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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC MEETING
BEFORE COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON RULES

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, March 28, 2000
10:10 a.m.

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BILL NO. 000105 - An ordinance approving the
redevelopment proposal of the Redevelopment
Authority of the City of Philadelphia for the
redevelopment of a portion of the Parkside
National Register Historical District
Redevelopment Area. . .

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PRESENT: COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN
COUNCILMAN FRANK DICICCO
COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER

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

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: This is the
4 public hearing of the Rules Committee. I would
5 ask the clerk to read the title of Bill No. 105.

6 THE CLERK: An ordinance approving the
7 redevelopment proposal of the Redevelopment
8 Authority of the City of Philadelphia for the
9 redevelopment of a portion of the Parkside
10 National Register Historical District
11 Redevelopment Area, Parkside National Register
12 Historical District Urban Renewal Area being the
13 area generally bounded by Parkside Avenue and
14 Girard Avenue on the north, the Conrail freight
15 rail yard right-of-way line running east and
16 parallel to 38th Street on the east; the railroad
17 right-of-way line of the former Pennsylvania
18 Railroad on the south; and Belmont Avenue on the
19 west; approving the urban renewal plan and
20 determining that such plan and redevelopment
21 proposal conform to the general locality plan and
22 make adequate provisions for individuals, business
23 concerns, and families who are displaced;
24 determining necessity for changes in and for
25 zoning streets, alleys, public ways, street

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2 patterns, locations, and relocation of public
3 utilities; determining that the urban renewal plan
4 and the redevelopment proposal prohibit
5 discrimination because of race, color, creed, sex,
6 sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, or
7 handicap; declaring that the condemnation is not
8 imminent with respect to the project except as
9 otherwise expressly provided in the proposal; and
10 declaring the redevelopment undertakings in the
11 project to be an important part of the City's
12 program to remove and prevent the spread of urban
13 blight.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Mr. Wetzel?

15 (Mr. Wetzel comes forward.)

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Good morning.

17 MR. WETZEL: Good morning.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Please
19 identify yourself for the record and proceed with
20 your testimony.

21 MR. WETZEL: Good morning. My name is
22 Herbert Wetzel, and I'm Acting Executive Director
23 of the Redevelopment Authority of the City of
24 Philadelphia.

25 Madam Chairwoman and members of the

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2 Rules Committee, as I stated, I'm Herbert Wetzel,
3 and I'm Acting Executive Director of the
4 Redevelopment Authority of the City of
5 Philadelphia. I'm requesting your approval of
6 Bill No. 105, which would authorize the following,
7 and it authorizes the establishment of the
8 redevelopment proposal and urban renewal plan of
9 the Parkside National Register Historic
10 Redevelopment District. And being in the area
11 generally bounded by Parkside Avenue, Girard
12 Avenue on the north, the Conrail freight yard
13 right-of-way running east of and parallel to the
14 38th Street, and on the east, the railroad
15 right-of-way of the former Pennsylvania Railroad
16 on the south, and Belmont Avenue on the west.

17 Bill No. 105, the redevelopment
18 proposal and urban renewal plan, would provide for
19 the acquisition of five properties. The purpose
20 of these acquisitions is to facilitate the
21 development plan by the Philadelphia Health
22 Management Corporation for the construction of
23 Interim House West, a transitional housing for
24 women with addictions and their children. The
25 facility would provide housing for 20 adults and

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2 45 children. This facility will also provide
3 space for intensive drug treatment, primary health
4 care, and computer-based job training. Relocation
5 of one existing business will be necessary.

6 The Planning Commission, at its meeting
7 on February 3, 2000, certified the Parkside
8 National Register Historic District Redevelopment
9 Area as blighted, and adopted the Parkside
10 National Register Historic District Redevelopment
11 Area plan. The certification request was made on
12 behalf of the Philadelphia Health Management
13 Corporation and is supported by the Office of
14 Housing and Community Developmental, which has
15 allocated \$110,00 for pre-development and
16 acquisition activities.

