounds, how are the next generation of children going to enjoy the same things I do?

Also, I think we should start a fund for a security guard so that there are no more drugs or graffiti on our equipment. It's not fair that our playground has to be ruined by adults who have nothing better to do. It's not safe for our younger generation who is just starting our in the world like my nephew to see the ugliness in their

play world.

I would like a kiddie's pool added so my nephew and friends can swim also. And more lifeguards should add so babies like my two-year-old nephew can learn to swim. Also, could you put in a sandbox and a bouncey horse in the rec center? There should a changing pad in both bathrooms so that the babies shouldn't be changed on the cold floor.

In conclusion, these are some of the things that should be fixed so other kids have just as much fun as I do.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That was excellent testimony. We know you work hard, especially for the little ones who are just starting out like your two-year-old nephew.

(Laughter.)

MR. MCCREA: Mayor Street, Members of City Council, as president of the Philadelphia Recreation Advisory Council, I represent a coalition of over 170 volunteer organizations

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associated with the Department of Recreation, each of them representing a different park, playground, recreation center all across the City. Working in a citywide position, I deal with thousands of volunteers working 40, 50 hours a week and returning home to volunteer 3 to 4 hours a night at thier local recreation center or playground, and that shows me that they all realize the importance of those services, not only to their families, but the entire community. And it's not hard to see what a difference it makes to the quality of programs offered and delivered by the Department of Recreation.

As we begin the new millennium, the new administration calling it the year of the child, I think much to be thankful for. Our after-school programs serve almost 4,000 children a day, our summer camp enrollments were as high as they've been in many years, our swimming pools had one of the longest and safest seasons in recent memory, and enrollments in all of our programs across the board have increased. Looking at the large number of children we serve and the variety of programs and activities we over, all to a cost to the City

of about $1.58 a day. I don't think there's anyplace in the City's budget where we get more value for our dollar than here.

The current fiscal year we've hired 54 full-time custodians making it possible for all of our A centers and most of our B centers to have full-time custodial care and most of our smaller centers to have at least part-time, permanent part-time custodial care. And this will allow us to utilize each facility to a fuller extent and with some additional dollars provide safer supervised and structured activities to even more children during these crucial hours and days when school's not open.

We've seen a reduction in youth homicides from 1998 to 1999, and preliminary statistic look like we may even see a slight reduction to youth violent crime overall. We feel this is due in part to the investment we've been making and continue to make in young children and support prevention in early age.

Now, looking at the proposed budget, however, some questions have to come to mind and some items that continue to divide reasonable

explanations to myself or to many of my members. How is it that the budget allocates $152 a day to send a juvenile offender to an out-of-state facility, $98 to keep a juvenile offender in our own youth study center, almost $6 a day to provide a drug addict for free needles, condoms, and drug paraphernalia, and only about $1.58 a day to offer a child a variety of crime-prevention alternatives delivered by the Department of Recreation? It doesn't take much to see what's wrong with this picture, does it? However, myself and others continually point this out in the previous years with our testimonies, and this can only tell us that regardless of how lopsided these numbers seem to be, there must be some of you who must find this acceptable, otherwise, we'd be doing a better job of addressing it. Our kids deserve better, and as a group, you must make it a higher priority than it's been.

It's also hard for us to understand how you can continue to a needle exchange program at a cost of almost $400,000 a year. The State Attorney General and her own District Attorney have both told us that it's against the law, and

yet we continue to allocate public funds to do so. One would think the illegality of it alone should be enough to raise serious questions, but last year the program distributed a pamphlet on how to smoke crack safely, and most recently a distributed pamphlet titled "Tricks of the Trade Health and Safety for Street Sex Workers, covering such topics as what to wear and how to negotiate services and prices. Getting past moral outrage, it's obvious that the people in charged of this program have such a narrow focus that they cannot comprehend the continued criticism. These are also the same people who gave out at the needle exchange locations what they call -- they used to give out what they call a starter kit for those individuals who showed up without any needles to exchange, and I brought one of them to these hearings four years ago and it contained syringes, needles, rubber strap, bleach, heroin cookers with associated paraphernalia, container for disposal, and instructions on how to inject yourself safely. And my own feeling is how could the City continue to fund this illegal activity with public funds is just inconceivable to me.

Let's just talk for a minute, though, about funding for some of the crime-prevention programs I mentioned earlier. Most of the after-school programs wherein the Department of Recreation, as good as they are, only provided with one structure RSI for about 16 to 20 hours a week. Most summer camps, as good as they are in Department of Recreation, are provided with two adults for 35 hours week and one youth worker for 20 hours a week. And when our after-school programs serve between 15 and 50 children a day and summer camp served between 50 and 200 children a day, it's not hard to see the numbers just don't add up. The supplement these programs appropriate levels of supervision many advisory councils need to hire and pay for additional staff. Now I can remember recent summers where some facilities spent almost $8,000 in additional salaries just during the summer, which doesn't include after-school or other programs where additional staff is also needed. Our only other choice would be to turn some of these children away, and that's not an alternative that we could live with. Shouldn't be acceptable to turn any child away

simply because we don't have the resources to accommodate them.

Now, over the years, as well as being volunteers, the advisory councils have also had to serve in that capacity as well. In 1995, however, the City Administration, specifically Risk Management, decided these additional support workers weren't covered under the City's insurance and because we paid for them and wrote out checks and signed them that we as volunteers were also not covered. And then we were told to continue functioning in that role, we needed to purchase liability insurance for the support workers and the teachers and ourselves, which at the time would have cost us almost $30,000 a year citywide.

Now, it took many months of negotiating, and as most of you remember, we did finally agree to cover the volunteers but it still left to us to cover the support staff and fee paid instructors currently at a cost of about $14,000 a year. The fact that we even had to go there was not only insulting to us, but also showed us firsthand that there's still some people that just don't get it.

As volunteers we don't have no problem helping bridge the gap between the level of services the City can deliver and what our communities need. But make it very clear we also don't like being taken advantage of. It's hard for us to believe that there was any one city government that found that even the littlest bit of acceptable. Bottom line is, I think, when we lose just one child to the streets to crime, drugs, violence or just an innocent victim, that to me is truly tragedy. But for us to allow it to continue as we have day after day, week after week, month after month, and year after year without doing everything we can to prevent it, that to me is unconscionable. So the simple question must be asked, how much are we willing to sacrifice?

Some people say it's a sacrifice just to continue to live in the City and not move out, but that would constitute quitting, and we're not quitters and would never set that poor example for our children. Thinking about sacrifice, though, it has to bring to mind the Lord our God who endured the ultimate by giving up the life of his

only son. Anything else we could possibly imagine would probably pale in comparison, however, it does help to bring home a very important point. It's never been difficult for us to find more money for prisons, police, and other costs associated with crime, courts, and incarceration, but it seems like every year we have to come here and beg for what amounts to a very small percentage of that to invest in our young people, our children who are just looking for alternatives to the negative images they are faced with every day. If we want to teach children anything, we need to lead by example, invest our time, our talent, and our treasure in children when they do te right thing, not wait until they fall into the abyss where seems no matter how much we seem to give them, at best they're just treading water. When it's clear that expend more energy and resources on those that choose to do the wrong thing, isn't it any wonder that more of our youth don't fall into that abyss? And doesn't that really make all of us just nothing more than hypocrites when talk to our young people about wanting them to do the right thing but we pay so

much more attention and spend so many more resources when you do wrong thing? Just think about it. It's not rocket science; it's just common sense.

I also feel that -- I added this later. It was two weeks ago. I wanted to do address an issue that came up in the hearings concerning capital improvements. I think while the Department of Recreation has control or the quality work completed at the facilities, I think they have very little control of how long a job takes to get completed and almost no control over the unqualified contractors being approved and allowed to submit bids for particular projects. Most of that control lies in the Procurement Department. To put it bluntly, we don't make the rules, we just have to follow them. For instance, if a contractor bids a job containing work at four different facilities at the same time, there's nothing we can do to keep him at one site until it's completely finished and then go to the next site. He can literally move from facility to facility week after week as long as doesn't exceed the total length of his contract. The Procurement

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Department qualifies contractors for bidding on all City work and they also determine the1 length of time associated with each contract. Concerns brought up were almost as much Procurement Department issues as Recreation Department issues. And to properly address those concerns, we need to look at the whole picture and put it in the proper perspective.

Now, I've been told by some that I take too hard a position, that I'm too hard on myself and others and I just need to lighten up a little bit. But when I talk to many volunteers all across the City that live and breathe it every day, they tell me that we are taking it too easy and not being hard enough. So I guess maybe it really depends on your perspective. Regardless, my personal opinion is we all need to be a little harder on ourselves because the truth is we're all somewhat responsible for the situation we find ourselves in, and like it or not, it is our cross to bear.

When it comes right down to it, the next question we have to ask is, "Can't we do better than this?" It's something that you should

each have ask yourselves before the ink is dry and you put this budget to a final vote. As your constituents, we count on you to make the right decisions and we're not willing to accept anything less. As adults and parents, we certainly have to share some of the burden because if we did our better, the services would not be in such demand. And some of that burden falls on me because it has been part of my job to represent my membership to continue to bring message. In every year that goes by without taking enough action represents a direct reflection on my delivery and sincerity. I think it's extremely difficult, though, for me to place a value on the satisfaction I get personally from empowering other communities across the City, helping to provide resources, administering grants, organizing and participating in citywide initiatives directed at youth crime prevention, participating in what has been referred to as old-fashioned community barn-raisings where we organized the community and put together an entire playground in one day, participating in special events like bingo for the blind or just helping to run a number activities at the Feltonville Youth

Access Center where I live.

I have said to people that there are probably three things that are most important in contributing to the success and longevity in what all of us as volunteers do. First, you have to believe in what doing is right; second, to be willing to stand up for what you believe in even when you might be on an island all by yourself; and third and most important, you have to enjoy what you do and be willing to have fun with it. I think without any one of these, 17 or 18 years ago I don't think I could have guaranteed that I'd still be here today with as much enthusiasm as I've ever had. So I think it's time to get past our personal differences and continue to do the right thing if we're going to leave any legacy to our children that we can be proud of. We didn't arrive where we stand today overnight, and it will take many years of continued commitment to get us where we need to go. It's been said that the choices we make dictate the life we lead, so let's make a promise to set the right examples and work harder, provide more opportunities for all of our children to make better choices.

In conclusion, I guess I'll ask the same question again. Can't we do better than this? I don't know what your answer is going to be, but personally, my answer is I know we can. And I hope that collectively you can all come to the same conclusion. Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much. Thank you for working so hard at your recreation center.

Mural Arts, Sandy Spicer, Teddi Harris Glenda Tate.

(Witnesses come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It's great to see you again and to see that you're both doing so well.

MS. LYNGARD: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're welcome.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please

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identify yourself for the record and begin.

MS. LYNGARD: Hi, I'm Deidra Lyngard, L-Y-N-G-A-R-D. I appreciate the opportunity to speak before you today. I am on the board of the Mural Advocates, and I'm here to request increased funding for the Department of Recreation's Mural Arts Program so that it can function administratively at a level that can support it's current program.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: What is your name again?

