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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE ON PARKS, RECREATION

4

AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

5

- - -

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, March 24, 2009
2:20 p.m.

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PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN, CHAIR

12

COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE

13

COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.

14

COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO

15

RESOLUTION 090057 - Resolution authorizing
Council's Committee on Parks, Recreation and
Cultural Affairs to hold public hearings for
applicants seeking nomination to serve on the
Commission on Parks and Recreation...

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COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We are

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going to begin, and I learned from across

4

many years ago, go with what you got and

5

do the best with what you have. So we're

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going to start that way while we continue

7

to wait for additional tech support.

8

Let me open my remarks and move

9

to the very clear instruction that we

10

will need you to honor to capture

11

everything that you have to say. My name

12

is Blondell Reynolds Brown. I serve as

13

Chair of City Council's Committee on

14

Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs,

15

and joining me is Vice-Chair of City

16

Council's Committee on Recreation, Parks

17

and Cultural Affairs, you will hear from

18

Councilman Curtis Jones.

19

We need to thank my colleague

20

in this long journey, Councilman Darrell

21

Clarke, who is actually Chair of the

22

committee next door, who together we

23

walked down this road to get to this day

24

and this hour.

25

We must also thank our Mayor,

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2 Michael Nutter, whose support of this
3 effort was strong well before his tenure
4 as Mayor.

5 Parenthetically, you should
6 know that Councilman Clarke and I went to
7 then-candidate Mayor Nutter in November
8 of '07 to let him know that we had done a
9 lot of work. We actually had more than
10 nine votes and we were ready to call this
11 bill up for a vote. At that time,
12 candidate Nutter said, Could you please
13 hold the bill a little while longer,
14 allow me to become Mayor and weigh in
15 further on the bill, and committed to us
16 that he would be supportive but also,
17 more importantly, find additional dollars
18 so that we could really add the teeth of
19 what many thought were lacking. And he
20 became Mayor and honored his word and
21 signed the bill into law.

22 Let me also thank both the
23 Recreation and Park advocates and the
24 employees, who each and every day, during
25 this process and during their times that

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2 they served in those departments, seek
3 every day to improve our Park and
4 Recreation facilities.

5 As this process moves through,
6 it is our commitment that we will pledge
7 to find the best and the brightest
8 candidates that reflect, first, the
9 diversity of the City in its entirety and
10 the diversity of the users on both the
11 Recreation and the Park side of the
12 equation.

13 We all know that this has been
14 a monumental challenge, one that myself,
15 my staff and City government is excited
16 to continue to face as we move to this
17 milestone on this journey. As we're
18 going to find a dedicated and passionate
19 Commission on Parks and Recreation, the
20 search continues today.

21 What has happened to date, we
22 have had 194 applicants. When I tell you
23 that the talent, the breadth and depth
24 and ideas that we have heard over those
25 sessions, it has been remarkable, truly

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2 amazing. The talent of the persons of
3 all stripes and from every single walk of
4 life, from a 21-year-old entrepreneur to
5 a 70-year-old silver fox -- that's what
6 he called himself -- and to everything in
7 between. Folks have stepped forward to
8 tell us how they care about the parks.
9 So it's been never for a second boring,
10 all extremely, extremely exciting and a
11 reassuring affirmation that this was a
12 good place to end up.

13 What are the ground rules?
14 We're going to call you up three at a
15 time. We're going to ask you to please
16 sit in any one of these three chairs. It
17 will be imperative that you turn your
18 mike on so that our transcriber can take
19 all of what we have to say. We're going
20 to ask that you please honor what was
21 reflected in the e-mail, and, that is,
22 that you speak two, no more than three
23 minutes. This is a slight tradition from
24 a regular hearing, where we typically
25 engage in a lot of exchange. Today we're

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2 principally in a listening mode, unless
3 we have questions regarding clarity. So
4 we ask that you please honor the clock.
5 In those other two sessions I actually
6 had a clock and I only had to use it
7 once. So I only had to become the police
8 officer for time one time.

9 Lastly, I would be remiss if I
10 did not mention the tech staff that were
11 extremely helpful in the gathering of all
12 of our paperwork, Hal Thickhander, and
13 the City Council tech staff, Sharon
14 Ortiz, who was with us from the
15 President's Office. They, along with my
16 Chief of Staff, David Forde, have been
17 extremely helpful in making sure that
18 we've been adequately prepared today.

19 And so with that, I would like
20 to ask the Co-Chair of this Committee,
21 Councilman Curtis Jones, please offer a
22 few words.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Ladies and
24 gentlemen, good afternoon. The
25 instructions of my Chairperson were

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2 actually directed at you, but also meant
3 for me, which was that we will be in a
4 listening mode, and that means for me not
5 to ask you too many questions. Her
6 instructions shall be obeyed.

7 My observation over the last
8 couple of hearings have been that a great
9 number of people absolutely love Parks
10 and Recreation, and the passion in the
11 testimony has come across and the
12 overwhelming response has come across,
13 and I would just say that we are in an
14 interesting point in time where we were
15 able to get Mr. DiBerardinis to come from
16 Harrisburg to come back to his home to be
17 a part of this, and we are truly excited
18 about it.