17 This bill will eliminate a blighting
18 influence on the community, enhance community
19 development, and support community economic
20 revitalization efforts. Therefore, Madam
21 Chairwoman and members of the Rules Committee, I
22 respectfully urge you to take favorable
23 consideration of Bill No. 105.

24 At this time, I would also like to
25 formally request a waiver of the rules to allow

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2 for first reading of the bill on March 30, 2000,
3 and a second reading and passage on April 6, 2000.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,
6 Mr. Wetzel.

7 Are the five properties occupied, or
8 are they vacant?

9 MR. WETZEL: The one property is an
10 existing business -- it's an auto repair shop --
11 and the other properties are vacant. And the auto
12 repair shop is -- the operator of the business is
13 leasing from the owner. They are not the owner-
14 occupant of the auto repair shop.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And you're
16 making the appropriate -- you're taking the
17 appropriate steps to relocate the business?

18 MR. WETZEL: Yes. The business would
19 be entitled to relocation benefits as a commercial
20 enterprise under the Uniform Relocation Act, which
21 is a federal act which has governed this situation
22 because we're using federal dollars to acquire the
23 properties.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you tell
25 us what the cost of acquiring the properties will

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2 be?

3 MR. WETZEL: Just one moment, please.

4 (Mr. Wetzel confers off the record with
5 colleagues.)

6 MR. WETZEL: Approximately 167,000.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we know if
8 there is community support for this?

9 MR. WETZEL: Yes. Mr. James Brown is
10 here. For those who don't know him, Jim Brown has
11 been a major developer in the area and a resident
12 of the community and will be testifying today,
13 representing the Parkside community.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

15 Are there any other questions of Mr.
16 Wetzel from members of the committee?

17 The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

18 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Good morning,
19 Mr. Wetzel.

20 MR. WETZEL: Good morning.

21 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: In the -- it's
22 actually the PHMC testimony, it talks about eight
23 properties between Parkside Avenue and Viola
24 Street; is that correct, is that what we're
25 talking about?

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2 MR. WETZEL: Yeah. I'm making the
3 assumption that there's some private acquisition
4 that's part of this as well. So we're taking five
5 of the properties and the other three are being
6 privately acquired.

7 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. And is it
8 anywhere in the materials what the addresses are
9 of the five properties?

10 MR. WETZEL: There's a fact sheet, and
11 if you don't have it, we will make copies of it,
12 and I can read those addresses into the record if
13 you would like.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please.

15 MR. WETZEL: 4108-10 Parkside, 4112
16 Parkside, 4114 Parkside, 4114 Parkside, 4120
17 Parkside, and 4109-11 Viola Street.

18 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: 4109 to 11 Viola?

19 MR. WETZEL: Right, that is correct.

20 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Councilwoman
21 Blackwell wins again. I just can't get some of
22 that activity on the other side of Belmont
23 Avenue. I was hoping that this might be the
24 development that goes across, but. . .

25 Thank you very much.

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2 MR. WETZEL: You're welcome.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are there any
4 other questions of Mr. Wetzel?

5 (No further questions.)

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I believe our
7 next witness is Mr. John Loeb.

8 (Mr. John Loeb comes forward.)

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good
10 morning.

11 MR. LOEB: Good morning. Thank you for
12 the opportunity to come to testify in support of
13 this project, Madam Chairwoman. My name is John
14 Loeb and I'm --

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Excuse me,
16 Mr. Loeb, could you pull the microphone closer to
17 you.

18 MR. LOEB: I'm sorry. My name is John
19 Loeb, and I am the Senior Vice President at the
20 Philadelphia Health Management Corporation.
21 Philadelphia Health Management Corporation is a
22 nonprofit organization. We were established in
23 1972, and we serve Philadelphia and the
24 surrounding counties. Our mission is to improve
25 the health of the community through outreach,

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2 education and health promotion, research planning,
3 technical assistance, and direct services.