MS. LYNGARD: Deidra Lyngard.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. LYNGARD: I won't spend a lot of time with facts and figures because I figure other people have been here and already given you those. My main concern is just to tell you how much I think the program needs additional support because of the work it's doing. It has the will and the know-how to achieve its dream of bringing art to Philadelphia's communities, but it does not have the way. Plain and simple, it needs more warm bodies. Without more staff, the program cannot expand its art education programs for which

there's a great and ever-growing demand, it cannot provide adequate backup to its mural teams, manage much mural restoration effort, it cannot plan for the future or begin to tap the extraordinary reservoir of goodwill that it has built within the community. While we certainly appreciate the support the City has given the program and we have enjoyed enormously the partnership with the Department of Recreation, I think there's still more that we would like to ask the City to do for us. I think that Jane and her small staff have done extraordinary effort in raising private funding in the best spirit of public-private partnership to match the City funds and certainly to exceed them, but unfortunately, private funding is not interested in supporting ongoing staff positions. This is the kind of thing that we need to ask the City to support.

Right now, this program, the citywide program which produces over 100 murals a year and serves hundreds of children through its workshops and other classes has just one full-time administrative support person and a couple of part-time people. I go into that program on a

weekly basis and I look around and I cannot believe the amount of work that they are able to accomplish given the staffing they have. I think it be a miracle. When I consider what this program is contributing to the quality of life in Philadelphia and how much national recognition in the media and elsewhere the beautiful murals have brought to the City, I have to ask myself, why is it such a struggle to find the manpower to get the most basic things done? And I am hoping that the City Council will ask that same question and come to a decision to increase funding.

In closing, I would like to quote from a poem by William Carlos Williams. It's a quote about poetry, but it can just as easily apply to any art, particularly the Mural Arts. The quote is as follows: "It is difficult to get the news from poems, yet men die miserably every day for lack of what is found there."

I appreciate the hard task City Council has ahead of itself in allocating limited City funds to so many deserving activities. As you undertake these difficult deliberations, I hope you will remember this quote by Mr. Williams which

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reminds how very important art is to people's lives, and I would add, to the spirit of the City. The Mural Arts Program better than any other program I can think of knows how to bring art alive and knows how to bring it into the lives of the people of Philadelphia. It is a quality program that deserves the best support possible.

Thank you very much for your time.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. LYNGARD: If any of you have questions, I'd like to have the opportunity to answer them now because, unfortunately ,I have an obligation that I need to leave for quite soon.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: There are no lights on. Are there any questions so far?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: No there are not. Thank you.

MS. LYNGARD: Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Great to have you again. Please identify yourselves for the record.

MS. SPICER: Good afternoon, Madam Chairperson and City Council.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good afternoon and welcome.

MS. SPICER: I'm so honored to be here, and I'm here on behalf of the Mural Arts program and to be a voice for the children that have lost their lives. As for myself, I've lost three children in '92, '93 and '95. Without any money ours for our program, I wanted to reach out and help and touch the families of these children, so I wrote Jane Golden a letter and I asked her, is it any way that you can help me --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Excuse me. Introduce yourself and your husband, please.

MS. SPICER: Okay. I'm Sandra Spicer. I am the vice president of Families of Victims, and my husband, Garnet, is the president.

I guess am a little overwhelmed because I'm so honored to be here. As I said, in 1992 and 1993 and '95 I've lost my children to acts of violence. I didn't know what I was going to do at that point. I was distraught I didn't know which way to turn. But I wanted to reach out and help other people that could share the same feelings that I've had. So I wrote a letter to Jane Golden

and I asked her, "What can we do? Can we get any funding to go try to fund a mural for these families that these children not lose their lives in vain? She said, "Oh, well, we'll find some money somewhere." I felt so warm because I was able to do something and to bring awareness. And I'm also the voice for the 14 children because they can no longer speak and their families. If you were to come down and see that mural and see the faces, those children, through art, have been brought alive. It's better than visiting a grave site because that's so final. When you see these children, it's a sense of healing to be able to know that it's like they're looking back at you. There needs to be more money put into the Mural Arts program because there are so many things that the Mural Arts program has to offer. I was surprised that they would even consider doing such a project as this because of the crime rate in the City. I was told -- there was a lot of negativity, "Oh, you shouldn't do this because they're not heroes." I mean, these things came from a lot of people. But after this mural was done, we've had people come from the various

states come up, sometimes the streets are full. Sometimes you come out and you find the families crying and they're in tears and you embrace them. It's so touching and so moving that it helps me also through the process because of my loss. And I'm just hoping that more funding can go in to help to promote this program. It's a wonderful program because I know what it's done to touch the lives of all of these people. So I'm asking you to please give from the heart and not from the pocket. Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you Ms. Spicer. And certainly, you and your husband have really been role models in West Philadelphia and your kindness when we went to the mural dedication, for those of you who are not aware, they held a service last year and they had pictures on a real, real long wall on Chester Avenue and they had oval-shaped paintings of victims, these young people, victims of crime. And as Ms. Spicer just said, she's lost three children, so it's really, really quite overwhelming when we were there, the service, and you can imagine, very, very sad quite

overwhelming. And we want you to know that we do support, we love the Mural Arts Program here in Philadelphia. So we are deliberating the budget process now and we look forward to doing our part for them.

Can we have the Sergeant-at-Arms show that picture so that everyone can see? Oh, that's of the dedication, isn't it?

MS. SPICER: That's the mural, yes, it tells a story.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes, the mural tells the story so all of you would you take that around so the Members of Council can see the long wall with just the pictures of all the victims of crime. Very, very sad, but Very, very important and it shows you just how the Mural Arts Program can be used. There are so many ways we use it to certainly uplift and commemorate lives of others. But we absolutely thank you.

Does anyone have any questions for Mrs. Spicer or her husband?

Yes, I will like to see it even though I was there.

(No questions.)

MS. SPICER: And I do thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We thank you. Absolutely very, very, very beautiful for anyone who would like to see.

MS. SPICER: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We thank you again and we commend you for all that you are doing try to give your lives to the community in spite of all that you've been through. We do love you and we say thank you and God bless.

MS. SPICER: I love you, too. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Joanne Fabian, president of Fisher Park Community Alliance.

Scott, you're next, from the Philadelphia Trolley Coalition. I saw you earlier. Are you still here? Scott? Okay, you're next.

(Witnesses come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Joanne Fabian Fisher Park Community Alliance, are you here?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I suppose not.

All right, Scott, come up Philadelphia

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Trolly Coalition. Identify yourself for the record, please.

MR. MAITS: My name's Scott Maits, I'm with the Philadelphia Trolley Coalition. I've also been elected to a national organization, the regional group is the Delaware Valley Association of Rail Passengers which I'm a board member now. I wanted to thank you, Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MR. MAITS: And the various other Councilmembers, thank you for listening to us today, ladies and gentlemen, various commissioners.

I've been an advocate for quite a while now for improving transit in the region and within the City, and I'm here to testify about that subject. I know it's a little arcane for many people how we can improve SEPTA. It's been in the public light now that there's different problems there and people have seen that, but what I talk about is things that are not known so much in this area that we can upgrade transit beyond buses, beyond the subway system that we have now, and how important it is to revitalize the City. We all

know about loss of manufacturing and what's that's done to the City, aging infrastructure, white flight, drugs, redlining. What story is not known so well, even sometimes by officials or planners, is that we've failed to upgrade our transit system which has been done in some European cities to keep pace with new highways in the suburbs. We can't build interstates in the City, we don't have the room, it's not appropriate, cars just decentralize cities anyway. But what we can do is run a better bus system, in some instances upgrade to modern light rail like it's done in Europe, not like it's done here in Philadelphia with our old street cars except for the subway surface subway portion where it's done, was upgraded in the '50s and runs pretty well this. So I just wanted to do come to this budget hearing to express how important this is. There are so many other worthy causes out there. The City, you know, continues with its problems, but one thing that is completely unknown by even planners sometimes is what transit can do, and I just come to let people know about that and that we can upgrade the City with a new investment if we can find ways to build

you new lines. It's a very tough political situation with SEPTA and financially the City and SEPTA is supported the least of any major city in transit funding in the country from its state, and that makes things very tough. But we can -- we've gone around and identified various projects brought them to politicians and community leaders.

Jannie, you know well we have a proposal that's really gaining some support out our way. We'd like to do things to increase Center City's mobility instead of building more and more parking lots, and as the Mayor stepped in the other day to perhaps say maybe we shouldn't do that in every instance. We'd like to build a light-rail line down in Center City to expand and bring tourism so that people can get around away from the Market Street subway and in other ways without having to bring cars.

There's many, many different issues I could talk about. I will not go into the details of them. I will have a follow-up letter as time allows in time for the budget hearing process. I just wanted to highlight a few points today.

The City, of course, has a hard-won

agreement with SEPTA to bring back the Girard Avenue 15 as a kind of a first step. There is the other lines that are suspended that can also be helpful in the future, but we must make the 15, I think, run right. That's the Girard Avenue trolley, and upgrade to it light-rail standards. Hopefully, we can get a good count out of SEPTA of any increase in ridership that that has brought to the line. Typically, in comparable situations ridership can go up 30 percent. It can bring new investment. It can coincide with the Mayor's and the City's efforts at redeveloping areas if it is done the right way. There is a limited budget, of course, SEPTA money and the City, I believe, is throwing in some money in various ways, and I just want to emphasize that if it's done the right way, it will work well; if it's not, because there is street running and the problems with it, that it will not benefit very much. And so we have to be very, very careful about how we do it. I'll bring that around to various City Councilmembers and come to their offices and talk about what can be done to make it right or what budget things the capital budget can do to make it right and make

those things right with that project to demonstrate to SEPTA, to suburbanites that it is worth investing in the City, in transit projects to curb suburban sprawl, which is the hot-button issue right now.

Finally, I just wanted to say, to keep this short, that even though this subject is not widely understood, I don't have 20 people behind me today, it's not understood by residents or riders, sometimes the leaders and sometimes even planners, but it is critical. Most Philadelphians do not own a car, don't drive, A lot of households have no access to a car or there might be one person that drives or one car and there might be several people in the house. So we have a silent majority here, and this is something that is, of course, not understood outside of the City. And certainly in a state where the biggest rural population in the country, they don't understand how we might need to improve a bus here or a train here or a trolley there. But it is very important if hope to truly expand Center City's prosperity, University City, and West Philadelphia's prosperity, South Philadelphia, rebuild North

Philadelphia. We can bring the prosperity of Center City which is fed by high-quality rail service to the areas where it is not getting it, which is one of the primary reasons that it has declined over the years is because it doesn't have good connections anymore; it has weak connections transit-wise, and we can help to we build the City in that way.

Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Scott. Hold on for a minute, please. Councilman DiCicco would like to respond to your testimony.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Just for your benefit, and I appreciate what the Trolley Coalition has been attempting to do over the years. I live in South Philadelphia and I live on 11th Street which is the 23 Trolley line. It was a trolley line, it's now a bus line; I keep waiting for the trolley to return. But when I was the acting chair of the Transportation Committee after Councilwoman Fern resigned I convened a

after Councilwoman Fernandez resigned, I convened a meeting of a group of people who represent Delaware Port Authority, Penn's Landing Corporation, SEPTA, Philadelphia Streets Department, Historical District, and a few others who I just can't recall off the top of my head right now. And the purpose of my meeting was to see if we can bring all of these departments and authorities together to look at better ways in which we can move people around throughout the Center City area, in particularly on the east side of Broad Street, not because of part of Center City that I represent, but because part of the most concentration for the historical districts there and tourism and other forms of activity. And with the advent of the entertainment center down at Penn's Landing, there will certainly be an increase in traffic conditions east of Broad and around the Market Street Chestnut Street corridor. I know that for a long time now SEPTA has always been bearing the brunt of a lot of criticism, but I can assure you that since Jack Leary has been around and since I've been involved with him, SEPTA has really cooperated fully. And we have a

proposal that SEPTA basically thought of and have agreed to participate in with a significant amount of funding should the Administration agree to a transportation mode that will be a real system from Front Street to 12th Street, Chestnut Street to Arch Street, and it will be a real trolley; it won't be the rubber tire things that are buses that people sometimes hop into and think they're trolleys, but it will be an authentic trolley system that will not only be there for the purpose of moving the tourists around the general vicinity, but also be for the residents in Center City and the commuters, people who work here on a daily basis to move them in and around the area that is most heavily used today. So I just wanted to pass that onto you for your information that we are working together. I gave this presentation to the Mayor a couple of weeks ago. He is looking at it. I think going forward you'll see something like that, but SEPTA has been extremely cooperative.

MR. MAITS: That's really great to hear. Thank you so much for that. I think it would be important to allow Center City to grow

without coming to a standstill to do that if it is done right. I've looked at that loop. It's been the proposal -- the original propose proposal has been around for a while. I have some different things I'd like to point out about it. It could be an excellent -- it will cost some money, but I'm glad --

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Everything costs money.

MR. MAITS: Yeah. Well, it could also have a major benefit and impact.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Well, everyone recognizes that we have to do something because the more advertising that we do in promoting Philadelphia as a place to visit which is good, a good benefit to us, we also have to figure out ways in which we can move people around more effectively and efficiently. And the DRPA is part of that program that we put together. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MR. MAITS: I'd like to speak with you in the future to talk about that.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Sure.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Scott, for all that you do in this field.

MR. MAITS: Thank you, Jannie. And I look forward to seeing you again maybe tonight.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yeah, tonight, once we're done here.

Brenda Kyser, 5300 block of Sydenham Street, Ms. Kyser?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right. Is Letty Thall, Children Youth and Family Council here yet?

These are people who are due to be here tonight. I don't expect that they're here, but certainly if you are here, we'll give you a chance to go on now.

Steve DiPietro? Bob Pierson? Bob Pierson? Maurice Sampson, Solid Waste Advisory Committee?

Sheila Harper, Public Health Center No. 9; Sheila Harper, Public Health Center No. 9?

Again, Barbara Kyser?

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Excuse me, Madam

Chair, did you mention Mike McCrea?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Mike McCrea has come and gone. He came in with a little girl. He wanted to be moved up because he had his child with him.

And also Rick Butler we let on because he needed to come up early.

So therefore, we have completed our list so this hearing will be in recess, the committee hearing will be in recess until 6 o'clock tonight. Thank you all.

(Break taken.)

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(Proceedings resume.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you for your patience. Too many issues going on. I think the committee that was in recess now is called back into order to begin immediately with Children, Youth and Family Council. Thank you for your patience. Please identify yourself for the record and begin.

MS. WARD: Members of Council, I'm Laurie Ward, Vice President of the Children, Youth and Family Council, known as CYFC and Executive

Director of the Youth Service, Inc. With me today is Letty Thall, the new director of the Children, Youth and Family Council, whose members serve 895 percent of the children in DHS's care.

The Children, Youth and Family Council was established in 1983 by coalition of Philadelphia area nonprofit child welfare agencies to see share resources and build opportunities to ensure diversified, quality services for defendant, delinquent and special needs children. Through the CYFC Education Consortium, approximately 2000 child and youth serving staff and foster parents are trained annually in skills and knowledge basic to their employment.

First, on behalf of members of CYFC, I want to thank the Department of Human Services for the rate increases the private providers received this January 1 for SCOH and foster care. We appreciate the Department's willingness to look at congregate care rates July 1, 2000. Review of rates for quality services on a regular basis enables us to move forward with a number of joint projects with DHS.

In Commissioner Martinez's testimony to

City Council on February 16, she mentioned that the Department is anticipating zero growth in placement services for Fiscal Year 2000 and a 2 percent decline if Fiscal Year 2001. This is good news for all of us, as it means that we are successfully preventing placement of children by providing services to children in their own homes, family preservation and truant services, and are decreasing the number of days in care through foster care initiatives, such as Family to Family, and aggressively recruiting adoption homes. We, too, are proud of these achievements.

Accountability is important to us, also, and we have willingly participate in the outcomes projects and the SCOH RFP process. We hope DHS will be successful in receiving state funding for new initiatives, as outlined in Commissioner Martinez's budget testimony, and we look forward to working with the Department on those, too.

The year ahead will present many challenges to DHS and the private providers, as TANF sanctions loom and ASFA requirements are met. We anticipate that the pending merger of CYFC with

Pennsylvania Council for Children's Services will help us meet these challenges. The new Pennsylvania Council of Children, Youth and Family Services will represent private providers state-wide, many of whom have contracts with DHS. It should become easier for all these agencies to see participate in DHS initiatives. It will also help local private providers have greater impact in Harrisburg, which will ultimately help children placed through DHS in Philadelphia.

We look forward to working with City Council and new Administration to ensure quality services for all the dependent and neglected children in the City. Thank you for your time and interest.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Mr. Steve DiPietro?

Is Bob Pierson here? Your next.

(Witnesses come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome. Thank you for your patience.

MR. DIPIETRO: Thank you, City Council, for this opportunity to speak before my representatives and to speak before my neighbors. My name is Steve DiPietro and I'm a student at Drexel University. I am a member a student organization named Eye Openers, a group students concerned about issues regarding the environment and ethics and human rights. We're also a member of the Philadelphia Recycling Alliance, the Student Environmental Action Coalition, and I also personally used to work for Clean Water Action. And so through all of these different venues, I've been allotted time to speak as both residents of Philadelphia and students here at different colleges, including importantly the University of Pennsylvania and St. Joe's and also one of our friends Sarah who's here present Bryn Mawr and we're here to speak not only as students but also we're here to speak as members of the Philadelphia community. We're not here on some kind of holiday; this is where we live and we do care about our City and I'm here to represent those students who feel that we have a moral responsibility to manage our waste responsibly and

to manage our resources responsibly.

I'd like to perhaps propose that this time of waste is actually much more of a flash in the pan and we come from a long history of cultures that are very conservative of their all their resources. And one example of that is when I was walking and talking to people in Philadelphia for Clean Water Action, I spoke to over a thousand citizens. Time and time again I mentioned when talking about recycling when they were younger when they used to collect food waste separated from the normal waste sent to feed the farm animals, an important point because it kept coming up every time I spoke to these people. I think it speaks a lot to one of the themes we kept hearing recurring both this weekend and the week previous during talks was education is important for the young because people are going to remember these things. We need to get people into the habit and to realize that recycling is just something that you do. We need to make recycling easy and we need to make it more regular so it becomes more a part of people's habits. That's why it's so important that we switch to a weekly

program and it's important that we keep it on the same day as trash pickup because it does make so much more simpler.

The social sciences in this issue, the data is really straight-forward. And basically it says if you want people to participate in programs where they're volunteering and when they're being helpful to their society, you have to make sure that it's simple. The more complicated you make it, the less people are going to be able to participate. And one of the other reasons why we know that it's important to switch to a weekly program is because we've had these pilot programs and know that they work because we've seen a 24 percent increase in recycling in those areas that have weekly pick up. And sometimes we even have an increase up to 50 percent.

You know, all of those things are kind of like common sense,, I mean, even ten years ago when I was in high school and playing Lacrosse, you just called it KISS, Keep It Simple, Silly. We didn't say "stupid" because we were a very P.C. high school, but at any rate, it still stands here. I mean, if we have a simpler system, people

are going to be able to do it. And this is the time to move forward and to make sure that we have room to expand our recycling program because we have momentum and it's important. And it will give -- I mean, sometimes when I talk to friends from out of state, they'll say, "How can you like Philadelphia? Isn't it dirty?" This is our chance to have Philadelphia known for something else. That's an excellent recycling program that people care about.

You know, I've also got another sort of silly cliche from high school or grade school is that you can't do things halfway. That's kind of the opinion that I get about how things are being run in the Streets Department. It doesn't seem like they're viewing recycling as an integral part of waste management; it's just like some little added thing. For example, I was in 30th Street Station right before we got here. I went and bought a drink and I couldn't fine a recycling bin in 30th Street Station. If we were really serious about recycling, wouldn't we have recycling bins in some of our major areas where people are converging?

When I was talking to people across Philly and especially on campus, people didn't know if we recycled paper, people didn't know if we recycled plastic, they didn't know if you put things in your recycling bin that can't be recycled, sometimes that whole bin is going to get thrown out. And people need to know all of these things.

Another important issue that I keep hearing from students when I was talking to students was when they're living in apartments they don't get notification of whether they're a blue zone or yellow zone. So students don't even know when they're supposed to -- even if they want to participate, it's made hard for them. And I also know some people who live in apartments who just don't have bins. They didn't even know that Philly had a recycling program. I don't think there's any excuse for that. We should be doing a better job. You know, I'm not beating up on the Streets Department as much as I'm saying we need to give them the resources they need to get this work done.

Of course, we're all visionaries here.

We can be, we're supposed to be if we're politicians, too, so I think if you took a second to think about the future, do you really see a future without recycling? I don't know how that could be. I mean, this is the way it's going to have to be in the future. So why don't we go ahead and step up to the plate now.

And before I resign here, I'd also like to say that in this past month I've talked with the other members of my group who are with me. If you guys want to stand up, you can stand up if you can, go ahead.

So these are some of the guys who were able to show up, but I did speak to over 200 other students this month, and they all signed a document here to explain how we feel about this program and I'd like to just read that and then submit it for Council.

"Philadelphia's current recycling program is confusing and too inconvenient. Because we are obligate to manage our waste responsibly, our recycling program must be improved.

"We, the undersigned members of the

Drexel and Philadelphia communities submit this petition to our city government to request citywide weekly pickup of recyclables on the same day as trash pickup and expanded educational efforts to teach our fellow residents about recycling.

"We ask the City of Philadelphia to adopt this new system for several reasons, because the pilot program with weekly pickup which started last spring should increase the participation in recycling, because we truly feel that the above changes will enable us to participate with more ease and effectiveness, and also because it is a necessary step in achieving our commendable goal of 40 percent waste reduction which was set quite some time ago."

And these are all 200 students from Drexel who also live in Philadelphia.

Thank you very much for your time.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very

much.

Mr. Steve DiPietro. Thank you.

MR. DIPIETRO: Yes, Council.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm sorry. It's Mr. Bob Pierson I'm looking for. Thank you.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony. Thank you.

MR. SAMPSON: Actually, I'm not Bob Pierson. Bob Pierson asked me if I would make his comments for him. He's a new grandfather and today is the first day he gets to baby-sit his granddaughter. And as important as he feels this issue is, he's going to spend time with his family. My name actually is Maurice Sampson. I don't know if I'm next on that list, but if it's all right --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes, you are, you're next. So you're with the Solid Waste Advisory Committee?

MR. SAMPSON: That is correct. I live in the Mt. Airy section of Philadelphia. I'll make my comments first and then I'll highlight

those points Bob would like to make.