4 We've been working in collaboration
5 with the Parkside Historic Preservation
6 Corporation over the past three years as a part of
7 their Parkside 2000 initiative, which is a
8 comprehensive initiative that you have seen
9 described in the document that was prepared by the
10 City Planning Commission. Our efforts have been
11 to help really cofound a coalition in East
12 Parkside, or the Parkside Historic District, which
13 is representative of all the community
14 organizations, the churches, and the major
15 institutions in the area, as well as helping to
16 support the revitalization of the community
17 organization in that area, the East Parkside
18 Residents Association.

19 We meet monthly as a coalition and we
20 share each of the organizations, including such
21 organizations -- and it's in the testimony -- as
22 the Philadelphia Zoo and the Leidy School, Inglis
23 House, Parkside Historic Preservation, Habit for
24 Humanity. We share our progress on projects that
25 will affect the area, and we make sure that

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2 everyone is up to date. All of the organizations
3 in the coalition support this initiative.

4 You have the full testimony. The one
5 major point that I wanted to emphasize is that in
6 addition -- that the reason we are moving is
7 because the facilities that we are in are really
8 not adequate to support a therapeutic community
9 for the families that we serve. In creating this
10 new building, it will also free up 21 rental
11 housing units that Parkside Historic Preservation
12 is now renting to us, so there will be increased
13 housing in addition to the transitional housing.

14 In addition, we have worked with the
15 community to identify services that will be of
16 benefit to the community, and those include job
17 training services, GED, and adult basic education
18 services that will be provided in the building, as
19 well as -- we're still negotiating, trying to
20 figure out a way to do after-hours day care during
21 the day. The families -- the 40-some-odd children
22 in the facility will be receiving day care, but at
23 late afternoons and evenings, the hope is that we
24 can provide some kind of child care for families
25 in the area who are involved in job training or

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2 other activities.

3 The building is 23,500 square feet. We
4 will have a tot lot. It will also be adjacent to
5 Jim Brown's first development, the Lansdowne
6 Apartments, at 41st and Parkside, where we will
7 have our tot lot connecting to a green area, so it
8 will expand the green areas in the community.

9 I'd be glad to respond to questions.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank you,
11 Mr. Loeb.

12 Where will the residents of the
13 facility be coming from?

14 MR. LOEB: They're referred through a
15 variety of sources. They come from detox
16 programs, they are referred through the Department
17 of Human Services, through Community Behavioral
18 Health, through outpatient programs. There are --
19 we have about 40 referral sources.

20 We maintain -- we've been in existence
21 since 1993. We have an average census of about 17
22 families, and the families remain there for 6
23 months, and then we assist them to find permanent
24 housing, assist them hopefully in terms of job
25 placement. And during the same time, we provide

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2 comprehensive services for the infants and
3 toddlers as well as for the children, all of whom
4 attend Leidy School, those who are school age.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: So the
6 average stay of the residents is six months?

7 MR. LOEB: The average stay is six
8 months.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you tell
10 us what staffing will be at the center?

11 MR. LOEB: We have a staff of
12 approximately 20 persons. There's a full-time
13 program director, a deputy program director, a
14 full-time nurse, therapists, case manager,
15 resident persons who really supervise the
16 residents, a child-care coordinator, and a staff
17 who will work with the child care coordinator.
18 There are actually three child-care rooms in the
19 design for the new building for the three age
20 groups that see, from infants to toddlers to
21 preschool to the school-age children. So that
22 there's a very highly qualified staff.

23 I should say that this program has been
24 supported originally by federal money. It was a
25 demonstration project, it was one of only, I

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2 think, 15 to 16 programs nationally. It was
3 funded by the Center for Substance Abuse
4 Treatment.

5 Since the demonstration ended, we have
6 been supported from funding from the City's
7 behavioral system through Community Behavioral
8 Health and through the Department of Human
9 Services. Fourteen of the families can be
10 families that are placed through DHS, or at least
11 the children through DHS. So it's a combination
12 of those funds.

13 We also use McKinney Act funding
14 because we are the health-care-for-the-homeless
15 provider in Philadelphia and we refer women who
16 are in shelters, who have addictions problems to
17 the program. And we are also a United Way member
18 agency, and the United Way helps support some
19 supplemental services, including a day camp, which
20 we have sited really on Fairmount Park since we're
21 right across the street from Memorial Hall.