For the record, I also want to inform you that I'm working with Clean Water Action and Clean Air Council, and Recycling Alliance of Philadelphia in preparation of a citizens' white paper on recycling, an historical review report, an evaluation of the recycling program and recommendations for future development. We're hoping to have that complete sometime in the next month.

I want to speak to several points today concerning the City's recycling program and also I want to make a comment about the issue of waste tires. First I want to encourage you to impress Mayor Street to restore to the Mayor's Office, Philadelphia Recycling Office as it was intended in 1251A and dictated in Section 10-717 in the City Code and that he take steps immediately to fill the position of recycling coordinator.

A second concern is weekly collection. The early results of the pilot program indicate that the volume is increasing and the costs are decreasing. Steps need to be taken as soon as possible to expand the program citywide.

Currently, program services about 20 percent of the City residents. Based on the cost of that program, my recommendation is that we add to the Streets Department budget enough money to double that service to 40 percent plus the funds to prepare and implement an extensive education and promotions program starting next fall.

I have several reasons for making recommendation. The first one is that with the current budget, I understand, has money to take us to the end of the pilot period to the end of May and then to continue the program as it stands right through the next year provided that the evaluation that's due to happen in June is positive. That means that there won't be any expansion until the next fiscal year. We need to put some money in the budget to make sure that we can at least double the program.

Larry also talked to us about in his testimony, Larry Moy, that while recycling rates in the pilot are up an average of 26 percent, the rest of the City recycling rate is dropping. Now, I don't think that there's any mystery as to why the rate is dropping. It's the same reason why we

needed to go to weekly. People don't remember what day recycling is. And now that you have recycling and trash happening on the same day, unless people are carefully educated, it's very easy to say, "you know, they didn't pick it up last week, I don't know if it's this week, maybe I'll just put it all in the trash and that way it goes away." Going the same day as trash is the right way the to go about it, but we have to be very careful about making sure that people understand how it works and we need to go to weekly so that there isn't any question of when it goes out. By doubling the area service by weekly collection and making an orchestrated effort to educate everyone will go long way to turn it around.

I need to stress this: The education and programs need to be planned to be effective. It needs to enlist Mayor and it needs to enlist Members of City Council to help deliver the word. According to the studies that we're finding as we are doing our research for a white paper, the average setout by citizens who do recycling in this city is only 20 percent of what it could be.

That means that we could almost triple the amount of recycling rate in this City just by getting people who ae currently participating to put out everything that they can put out.

We also have a 40 percent illiteracy rate and even more that are functional illiterate. What that means is 4 out of 6 Philadelphians either can't or don't read the posters, brochures, and ads. So if the only kind of promotion that we're doing broadly is in written form, there are a lot of people who won't even understand what it is we want. We need to make sure that we're going to spend money on doing education promotion, we need to make sure that we're reaching the people with the message.

Now, as you may know, the City receives funding from the State under provisions of Act 101. It covers cost of education, equipment, half the cost of recycling coordinator's salary. That law that provided that money was recently extended, but it's not clear how long that funding is going to last. It's really critical that we move as soon as possible, develop the plan to go weekly citywide so that we don't miss the

opportunity to finance the equipment, the education, and promotion with State dollars. Expanding the pilot, implementing an education program while planning for citywide expansion and securing funds to do all of this is a reasonable expectation of work for the next fiscal year.

Speaking briefly to tires, in 1996 under a grant from U.S. EPA under contract to the Commerce Department, I had opportunity to prepare a rather extensive study on waste tires focussing on Market development. The bottom line is this: The issue of waste tires in the City of Philadelphia and in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania can be solved. While we need state support to clean up the tires that are on the ground, and some of that money is available right now, the methods to manage and stop the short-dumping are available to us, it's in the laws and regulations that are currently on the books. What's required is the leadership of the Mayor and the City Council to compel coordination among City agencies to make it happen. Now, as many of you will recall, right after I-95 fire, Mayor Rendell ordered the Commerce Department to

set up a committee to examine this issue and make recommendation to solve that problem. Well, this has been done. The report is complete and it's available, it's in the Commerce Department, it's been done since July of 1998. By the time that report was done, the cleanup was complete the guilty parties were convicted, and the report's never been formally released. But everything that we need to do has already been determined and we need to look to get a copy that have report and move on this issue. I'd be glad to meet with Members of City Council to discuss this further.

I think the last point that I want to make here is that on all of these issues we really need to have a public hearing. You know, we've spent by my estimates some $55 million since 1987 on the recycling program and we have yet to have a formal meeting to review our progress, and it seems well overdue. April marks the 30th anniversary of Earth Day and it seems very appropriate that we would have a hearing at that point in time to talk about recycling in Philadelphia and to talk about where it's going.

Those are the end of my comments.

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Bob Pierson sits with the Recycling Advisory Committee and he was appointed to that position really from the very beginning. He has several points he wanted to do make cheer here. One, he wants to make sure that you understand that the need and urging of City Council to push to get a new recycling coordinator. There's also a desire to see us go to weekly collection of recyclables, to make sure that the funding is there to thousand for successful expansion and to have an education program to convince citizens to recycling all of their mixed paper which is the large component of the trash that recycling very little of. We also need a master plan for recycling, a plan ties specific program elements to a schedule to City and State goals, and most importantly to the budgeting process of this City. There's no way that we can know where we are unless we have a plan and that we know what that plan is before we go into it every year so that we have some idea when we come to these meetings what it is that we can expect. Without the plan, the Department will fail to meet the City's goals for recycling. In Bob's words, "I cannot tell you the

collective disappointment of the many loyal volunteers from industry, business and ordinary citizens who have come to endless meetings over the past 13 years. We have struggled so hard to have premier recycling program, but this has not happened."

That's my comments. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Councilman Rizzo?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Certainly.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: In reference to the issue with tires and knowing that there's a serial number on a tire, and when I think about that, I think about that three's a serial number on abandoned automobiles and it's very difficult to use that VIN number to determine who the actual owner or who is the responsible person that left that car on the street. I guess as just a curiosity question, in your research on the issue of short-dumping, specifically tires, is the serial number that's on a tire, every tire has one

and they're recorded at the point of sale, is there any value to that number or is that just like the situation I just described, if it isn't valuable in many cases in determining ownership of an abandoned vehicle, could the serial number that's on that tire have any value in at least knowing who the original purchaser of that tire was?

MR. SAMPSON: Yeah, that number will tell you from where it was sold. It doesn't track all the way through to exactly who had and owned that tire, but the system of dealing with tires, the industry has already put a system in place where there's a place and a home for every tire that comes back. The issue that the industry has is the industry cannot regulate getting that tire into their system. The tire industry wants government to get involved in helping to regulate to make sure that those tires get into their system, okay? And if that happens, then it means that every tire that gets returned to the market after you bring it back should have a home to go to that has been manifest so it doesn't end up on the ground.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Somebody paid for that. Isn't there a tax?

MR. SAMPSON: Yes, it's actually within the industry has a fee.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Isn't there a tax that each of us pay when we buy a new tire, a tire disposal charge.

MR. SAMPSON: That's a different fee. There is a fee that the shop charges and then there is a fee that is charged above and beyond that. If I remember correctly, I believe that money actually supports mass transportation.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So what I'm hearing you say is that the tire industry is willing to help be part of a solution to this problem if someone would reach out to them. Has anyone nationally that you know of that we can look at what they've done?

MR. SAMPSON: There are 34 states that have passed tire laws. Maryland and Virginia have excellent laws. Virginia actually has cleaned up an recovered more tires than are being sold in that state. And in that state, if you're caught dumping tires, it ranks a felony.

We don't have -- there's a tire law that the state has passed, but when went to pass that law, there was a provision in it that would have put a penalty and would have put an enforcement element for dumping tires and it was taken out before the law was passed.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I believe when the Streets Commissioner and his staff were here before Council, and I don't want to misquote the Streets Commissioner or the Council. He's here; he can correct me if I'm wrong. That there are cases where tire dealers and garages that handle the replacement of tires are very responsible for the dumping and disposal. They take our money to dispose of them properly and then at 2 o'clock in the morning under I-95 drop them there. Do you agree that that is one of the problems with the tire companies throughout the City?

MR. SAMPSON: Yes. In the network of tire recovery, there's a group that are referred to in the industry as "tire jockeys." These are people primarily -- primarily the vehicle they use is a pickup truck. What happens is you go to the gas station or to a dealer that has tires and you

offer a price to pick up those tires. Well, there is one price that will cover the cost of your fees, your cost, and the fee of taking it to where it has to go because tires have to be paid to be gotten rid of, and then there's a fee that's somewhat less than that. And that fee, when they get that money goes into thier pocket and tires go into the pile. The largest tire piles in this country filled up by tire jockeys in pickup trucks, not big tractor-trailers, although that happens. The biggest piles in this country are filled up by people with pickup trucks. And, yes, there are a number of people out there that are in this industry that are legit, but it's hard to compete when somebody comes to place you go and you're doing it for $75 and they do it for 50.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I learned that the Streets Department will pick up tires from a residential, if you have a couple old snow tires and you put them out. I understand from looking at the commissioner that they will pick those up. Do you know how we dispose of them? Do we recycle?

MR. SAMPSON: Our tires go -- we have a

contract with an outfit up in Conshohocken, it's actually a waste management company, I believe. Domino Tire. Domino Tire grinds up their tires, and their tires are all used as tire-derived fuel. Most of their product goes up to New York, actually, and makes electricity.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So we collect tires throughout the City of Philadelphia and the ones that are short-dumped, we take them to a location in the Streets Department and then we drive them all the way to Conshohocken?

MR. SAMPSON: Well, I'm not sure of all the particulars. Yeah, they eventually have to end up in Conshohocken. I don't know that we deliver them or they pick them up -- they pick them up from us.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, that's another conversation with the Commissioner. Maybe that needs to be looked at to see if that's the most cost-effective way of disposing of them, because we have thousands of tires scattered throughout the City.

MR. SAMPSON: Eight to ten million.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Eight to ten

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million?

MR. SAMPSON: Eight to ten million.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I appreciate this because this is an issue that I don't know a whole lot about and I've learn something.

MR. SAMPSON: I really want to say this: In the Commerce Department there is a report that lays out what all the effective rules and regulations that are on the books and that discusses a whole system for how we can solve this problem.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: For the record, Madam Chair, I'm going to request that the Commerce Department provide the Chair with a copy of that report so Members of Council that are interested in this issue can review it.

MR. SAMPSON: I would suggest an presentation. It's up there.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you.

MR. SAMPSON: Sure.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam Chair. Thank you for this opportunity.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Certainly.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Good evening. In the last couple of years I can recall a program, and I don't know if it was sponsored by the Streets Department, if they interacted with community organizations and block captains.

MR. SAMPSON: Tire Roundup.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yeah, and they were paid a certain fee. Is that the Streets Department sponsored that? How did that program work?

MR. SAMPSON: Well, I'll try and describe it.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Was it an effective program?

MR. SAMPSON: I'll try and describe it and they can chime in where it isn't. The Tire Roundup is modeled after the Partnership Recycling Program where the City asked for residents to bring the tires to a location and they pay associated community groups the money for bringing those tires in. So what it is, is it's a way --

somebody has to go out and pick up the tires. And doing it this way it allows them to actually take some of the money they would have paid to someone to pick them up and it ends up going into community groups.

See, something that we have to understand, all the tires that are on the ground right now, somebody, probably us or the State, we have to pay to pick them up, okay? So we got to get them picked up then we need to make sure we have a system in place that makes it very costly to the person who dumps them. We need to put a manifest on the tires when their taken back to these dealers so that we can trace that they're actually going to end up in legitimate hands. None of these things are new or exotic; they've ben done already. Once we do that, it means when we clean up tire pile, it's not going to come back. Quite frankly, if register all the people who pick them up and they're manifest, somebody with truck full the tires better have license or we ought have a very strict penalty to what happens if carrying a truckload of tires that you can't explain. The tire problem will disappear.

That's already happening in Virginia and it can happen here, but we have to decide that that's how we want to do it.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: The question I asked with respect to the tire pickup program with the community organizations, your recollection, do you think that's an effective program? Should it be expanded, or is just essentially a band-aid approach?

MR. SAMPSON: I think that it could be -- alone, it is a band-aid approach. But it is a part of a larger program that looks at trying to clean all the tires up, I think that it's an opportunity to really get community involvement in the whole process of cleaning up tires and I think it's great idea, but only if it's part of an approach that says within two years all the tires are going to be gone that are on the ground and the opportunity of doing a roundup isn't going to be here anymore because we don't let people dump tires on the ground.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Has your organization or anyone associated with your organization had an opportunity to talk to the

Mayor's people about the Blight Removal Program?

MR. SAMPSON: Not yet, not yet.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Okay. Because I think if talking about eight million tires, that's a lot of blight and I think that you should probably talk to them so you can play some sort of role as it relates to blight removal plus the stabilization because the backside of that program is making sure that whatever they clean up stays clean. And I hear what you're saying as basically an enforcement mechanism. I suggest you contact Joyce Wilkerson in particular. She's going to be in charge of that program.

MR. SAMPSON: Who is that name again?

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Joyce Wilkerson, she's the Secretary of Strategic Planning in the Mayor's Office.

MR. SAMPSON: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Certainly, it is sad that we don't use our tire material as they do in other cities when

we recycle. We even talked about many years ago using it for covering streets, but we just -- in fact, we introduced legislation way back then to investigate the possibility of recycling them and using it that way, but...

MR. SAMPSON: Well, there are, in addition fuel uses, which is the largest use, there's a whole range of civil engineering uses that you can do with tires. I did a project two years ago where they actually count the tires and use it as a top dressing for grass so that when you walk on it, you don't get bear spots. I did another project just this past year where you put on a horse track and it actually creates a better walking surface for horses. And then there are any number of product. All the plagues in the city use a rubber derived product to make that matting. In fact, the City buys a lot of that material. And there are opportunities for economic development here. When we talk about making the products. So it gets very exciting as get past just getting them off the street.

If I can make a last comment, I would say wouldn't it be wonderful to come back to a

budget hearing a year and two years from now and say, "Gee, has anybody seen any tires lately to pick up?" Because that's something that's possible. It's just a question of our putting our political will and muscle to it and deciding that that's the way it's going to be.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. Thank you very much for your time and your excellent testimony.

Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Could I ask Commissioner Moy to come to the witness table, please?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Certainly. Commissioner.

(Commissioner Moy comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much. Another late evening.

COMMISSIONER MOY: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Please identify yourself for the record, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER MOY: My name is Laurence Moy, the Commissioner of Streets, M-O-Y.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madam

Chair.

Commissioner Moy, are you familiar with this report that the Commerce Department has about the problem, the tire problem throughout the City of Philadelphia?

COMMISSIONER MOY: Just generally. I don't have intimate knowledge of it. It was I think two years ago, was it?

MR. SAMPSON: Yeah.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: They would conduct a survey or do a study about the problem and not communicate it to the Streets Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER MOY: No, we have the report and I think that our department participated and I think Commerce and I think Moe Sampson participated, I think there was a task force and L&I participated. So we have the report, I just don't have intimate knowledge of it.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: The problem with abandoned tires throughout the City of Philadelphia, and you have to agree that it is a serious problem. Maybe to a Streets Commissioner it's just another problem, but to Councilmembers

and residents, it's really a certain as you can hear here tonight.

The approach that you use to remove abandoned or discarded the tire throughout the City, is there anything that you know of like Virginia does or other cities that appear to have this situation under control at a State level? Is there any legislation that you need to be able to do a better job? Is there additional dollars? Rather than take tires to Conshohocken, is there something that we could have here that could grind these tires and be more effective and efficient? Is there some things that you would like to do to deal with this issue that you're not able to do right now? Or do you have some of your own ideas to deal with this problem that you just aren't able to implement?

COMMISSIONER MOY: We actually at the marketplace deal with the tire problem in the sense of taking bids for a vendor such as Domino to pay -- we pay a vendor to get rid of the tires, essentially. And then they go into the reuse market. In this case, as Mr. Sampson points out, it is going to fuel. It could be used for other

kinds of things. We could turn it around and they could use it for many of the products. But we in the Streets Department have not gotten into the ideas that bringing vendors into the City. Commerce has looked at that concept, I believe, of bringing vendors in to have different kind of treatments of rubber and so on.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: What bothers me is that you ride throughout city and you see vacant lot see a dozen tires, you see five tires, you see ten tires over here. And I have to pick up my car phone call and say, "there's five tires in front of this location," I don't see enough -- I don't see a proactive approach at going out and collecting all these tires that are just left along the roadway. I know PennDOT has responsibilities, the Streets Department. But going back to the very basic, the legislation, are you able -- why can't this problem be dealt with? You've done a great job in removing the debris and everything from the City streets. Why does it appear to be such a big problem getting these tired picked up. Is it that you pick them up on Monday and they're back on Thursday? It seems to

me these piles of tires that I see are there for a very long time, for months and maybe even a year. I don't know what your constraint are, you're allowed to go onto the sidewalk to pick them up or and into vacant lots. Why is this such a difficult problem to get under control?

COMMISSIONER MOY: Well, one of the things is I think is the sheer volume. We're talking about millions of tires that are in a dynamic situation. There may be some that you talk about that are there for some time, but generally in the right-of-way, the part of the street that we take care of, when we're made aware of them, we go out and we will get them. We're talking about another group that could be on private property on lots, and that's a different piece there. We usually do not get involved as a department for that. But with respect to the cleanup of the streets themselves and the sidewalks, and there are occasions where we talk about South Philadelphia we worked with Councilman Kenney on where people were just constantly just dropping tires on fire hydrants and things like this. We would clean them, and the next week

there would be another pile that would occur there. When we went into the Tire Roundup program, for example, we agreed that the likelihood was that there were small garages and small tire shops that were probably contributing to this problem. What we tried to do is not let them benefit -- but it was hard for us not to do this- - benefit from our Tire Roundup Program. And I agree completely with mow Sampson here that this is not the only solution. We were trying to offer something. We got private funding to pay the bounty, as a matter of fact, to encourage people to do this.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Would you be willing to pull a group together, a very small working group, that can look at that Commerce Department report and possibly look at a fresh approach, a new approach for dealing with this issue? Maybe what we've created here is the people understand that if you're dump a tire, you dump it on private property. I just don't understand why -- and if it requires legislation or power that you don't presently have, I'm sure this Council would be open because this is a problem that every year

that I sit here that never seems to go away. I'd like you to really focus on this. You used an suppression just a few minutes ago, tires that you're aware of made aware of. The eyes and the ears of the Streets Department is your supervisors ride throughout the City. They shouldn't have to rely on all these people here to report a tire that doesn't belong on the roadway, that those things proactively in my opinion should be collected and taken away because, you know, you can accept some newspaper flying around the street or you can accept a cardboard box, but when drive down an inner-city street and see a dozen tires on a particular block, that in my opinion, you can't excuse that. I know you do a good job at it.

By the way. I want to congratulate you. I got the press release today that you're now getting pothole repair down for the year 2000 down to four days from the day it's reported. That's a great effort and achievement. But I would like to see you put group of people and the interested parties here in this room because this is an issue that I really think needs to be resolved; and the sooner it's resolved, the

better.

COMMISSIONER MOY: I think picking up on Councilman Clarke's suggestion, I think it would appropriate to probably involve Joyce Wilkerson as part of the blight effort. So I probably want to coordinate this effort with her.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Great.

MR. SAMPSON: I'd also like to suggest a couple of things here. One is that you have both the Recycling Advisory Committee and a Solid Waste Advisory Committee. These are citizens who had been working, some of us, for more than ten years on these issues who would love to get into this. In fact, both groups have discussed this and were involved in the study before, so there are people who are already into this before and we should take advantage of that.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I'd like, again, to be a part of the solution to this problem.

MR. SAMPSON: It would be very interesting to simply get a presentation of what was in the report. I read it tonight. Before I came. I went over to the Commerce Department. There are only three copies in the City, I

understand. So I went tonight and sat down and went through the whole report again. It's extensive. It even goes through for all the various City codes and talks about what needs to be written in order -- it has one venue in it that says, "Here's a law you can pass," and then it has another venue that says "Here's what you can do if you don't pass any laws."

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: We will do that. I know that Commissioner Moy will help to resolve this program.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Councilman.

Are there any further questions?

(No further questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER MOY: Thank you.

MR. SAMPSON: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're welcome.

Sheila Harper, Public Health Center No. 9, Sheila Harper?

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Is Brenda Kyser here from Sydenham Street?

Brad Thompson, are you here? Okay, you're next.

(Witnesses come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good evening.

MS. HARPER: Good evening, Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Welcome.

MS. HARPER: Thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Would you identify yourself for the record.

MS. HARPER: Yes. Good evening. My name is Sheila Harper, I'm Chair of the Board of Citizens for Public Health Center No. 9 located on Chelten Avenue in Germantown, 131 East.

First of all, good evening, Councilwoman Blackwell; good evening, Councilpeople; and good evening, community members. I'm here this evening to speak on behalf of not just Public Health Center No. 9, but the entire public health system. The first point that I'd like to reference is the infant mortality rate that currently exists in Northwest Philadelphia.

Currently we have the second highest infant mortality rate in the City of Philadelphia. For the Northwest area it's 14.9 percent of our babies die within the first year of death (sic). Statewide the percentage is 7.8 percent. Countrywide it's 7.6 percent or something like that. It's almost like a third-world country, okay? My concern is -- it's a few issues. One, we have a prenatal clinic that we operate currently one day per week. The average clinics, public health centers, there's eight around the city, at least operate at least two days per week. The first issue I'd like to address is to determine if we can have some additional staffing, okay, along with additional funding so that we can operate at least two days per week, if not more frequently.

Secondly, we recently -- and I'd like to thank Council for approving the funds for our renovations. We completed those, I guess, about a year ago, and we have this beautiful playroom with no furniture and no staff. In discussion with some of the resources that are currently available around the City, one being the maternity care

coalition who operates the Mom Mobile, I understand that at three of the other centers, Strawberry Mansion Clinic, Health Center No. 4, and Health Center No. 10, that they all have an arrangement with the Maternity Care Coalition to staff their playroom. Health Center No. 9, given that we have that high infant mortality rate, the second highest in the City, would like to look at that possibility of being able to have the Maternity Care Coalition staff our play room also. From what I understand, the cost of that would be in terms I believe of equipment and staff would be approximately $200,000. From the way I understand, a third of it generally is covered by the City, a third of it is also covered by whoever the provider is, and in our area it's Einstein Hospital. It used to be Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine Tenet and they have now closed their doors for prenatal care. So that's another issue that we have up at Health Center No. 9; we do not have adequate provider coverage, and hopefully eventually that will be addressed. So, therefore, what I'm basically asking is for that 33 percent which, I guess, is about $70,000 from

Council to be allocated for the specific coverage of our playroom so that parents can come and bring their children to the health centers and be seen and at the same time not have to deal with where to put the other children. On the average, a lot of people that are on prenatal care have at least to or three other children from what I understand on the Mom Mobile, which means that they can benefit from being able to come and bring thier children as opposed to missing appointments.