22 It's an incredible location. It also
23 completes the development on Parkside Avenue from
24 the 4100 and 4200 blocks.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

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2 Are there any questions of Mr. Loeb
3 from members of the committee?

4 The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

5 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam
6 Chair.

7 Good morning.

8 MR. LOEB: Good morning.

9 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Could you give me a
10 little more specific information about the job
11 training program and if there a placement
12 component in that program also.

13 MR. LOEB: I can tell you about what
14 we're doing now, and this is -- you know, since
15 the building doesn't exist, some of this is
16 plans. Some of these are plans yet to be
17 implemented, but we work with Metropolitan Career
18 Center, which is located in Germantown, with a
19 number of our drug treatment programs, and they
20 have three levels of job training, from a very
21 intensive, several-month program called "Boss,"
22 which places persons in technical positions after
23 intensive training, to a shorter-term program, to
24 a basic skills program for persons who are not yet
25 ready to go into those more intensive program

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2 programs. And we have that program operating at
3 two other treatment programs -- one in Mt. Airy
4 Interim House and the other in Center City, an
5 outpatient program on Callowhill Street, called
6 "Chances."

7 We also have provided ongoing GED, ABE
8 education. We have an agreement with Community
9 College to provide those services onsite, and we
10 are working with MCC with the hope that they will
11 be able to locate some satellite services at
12 Interim House West. And we'll have a computer lab
13 in the building.

14 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

16 Are there any other questions of

17 Mr. Loeb?

18 (No further questions.)

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you
20 very much, sir.

21 MR. LOEB: Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have
23 anyone else to testify?

24 (Unidentified witness comes forward.)

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good

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2 morning. Kindly identify yourself for the record.

3 MR. BROWN: Good morning, Madam
4 Chairwoman. My name is James L. Brown, V. I'm
5 current the Acting President of Parkside Historic
6 Preservation Corporation. I'd like to extend a
7 good morning to you and to the members of the
8 Rules Committee and a good morning to Councilwoman
9 Blackwell.

10 I have before me testimony to the
11 Philadelphia City Council regarding the Interim
12 House West facility project in the 4100 block of
13 Parkside Avenue in the Parkside National Historic
14 District. We are pleased to have the opportunity
15 to provide testimony in support of the proposed
16 new facility for Interim House West to be located
17 in the 4100 block of Parkside Avenue.

18 Parkside Historic Preservation
19 Corporation is a nonprofit housing development
20 corporation, the sponsor of the Parkside National
21 Historic District, and we are committed to
22 improving the living conditions in the Parkside
23 neighborhood. This endeavor has leveraged an
24 investment of approximately \$21 million in a
25 10-year period and has resulted in the restoration

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2 of all of the mansions on Parkside Avenue and the
3 east side of Marlton Avenue, the south side of
4 Thompson street, which was new construction
5 resulting in 194 affordable housing units, serving
6 a diverse population, special needs, handicapped,
7 elder and families, some subsidized and some at
8 market level.

9 The Parkside 2000 Initiative, of which
10 Parkside Historic is a part, will result in the
11 removal of all the blight in the 4100 block of
12 Parkside Avenue and the north side of the 4100
13 block of Viola Street. We believe that your
14 support of this venture will demonstrate that
15 public-private partnerships will encourage further
16 investment in the restoration of Parkside National
17 Register Historic District, a showcase of how
18 innovative methods and cooperation produce a
19 self-sustaining community.

20 Thank you for the opportunity to speak
21 on behalf of this exciting project.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

23 Are there any questions of Mr. Brown?

24 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I have just one
25 comment, Madam Chair.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERA: The Chair
3 recognizes Councilman Nutter.

4 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Mr. James L. Brown,
5 V, would you be kind enough to tell us who the
6 young gentleman is to your right there.

7 MR. BROWN: Certainly, Councilman.
8 This gentleman next to the right of me is my
9 father, James L. Brown IV, who founded Parkside
10 Historic Preservation Corporation when I was 16
11 and sponsored the National Historic District,
12 which we started this work.