The other 33 percent betters can come from wherever. Now, I've been kind of examining some of the regulations around CHIPS and I understand that there is a 10 percent portion in which it can be used for administrative outreach education, counseling, and that certain community-based providers, which is really nebulous -- I put a call to the people who wrote the article to clarify, you know, certain community-based providers can waive that 10 percent maximum. CHIPS, from what I understand, I don't know, it's $24 billion for five years all around the states. I know, you know, we've done a good job in terms of getting it here, however, I

don't think the enrollment in CHIPS is where everybody would like it to be. It's also my understanding that unless we reach the cap on enrollment, the monies that we do not spend are returned to the State after a three-year period, okay?

So, therefore, I would urge Council to, number one, provide us some playroom coverage, provide us some additional staffing for our -- not additional staffing, any staffing, anybody for our playroom. I also understand that, like I said, the CHIPS Program and one of the other issues because the infant mortality rate is just so high generally in Philadelphia, certain areas got monies a few years ago, healthy start money in Southwest Philadelphia, I think at that time when I looked at the numbers, our area at Health Center No. 9 we were number three. However, we've moved up in terms of infant mortality. They put the monies in South and Southwest Philadelphia. We're now not number 3 anymore, we're number 2. Okay? So therefore -- and when I look at the statistics at some of the other areas that are operating the Mom Mobiles, the infant mortality rate doesn't

look like 14.9 percent. In one case it looks like 5.4 percent, so obviously it's working. It's an issue I feel as a mom that we have to begin to address and that some additional funding just has to be allocated. So that's the first issue that I would like Council to look into.

The second issue dealing with the tobacco settlement funding for the State. I know that a couple years ago, and I understand that that window of opportunity has not closed. Philadelphia had an option to file its own suit, okay, against the tobacco companies which meant that we would not have had to argue among the other people in this state, which we're doing right now for a little piece of pie. I understand that 10 percent of that tobacco settlement money is to go hospitals and to clinics, which is not clear. I don't know if they're talking hospital clinics, I don't know if they're talking about public health clinics, okay? The concern there is that I think we need to begin to lobby, rally. One, I think Philadelphia since the opportunity has not closed, should consider filing the own suit, okay, against the tobacco companies so that

we don't have to argue. I think the second thing is that we need to begin to -- the 10 percent that's been allotted for hospitals and clinics supposedly it's not a done deal as of yet. It's because they see a disproportionate share of the uninsured. Well, the public health centers sees 80 percent of our people who are uninsured. I know that there are should things that we would have to put in place such as the ability to be able to bill people in order to be able to cash in on that disproportionate share of the uninsured; however, that's something that I would urge us to do. A lot of the people who are uninsured that come to the public health clinics have cancer, respiratory problems, heart problems as a result of cigarette smoking, low birth rate babies, which also contributes to the high infant mortality rate. So in terms of that, I would really rally because somehow I have this feeling that public health is just not top priority on the agenda and I'm real concerned about it because, number one, the federally qualified health center money that's being eliminated by the year 2003, okay, which basically is a prime funding source for our public

health centers, I understand that there's something in place -- or not, it's not in place. It's something that's being negotiated or determined or whatever. It's not black and white yet. It's not -- I don't know what it is, okay? So if we know that there is a substantial pot of money that we're about to lose from the federal government, we know that something is going to replace it we don't know what or how much, I think it's really on us to begin to tap in on whatever additional fundings that might be available through that tobacco settlement. Okay, that's the second point.

And the third point or the other issues that I'd like to speak to is the public health centers I think should be looked at as an essential provider because without -- I guess what I'm asking Council is to look at designating it as an essential provider because without the public health centers -- right now everybody knows about the growing number of uninsured and all this stuff -- we're the ones who see them, okay? So unless additional funding is available or additional resources are being looked into, and as

the Board of Citizens we've asked this question, okay, and I mean I know that if it wasn't for the federal money, we would not be in place, the Boards of Citizens. And as a matter of fact, I also feel that if they didn't have to do it, they wouldn't have done it if we could have gotten that federal funding without having Boards of Citizens. But I think that the input is like really critical, so I'd like us to look at designating all of the public health centers as essential community providers.

Thirdly, I'd like to look at -- looking at some sort of legislation or commission on access to care, okay. For example, when things like what happened with Tenet impact a community like Germantown -- I mean, in Germantown we have a lot of things going on. We lost Germantown Hospital. We no longer have a Medical College of Pennsylvania with charitable admission. I think they allocate a hundred thousand dollars a year to see the uninsured. Well, that's a drop in the bucket. Okay. That means that there are certain things that are going on in that community that I really feel need to be monitored a little bit more

closely, given the loss of resources to that community. So therefore, what I'd like to do is to recommend that we have some sort of legislation on commission on access to care, given the cutbacks. I mean, in other words, any time a nonprofit hospital decides to go for-profit, any time nonprofit HMO decides to go for-profit, I think that it needs to be looked at in terms its impact on that particular community. And I'm asking Council to take a look at it and its impact on the community currently in Germantown.

There are also some other issues which I guess I've kind of spoken to in the past. Like I said, our renovations have been completed.

We still don't have ventilation in our restrooms at all. I know that if this was public facility like a restaurant, that would not be allowed, okay. That's something that I would like to see completed.

We also have major pharmacy problems. I think a year ago we were told that we would get I think two additional pharmacists that were going to rotate through all of the public health centers; it never materialized. Likewise, nursing

staff at Public Health Center No. 9, our budget says that we have three nurses. Well, we're operating with one nurse. And apparently, some recent changes to the test, the Civil Service test, no one can pass it? And I mean, you know, 12,000 patient is what we see yearly. You know, one nurse handling 12,000 -- and I understand that we borrow people from the AIDS nurse and this, that, and the other, but when an AIDS patient comes in that AIDS patient takes priority.

I'm concerned about the staffing, the nursing staffing, the clerical staffing which is an ongoing problem. I'm concerned about the overall appearance. And, you know,maybe I'm wrong. The overall appearance that it's just kind of -- something else going on that we as citizens don't know about, okay? So the staffing issues, like I said, with the nursing and the clerical staff.

Also, we raised the issue last year of extended hours to deal with the welfare-to-work moms, you know, so that they would not have to take time from their jobs to come see a doctor. You know, we would like to see that happen at

least one night a week. I have seen no progress towards that. Again, I remain concerned about it.

And I guess the final thing in terms of the legislation that we're talking about this commission on access to care, you know, I would like to see, one, what the -- I know there should be a plan that public health has. I mean, a lot of public health departments around the country are making decisions on whether or not they're going to keep primary care and just do the whole general prevention stuff that they used to do. And I know, you know, we only have a limited pot of money. I don't know if we're working towards something like that type of thing in terms of forgetting about the primary care and let's just do -- because we're not really doing a good job of doing both, you know, with the limitations on the funding. So therefore, whatever plans, let's say, that a managed care organization or hospital might have to service the people that don't have coverage, I'd like to be able to see some sort of plan in place so that, you know, come year 2003 when this federal money goes away, you know, there's something else in place and at least we're

beginning to look at it. And again, in all due respect to our commissioner, you know, I think she's done a wonderful, wonderful job in terms of mental health particularly. The public health side, and I guess it's from my standpoint, it's an essential community provider and I'm just not certain where it is as federally mandated community boards I think that we should have a lot more discussions or answers. For example, I specifically said, you know, the FQAC, whatever this that's supposed to replace that funding, can you give it to me or mail it to me? "Okay." You know, two weeks later I didn't get it.

"Can you mail it to me? Can you fax it to me?" Two weeks later, still don't have it.

So again, you know, I don't know -- I know that as a volunteer, okay, and all of our boards are volunteers, you know, we're committed or at least I'm committed. And there were a few of my colleagues tonight that could not attend, Sue Rosenthal's mom died and so she had to attend to her funeral and Walt Palmer had a class that he had to teach this evening. But I'm speaking on behalf of all our public health centers, you know,

to address that issue of the infant mortality to look into this 10 percent waiver, whatever it is that CHIPS has. If this is some money, we need to spend it. And I'm not asking for the City to foot all the bill, but I'm asking I guess for some communications back and forth between all the boards. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Are there any questions?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Director Estelle Richman is here as well as Acting Commissioner Domzalski. And certainly we would hope, Commissioner, that you will be in touch with Councilwoman Miller who's at another meeting tonight and bring to her attention the issues of Health Center No. 9, especially with regard to infant mortality. He is committed to doing that as well. Also, please move and let her know, get in touch with Councilwoman Miller's office tomorrow if you haven't done that, so she will know that you want to --

MS. HARPER: Yeah, I talked to her

earlier today. And I think the second thing, I don't know if they still have a health committee or something. I know last year we talked about, you know, rather than to come in and do this dog and pony show, which is what I feel like, you know, we're doing here, we'd like to have input, you know, prior to the budget when it's almost finalized, okay. So if there's still an existing Health and Welfare Committee --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely, we still do have that committee, and I think that the best way to access that is to work with Councilwoman Miller and certainly we want to do everything we can to keep you informed and to have you feel at ease that we do everything we can. Knowing Director Richman, I know that there are no federal dollars we could have gotten that she didn't access. She's an expert at that. So I'm sure that if you had more information about it, you would know because every dollar we can get, that's one of the things she does quite well. She's accessed for our City. That, I can assure you of. And she's nodding yes, so she's done that. So we want to work with you and allay your

fears that some of these issues -- to allay your fears that they're not being addressed because they really are. We work very, very hard in the area of health. Our City has done a lot, in spite of the fact that we have issues in health centers, but our City's doing a lot to try to improve health for citizens. So if you will do that, if you'll keep in touch with Councilman Miller who will give the rest of the Council direction, that would be the best way to approach that.

Councilwoman Tasco?

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'd just like to say that I chair the Public Health and Human Services Committee. My staff person is Brenda Frazier if you'd like meet with her. The other issue is that there will hearings in City Council on resolutions sponsored by Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds-Brown and some of us who will have a discussion about the tobacco dollars. You might want to contact her office to get the -- well, the hearing will be sometime after the budget.

MS. HARPER: Okay, because I know

they're working on a resolution now. There's a coalition of people that I'm a part of, too, that we're trying to whatever author it in order to, you know, present it to whomever in Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Certainly, you can present it to Council. I think if you want to impact on the dollars, you should talk to the State.

MS. HARPER: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Right now the legislature will be looking at the Governor's budget. You might want to talk to your State representative to impact how they determine the money will flow.

MS. HARPER: What about the issue of Philadelphia filing its own suit since we had that option?

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I can't get into the discussion about that. There are a lot of people were involved in the suit. I think at this point, it would be somewhat moot. I think the point is now you have to access the Governor because the suit has been filed and the State has been granted so many dollars. So to start all

over again I think would be moot.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Ms. Harper, the Councilwoman's made her staff available as well, Brenda Frazier, very capable attorney, and if you would get in touch with her; and invited you to a public hearing on the issue of tobacco, so that's a very, very good, good thing to do.