13 It's very, very comprehensive work
14 that's been going on. And lately, as of December,
15 we met with several members of the community
16 through United Community Clinics at First African
17 Presbyterian Church, which is located at 42nd and
18 Girard Avenue. At these meetings, it was with the
19 public and our residents of the community, it was
20 expressed that there was a great concern for these
21 needs, which Interim House West plans to provide
22 with this new facility, and we believe that will
23 give an opportunity for those needs to be
24 addressed, as well as further empower the people
25 in the neighborhood.

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2 COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

4 It sounds like you do very, very good work. I
5 applaud you.

6 MR. BROWN: We're trying.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Are there any
8 other questions or comments?

9 Councilwoman Blackwell?

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,
11 Madam President.

12 Certainly we don't have a big
13 federally-funded and major supermarket and all
14 that coming into our side of West Philadelphia.

15 (Laughter.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: But we are
17 very happy and proud to support this community.
18 All of the groups in the area have come together
19 to form this historic preservation corporation,
20 and this coalition works very hard. And,
21 certainly, we're happy to work with them and to
22 support all of their efforts to include a
23 community. And this community sorely needs it, so
24 we would appreciate the committee's support.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,

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2 Councilwoman.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you,
5 Mr. Brown.

6 MR. BROWN: Thank you.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have
8 anyone else to testify on this bill?

9 (Unidentified witness comes forward.)

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.

11 MR. CARTER: Good morning, Committee.
12 My name is Monte Carter, and --

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. Carter,
14 just pull the microphone closer to you, if you
15 will. Thank you.

16 MR. CARTER: My name is Monte Carter,
17 and I'm the director of Public Relations. I
18 represent the 39th & Poplar Street Community
19 Development Corporation. We're a nonprofit
20 corporation, and we're looking to develop our
21 community.

22 First, I'd like to commend Mr. Brown
23 for the work he's done in the West Philadelphia
24 community. Secondly, I'd like to thank the
25 community -- the committee for allowing me the

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2 privilege to speak for my community.

3 We, the 39th & Poplar Street
4 organization, is not into -- we're not in
5 opposition of the historical Bill 105. What we
6 oppose is that any -- the boundaries of the Bill
7 105 encompasses some of our community and what we
8 -- what our position is that nothing is developed
9 in our community without being agreeable to our
10 community. And that's basically all I have to say
11 is that, the 39th Poplar Street organization is
12 not in opposition of the bill. But in the event
13 that someone wishes to talk about developing
14 something in our community, that we -- they first
15 come through us.

16 COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you, sir.

17 The Chair recognizes Councilwoman
18 Blackwell.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very
20 much.

21 Certainly, we support all communities
22 and the rights of communities to decide what goes
23 there, and we would certainly ask that the speaker
24 join us in the back and talk to Mr. Loeb and talk
25 with Mr. Brown so that we can certainly make sure

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2 that his group is included in all the things.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

4 MR. CARTER: Thank you very much.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you
6 very much.

7 Is there anyone else to testify?

8 (No response.)

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing none,
10 this will conclude public hearing

11 - - -

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We will now
13 go into our public meeting.

14 The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney
15 for a.

16 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Madam
17 Chair. I move that Bill No. 105 be reported out
18 of this committee with a favorable recommendation
19 and I make an additional request for a rules
20 suspension to allow for first reading at our next
21 Council session.

22 (Duly seconded.)

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: It has been
24 moved and seconded that Bill No. 105 be reported
25 out of committee with a favorable recommendation

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2 and also a recommendation that the rules of
3 Council be suspended so as to permit consideration
4 at our next session of Council.

5 All in favor will signify by saying
6 aye.

7 Those opposed?

8 The ayes have it and motion is carried.

9 Thank you all very much.

10 (Adjourned at 10:37 a.m.)

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RE: COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON RULES

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BILL NO. 000105

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JOSEPHINE CARDILLO,

Registered Professional Reporter