MS. HARPER: Okay, thanks.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you so much.

Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Madam Chair?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes, sir.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I wanted to ask Miss Harper something.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Miss Harper, I'm sorry I was out of room while you were testifying, but I'm very concerned about the health centers, about the fact that I'm told that people have to wait weeks often for appointments. Is that true recently?

MS. HARPER: We've done things like

designate a walk-in doctor, you know, to deal with just the walk-in patients. However, there's still a long wait. We have people who are just discharged from the hospital that might need to come back and forth for medications and, you know, when your diabetic with heart problems and things like that, you don't really want to sit up in there for four to six hours and hopefully be seen and then come back the next day for your medication because there's not enough pharmacists. So, no, I mean, you know, I think that effort are being made in that area, but it's not producing any major results right now. There's about a six-week waiting period for you to even get into the health center without being a walk-in patient. If you were to schedule an appointment, it's about six weeks from now, you know, if you wanted to do a whole complete physical, that you would finally get into the center. So that's a significant delay.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Large what percentage of people in Philadelphia that need the services of the health center do you think know about its existence and its availability?

MS. HARPER: At Health Center No. 9, we see about 12,000 patient a year. And I think citywide it looks like it's maybe 350,000 patients a year at all of the different centers. Whether or not things are getting better -- my concern, sir, is the cutbacks that are coming from the federal government and the plan that's in place to deal with that cutback. I'm not sure if I'm answering your question.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, what percentage of the people who would tend to utilize the public health center because they lack insurance of any kind, what percentage of those people know of its availability and utilize the services?

MS. HARPER: I mean, we're kind of like unless you knew that we were there, there's these little signs but they're nothing that's really major. There's no marketing effort. I think that we are not in a position -- what happens is we don't want to see any more people without insurance because -- I mean, we do see them, but it's not a priority because that's not helping us to offset our cost. It's making us come back to

you guys to ask you to give us some more money, you know. To be able to see more patients, which we do accept all the other insurances, the Medicaid, the Medicares and the managed care organizations, to have some of those patients also come would help to offset our operating cost so that, you know, the City doesn't constantly have to pour in money to cover the uninsured, which is why talking earlier about whatever tobacco settlement funds and stuff like that. I mean, 80 percent of the people that we see of that 350,000 people a year don't have insurance, okay. So I mean, yeah, I'm sure that that's going to impact, and the bottom line is we don't want to see it go away because for many of us it's essential, it's an essential community provider.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: For those 300 patient visits, how many of them are repetitive? How many separate people do you think there are among the 300 patient visits? How many patients are actually being serviced?

MS. HARPER: At Health Center No. 9, it's 12,000 individual bodies.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Separate people come

in?

MS. HARPER: Yes.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And out of a population of what?

MS. HARPER: In Germantown, I'm not really -- I'm not certain. I don't really know.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, in Germantown my expectation would be that a study would produce maybe 10, 15 times 12,000.

MS. HARPER: Mm-hmm.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Who could utilize the services.

MS. HARPER: I agree. I agree that there's a larger percentage of people that could utilize service if they could get in on a more timely basis.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: You know I'm impressed that citizens like yourself are coming in tonight and all of you show sensitivity to the cost of operations. You want to be careful not to ask for too much, not to put too much of a financial strain on the City. I just wish some of these big outfits like those that want DisneyQuest, and want stadiums and all would show

at least a portion of the concern that the ordinary citizens show for the fiscal problems of the City. But thank you very much. I think you're doing God's work in doing the work for health centers. I think we've got to make them available to everybody and not on a wait two week or four weeks or six weeks basis.

MS. HARPER: I agree.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Thank you, Miss Harper.

MS. HARPER: And my final comment, I'm going to send copies of my testimony to all Councilmembers within about a week, okay? Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you so much.

And, Councilman, as you know, when the Health Department testified we talked again about the numbers going back up. Commissioner Richman fought to lower these numbers for people waiting to get seen on an emergency basis at health centers, and the numbers are going back up and

waiting list is long again due to the extra pressure now that's on the centers. That's serious issue and a very, very important one where we need citizens taken care of.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Madam Chair, I would suggest that a portion of the money we think of devoting to the stadiums into the future go instead to take care of the health needs of the people of Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I assume the Mayor is listening to that, that a portion of the stadium money is the recommendation that that go to our health centers.

Mr. Brad Thompson, Park Budget; and then Ruth Birchett, Heritage Community Development Corporation.

MR. THOMPSON: Good evening.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good evening.

MR. THOMPSON: I'm Brad Thompson and I live at 235 West Winona in Germantown. I'm here tonight to encourage Council to increase the funding to Fairmount Park.

I'm an avid user of the park and especially the larger watershed parks. I, like

others in the City, love to run and hike and visit the historic sites. And for a great reason, or a big reason is why I moved to the city was to be close to this resource. I also think it's difficult to have a world-class city without a world-class park system. And for those reasons, I'm here tonight.

The parks are in bad shape, and everywhere you go there are instances of deferred maintenance. We need the parks for active and passive recreation and for just contemplation. The children in the City need the parks for exercise and to grow and develop. I and others need the park for releasing tension and running and exercise. Parks are not frivolous, especially to the people who cannot easily afford to get away from the city on vacations or health clubs or tickets to museums.

Each time I visit the park I am aware of deferred maintenance. There are few places in the world or in this country where you have the natural lands and sports fields and recreation and historic opportunities that we have in Philadelphia. They lack funding which continues

to threaten this resource. The trails are in poor condition. The signage is either non-existent or lacking. And the park equipment and furnishings are often broken and vandalized. I see benches which are destroyed, trash blowing all over the place, sports fields in need of rehabilitation, historic mansions disintegrating. The list goes on and on. There are trash dump sites, sewer smells and graffiti. Cars are abandoned, set on fire, and left there. As quick as the park removes them a new, a net batch seems to arrive I've seen ATVs; they actually push you off the trails and they do incredible damage to the landscape.

You don't see anyone policing in the park, and it's no wonder that people perceive the park as an unsafe place to be. Weeds and unkempt landscapes are seen throughout the park. Designed areas aren't maintained to their full potential. Sidewalks and restrooms are crumbling. Everywhere you look, there's something that needs to be repaired. There's a crying need for policing. As a matter of fact, many people see the disintegration or the beginning of the

disintegration of the park pointing to the time when the police were removed from the park. We need increased funding for the rangers; it's our only hope to reclaim the park.

In Council's hands is the ability to fully fund the park like other major U.S. and European cities. It will be money well invested in attracting people back to the city neighborhood, together with school reform, crime reduction, we would have what many families are looking for. Your role in protecting the park is a crucial one, and I encourage Council to increase the spending.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you so much, Mr. Thompson.

Are any question from questions from members of the committee?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Ruth Birchett from Heritage Community Development Corporation.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. BIRCHETT: Good evening. Thank

you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're welcome.

MS. BIRCHETT: For sacrificing your evening. I'm sure you could be with your families but you're here with us.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. I think all of us. I had four meetings so I missed my meetings so I would have been at another Town Meeting on education.

MS. BIRCHETT: Well, I hope my notes serve me well in that I can make comments as concise as possible. My name is Ruth Birchett, B-I-R-C-H-E-T-T, and I'm founder of Heritage Community Economic Development Corporation in North Philadelphia. And I wanted to talk about the blight elimination plan and to say that in our North Philadelphia neighborhood we have great anticipation for this. I happen to live in a house where my family's been 50 years, and we're vested in our community. However, it's been a difficult journey. It's been a good journey, but it's also been a difficult journey. Across from my home there are no houses left standing and we

find ourselves surrounded by huge vacant lots, some that expand a full square block. And so while we're very, very interested in having new construction and certainly the rehabilitation of existing structures that can be salvaged, we also understand that blight elimination is more than bricks and mortar. We also have a very real concern about restoring the social infrastructure of our neighborhoods as well. But on the issue of the bricks and mortar, it's amazing to imagine a billion dollars being targeted to turn our neighborhoods around here in the City. We have benefitted in seeing how far our City can go with economic development when there's a particular interest spent on businesses. And we're very happy about Mayor Street's focus on the neighborhoods as well. We've always believe that we can do both. And we are happy that we have that kind of leadership to say that it is indeed important.

And one of the things I really advocate for is to look at the expenditure of those funds with an eye toward leveraging every single dollar possible to create job opportunities and to create

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opportunities for neighborhoods economic development.

In listening to the discussion about recycling for example, I wasn't sitting here thinking about contacting a vendor who might come and get our tires and take them away, but rather I was thinking of exploring the creation of a business that would be Philadelphia-based that could process those tires itself that citizens could literally take their tires and drop them off there at no cost. Businesses such as that have to exist somewhere. We may as well have the revenue. Why give away millions an millions of tires that can be utilized to create jobs here and also solve a major problem. Many of the vacant lots in our community are some of the vacant lots that these tires end up on. My organization and the children with our science an nature club have engaged in competitions over the summer using summer youth workers to clean lots, and we enjoy a wonderful relationship with the clean and seal unit of Licenses and Inspections. In fact, we had a goal to clean a hundred lots in any one summer and the highest we've gotten has been 93, which is

remarkable.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It is remarkable.

MS. BIRCHETT: It is remarkable for teens, it is a remarkable effort from the people in the community who support, you know, our efforts. However, there needs to be more. So I'm really pleased to have heard all the focus on recycling because while we in the '80s found ourselves really struggling with the issue of short-dumping on these vacant lots and believed that Council and the state legislature did some things that they needed to do to make it more problematic for persons who would do that we haven't been able to resolve that issue with the tire situation.

I'd like to say, also, with regard to the recycling issue that plastics is something that makes me wonder. I'm also block captain of my block and I'm a committee person as well, and my block has begun to recycle on a regular basis to the point where a neighbor will literally call me or I will call someone else and say, "This is recycling day," because it is difficult to

remember every other week, and so I do support the concept of having the recycling be once a week and also perhaps coinciding with pickup day. And I know people will have a transition. I remember years ago when we had a garbage can and a trash can and, you know, it was kind of -- it was a struggle then and you did it in the summertime worry about maggots and all those other kinds of things. However, when we went to getting rid of the whole issue of garbage cans, we still -- people adapted. We did adapt, and I believe with the recycling we can adapt, too. But we're not using all the resources that we can use at our hand. For example, we have Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee has a list of 6,000 block captains. Now, I as a block captain I have received recycling literature through the mail, but this kind of initiative requires hands on. It requires community outreach, and I will really advocate for the recycling which in fact is the law in Pennsylvania and the law in the County of Philadelphia, but it is an unknown law and it is simply incredible and one that could really help us deal with the issue of trash on our vacant lots

and also on our streets. So I will advocate for somehow for the Philadelphia the Beautiful Committee as well as the Recycling Office to be working together to energize block captains to get in on the act.

Last year when the Mayor and the Streets Department introduced Curby Bucket to the Philadelphia community, it was my after-school program and my science and nature club that took off from school and came out to help do that. We have a commitment to recycling, but there really does need to be a visible campaign.

I'd like to say also that with regard to blight elimination as well and part of what our neighborhoods need, we need to, as we're trying to restore neighborhoods like ours in North Philadelphia, for example -- our areas is the area where the riot were years ago. I was sitting on my steps the night of the riots, and our neighborhood has gone down ever since. And certainly it wasn't just the turmoil of the '60s that did it. We a major problem with police brutality and a bunch of other things as well. And certainly heroin coming into the community and

then the gang warring situation didn't help matters at all, and the poverty, you know, was problematic as well. However, there are many, many families that have stayed regardless. It is very, very critical that we look at as we look at rebuilding our neighborhood that we look at how much we want to keep, how much of what we want to have in our neighborhood, and how much we don't want to have.

For example, it has been a concern for me that our North Philadelphia neighborhoods have been the target of recovery houses. And as someone who has run residential housing for the mentally ill, for the mentally retarded, for the homeless population and have advocated for housing throughout the City, I find myself as an advocate not to the extreme of "not in my neighborhood," but very, very sad because I'm seeing a ressentiment toward this population of people, people who are substance abusers. That's unfair. It also is causing us to digress from a matter of tolerance that we had built up toward. Having any type of residential housing in a neighborhood has always taken a lot of care, a lot of concern and a

lot of effort on the part of provider as well as community people. And I've heard community people say over and over again that they're sick and tired of this. It baffles me how in the Health Department you can have the Office of Mental Health and Mental Retardation which are the trendsetters in this town, as far as I'm concerned, and I'm speaking out as a disabilities professional, have been the trendsetters in going out and working with neighborhoods to try to gain access for people with special populations. They have standards about oversaturation, standards about placement in housing, standards about normalization and not warehousing people into one cluster of the area. And I would like to see CODAP somehow confer with the people in the Office of Mental Health and Mental Retardation to look at what policies and practices and principles of operation that they have set forth and perhaps pattern something behind that. I think it will do a lot to give direction to the providers in an industry, for lack of a better word to describe it, that is evolving and coming up but doesn't have the same structure that MHMR does.

And I would just like to say with regard to the social infrastructure as well, I'm very, very pleased that Mayor Street has put forth within the budget increase for after-school programs.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. BIRCHETT: We believe that that is the very smart thing to do. Heritage began ten years ago in my home to respond to the situation of blight in our community, however, the children and elders and everyone else was so at risk because also ten years ago uzzis were on our blocks and just creating all kinds of problems so a lot of people were at risk. Well, now we have an after-school program, and I'm seeing with that that it is a desperate need for the existence of after-school programs, certainly particularly over the last year with our welfare reform. But as we look at the need for after-school programs, we really must remember the need to accommodate children with special needs. A lot of difficulties that families are having and children are having with achieving in school is directly related to their ability to function adequately.

And it concerns me that the School District does not do everything it can do with their expertise on the issue of early intervention and ensuring that the needs of children are assessed and accommodated. Parent after parent has come to me in frustration voicing upset that they have a child that's been suspended over and over again, they have a child who's having problems and the answer is to remove them or to suspend them rather than to examine what is the problem with that child and child's level of functioning. And so, you know, I advocate for that to really be looked at because even in -- not just in a school environment do you find that it is difficult to accommodate some children, but you will find that also in the after-school environment as well. And we in our after-school program have even accommodated special children but with far less structure and support than the school district.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. Can you start wrapping it up, Ms. Birchett.

MS. BIRCHETT: Yes, I will.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

MS. BIRCHETT: I also want to thank

Council, too, for the renovations to Health Center 5. I'm a patient of Health Center 5 and I boast that we have some of the best staff anywhere as health care professionals. We have people at our health care center, and I'm also vice president of their community board, but we have people at our health center staff who have been there 20 an 30 years, very, very committed personnel. However, they operate at a disadvantage. It's not just the patients that are operating at a disadvantage. When there isn't enough personnel and people can't get an appointment in time, they're frustrated. We have a broken door at Health Center 5 because a dental patient was in so much pain and so distressed that he ended up just acting out in frustration. We have had a pharmacist open the door to come out of the pharmacy and he was punched. You know, it is a problem in a neighborhood such as ours where a person leaves the prescription and has to come back a day or so later to get it. That person may have walked to that health center, that person may have taken off from work, that person may have the inability, if an elder in particular, to have the chance to come

back to find that it may be ready or it may not be ready. And I know that the Health Department has attempted to address this effort, but I just need to say to you that we need an increase in the personnel for pharmacies, but we also need to really seriously look at and make financial accommodations to every extent possible for the personnel increases as the population of uninsured people has increased as well.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely. Very, very important. And we've heard that theme over and over.

MS. BIRCHETT: Yes, I'm sure. And then the last thing I'd like to mention is the police department as it relates to, again, social infrastructure, and some people may not view that immediately as an issue of social infrastructure, but we do. It is important that the police department work along with communities. We've spent a lot of time over the past 15 years at least working on community policing, community policing. And it concerns me when in some people's mind with a department it is still something as active and something we want to

pursue, but it concerns me when the Commissioner doesn't seem to share that. You know, we as you may know we have a very serious problem in the City about gunfire on New Year's eve. And I found it difficult to explain to people what the situation and how it was accelerating in our community to the point where I put my tape recorder outside of my window in 1998 on New Year's Eve and met with the Police Commissioner in the hopes that we could get him to work with us to develop a year-long campaign because it's not just the drug dealers that are out there shooting these guns; it is also the homeowners who just blow that gun out one time a year, and the bullet has got to land somewhere. It was our belief as community people that if Camden can get rid of fires on Halloween, the hundred fires every Halloween the way that they did with clergy, police, neighborhood people, Town Watch, children everybody working together, that they had nothing on our community-based organizations here in this town that we could do the same thing as well. And it's our hope that during this year that we can keep the issue alive, the issue of guns in our

community, but also trying to make sure that that behavior diminishes even more in the next year.

And lastly on the issue of --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Ms. Birchett, you've got to tie it up, please.

MS. BIRCHETT: I understand that, but --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We're going to give you another minute and then you're going to have to complete your testimony.

MS. BIRCHETT: That's fine. Mayor Street had indicated an interest in suing the gun manufacturers. And I would just like to state that we are in favor of that, that I'm disappointed at the steps that are taken in Harrisburg that prevented counties from being able to do that, but I believe that if the Mayor and the Council thought it important to do so that you would find a lot of neighborhood support for you.

And with that I end my comments and also encourage your tolerance for the testimony of community people as you do for the heads of your departments. I know that they have a lot more to talk about, but it's not often that we get a

chance to have the forum and we try not to be lengthy, but it's important to be on the record. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Miss Birchett, I think you set forth an excellent program for making Philadelphia a world-class city, and I think you have your priorities right because I heard no mention of stadiums in that direction. I heard a whole series of suggestions from you to improve life in the neighborhoods and I congratulate you on that and hope you win a lot of support for the kind of programs you talked about. Thank you.

MS. BIRCHETT: Thank you, Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Is there anyone else here who would like to testify? Is there anyone else?

Yes, ma'am, come forward.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Is there

anyone else here?

All right, give us your name for the record.

MS. FABIAN: My name is Joanne Fabian. Laurel Sweeney and I --

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Oh, yes, we had you down earlier for 1:30. Okay, Ms. Fabian, thank you.

MS. FABIAN: Honorable Members of Council and guests, we represent the Fisher Park Community Alliance which is an advocacy group for Fisher Park. It's a 26-acre park, urban park located on Fifth Street in the 6000 block between Spencer and Champlost Street. Right now the park operates by a tight group of volunteers under Fairmount Park and we have come to you tonight to ask for your support in helping the park be revitalized.

As many neighborhoods in the City, we have been neglected. We view our park as both a unifier and a refuge for enjoyment. That unifier ties to unify a very richly diverse group of residents. The capital improvements we are seeking may highlight some of the neglect. We're

asking for additional lighting, especially on the west and north sides of the park. We're looking to resurface the tennis courts for many of the summer programs that exist for our children in the community. We're looking to have bike police, not only in our park, but also could be shared with the Olney community. Many of our young mothers are leaving the City and going to suburban parks to use the playgrounds elsewhere for their toddlers, so we are asking that we have a tot lot for the many children and toddlers in our area and also enhanced playground equipment that meets current standards.

Our teens have no movie theaters. Our children have no bowling allies. We have no place for our children. And we are hoping that by revitalizing the park, we can interest our teens and bring them back into the community and integrate them more than they are so now.

We'd like to think that the money that the City invest into the parks are fewer dollars that are spent on criminal justice costs especially with your young teenagers. And tonight we ask you for your help and support for Fisher

Park. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Councilwoman Tasco?

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

I'd just like to say that Fisher Park is in the 9th Councilmanic District. I want to thank the ladies for coming down to testify. We asked them and we appreciate your waiting and your testimony, and certainly we're very supportive for you and the park and I applaud you for the wonderful work you all do there and you all are volunteers and they are a wonderful group and they just represent a small portion of the larger committee but they're very active and work very hard so we support you.

MS. FABIAN: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Madam Chair?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: To the two -- is

this anybody in the audience from the Recreation Department who -- well, Fairmount Park is under the jurisdiction that would know about how much funding the County of Philadelphia gets compared to other funding by the State of counties. Is there anybody familiar with that?

The reason I ask that question is it's my understanding that the City of Philadelphia in its role as a county gets less funding for parks than any other of the 67 counties in the State. That this is an example where the City of Philadelphia is simultaneously the County of Philadelphia precisely the same jurisdiction, we get shortchanged. The State treats us as a city for park purposes but for purposes of supporting the court system, it treats us as a county and says we have to assume county responsibilities, but we don't get any benefit from being a county. That's one of the problems that this Council, I think, is going to be addressing in the future. Thank you.

MS. FABIAN: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes, I yield to you.

2/29/00, Operating Budget, Bill 000005

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: May I, Madam Chair?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: One of the problems that I observe is that there's some confusion -- I don't know if confusion, but doesn't seem to be a very efficient way, where some of these community parks are managed by the Recreation Department. And forgive me if I've got it vice versa. And I don't understand how the Recreation Department when there's not one bit of recreation equipment in these community parks is responsible for maintaining what Fairmount Park Commission should be maintaining. So I think we really need, and I know the acting Recreation Commissioner is here, for someone to provide to the Chair the rationale of why the Recreation Department is responsible for a facility that I call a park when it's not a recreation facility. So I think that maybe we've got this placed improperly and not the most department. No disrespect when I say not the most efficient department, but not the right place for the maintenance of these facilities. I know Vernon Park, is that a facility that's maintained by the Recreation Department?

MR. CARAPUCCI: Yes.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I can't figure how Vernon Park figures as a recreation facility. There's no play equipment in there, is there Commissioner?

MR. CARAPUCCI: No, there isn't.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So I think that that whole issue needs to be visited to see if maybe the transfer of that maintenance responsibility should go to the Fairmount Park Commission rather than the Recreation Commissioner.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

Is this anyone else here to testify?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right. As soon as the president comes back verifying the date we recess until, but for tonight we're over and we will announce this committee will stand in recess until and I'll give you that date in a few seconds.

Thank you everybody, and members from the administration, too. I know it's a grueling

experience, but it will get better. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Committee of the Whole will stand in recess until Monday, March the 6th at 9 o'clock. Thank you.

(Adjourned at 8:45 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing proceedings of the Council of the City of Philadelphia of February 29, 2000, were reported fully and accurately by me, and that this is a correct transcript of same.

RE: COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
BILL NO. 000005

_____,
JOSEPHINE CARDILLO,
Registered Professional Reporter