19 We are at a point in time where
20 our Mayor, even in spite of tough
21 economic times, is committed to the
22 well-being of the Park system and the
23 Recreation process, and I think that you
24 and your outpouring have taught us a
25 couple of things.

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2 What I think your partner,
3 Councilman Darrell Clarke, talked about
4 was that we were going to be forced to
5 make a tough decision and whittle this
6 down to a limited number of people, but
7 what we hope to do is create an
8 environment in the process, more
9 important than environment, that will
10 take some of the talent and ideas and
11 funnel it into a place, no matter who
12 gets picked, that we can use going
13 forward, because some of the ideas have
14 been tremendous. I'm just thankful to be
15 a part of hearing about what some of the
16 ideas and passions are from the
17 participants.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
20 welcome. You're welcome, Councilman
21 Jones.

22 And so with that, the process
23 begins. And, again, my reminder as a
24 former teacher, please honor the clock.

25 Hello? Feedback?

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2 (Yes.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, okay.

4 With that, please allow Barry Esslinger,
5 I.A. Maitland and Joseph Manko to please
6 move to the center table, grab a mike,
7 turn it on. And we'll welcome your full
8 name and then proceed with your
9 testimony. Thank you very much.

10 (Witnesses approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
13 afternoon, gentlemen. Please.

14 MR. ESSLINGER: I'm Barry
15 Esslinger.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You may
17 proceed with your testimony.

18 MR. ESSLINGER: Okay. Thank
19 you.

20 I've been a lifelong worker in
21 Center City Philadelphia. By way of
22 education and background, I have a degree
23 in landscape architecture. I have two
24 years of graduate training in
25 transportation and engineer from

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2 Villanova. I'm registered as a landscape
3 architect in 12 states actively and as a
4 registered planner in the State of New
5 Jersey.

6 I've always worked in downtown
7 Philadelphia. For the last 41 years,
8 I've been with Cope-Linder Architects, 29
9 of those as the principal in charge of
10 landscape architecture.

11 By way of relevant history in
12 terms of parks, I was involved in the
13 design of the first Sesame Place, the
14 Great Plaza at Penn's Landing. In the
15 '60s, I was a volunteer designer and
16 partial builder of three neighborhood
17 parks. The people with whom I was
18 working were very surprised to find out I
19 wasn't being paid to do it, but I was
20 there two or three nights a week
21 designing and building.

22 I've been involved with the
23 Center City District's streetscape
24 design, Ben Franklin Parkway
25 improvements, Triangle Park, the Cret

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2 Cafe, Second Street, all sorts of urban
3 improvements for the last 15 years.

4 In terms of related experience,
5 I'm the landscape architect of record for
6 a seven-acre downtown park in Omaha,
7 Nebraska right now, which is currently
8 under construction, will be finished this
9 year.

10 I'm a member of the Open Land
11 Institute, Philadelphia Chapter Executive
12 Committee. I was on the Planning Board
13 in Upper Dublin Township for 12 years,
14 six years of those as Chairman. And I
15 put my money where my mouth is. I've
16 been supporting groups and agencies like
17 Greenpeace, Worldwide Life Fund,
18 Galapagos Foundation, Nantucket Land
19 Conservancy. Every kind of historic and
20 environmental group you can think of,
21 I've been involved with.

22 I think basically I have the
23 training and the enthusiasm and I'd like
24 to spend the time being involved with the
25 Fairmount Park Commission. I think it's

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2 a terrific group and I've worked with
3 people like Mark Focht in the past, and I
4 would certainly like to be part of what's
5 happening in Philadelphia.

6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
8 for your testimony.

9 Good afternoon.

10 MR. MANKO: Good afternoon.
11 Thank you, Councilpersons Reynolds Brown
12 and Jones. I will be a silver fox in
13 October, but not yet.

14 My goal is to further Mayor
15 Nutter's goal of making Philadelphia the
16 greenest city in America. I believe I
17 can help him achieve that goal, but let
18 me share with you in two minutes my
19 experience and what I'm going to be doing
20 in the future.

21 I served for 27 years as a
22 Commissioner of Lower Merion. I oversaw
23 the Parks and Recreation Committees, and
24 I merged them, so I do have that
25 familiarity, and I have as one of my

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2 three letters of reference a letter from
3 the Manager of the Township.

4 I served for 25 years on the
5 Lower Merion Conservancy. I have a
6 letter from Michael Weilbacher, who is
7 the Executive Director of the
8 Conservancy.

9 And then we moved into the City
10 of Philadelphia. I now am serving my
11 second year in the Fairmount Park
12 Conservancy and I have my third letter of
13 reference from John Binswanger, who is
14 Chair of the Fairmount Park Conservancy.
15 I also served for two years on the
16 Fairmount Park Commission. Being put on
17 there while I was in Lower Merion, we
18 then since moved into the City.

19 I served two years as general
20 counsel to the Environmental Protection
21 Agency's Region 3, and for 18 years
22 taught environmental law at University of
23 Pennsylvania and Vermont Law School. And
24 for the last 36 years, my practice has
25 been limited to environment land use law.

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2 I did serve for eight months on
3 the Zoning Board at the pleasure of Mayor
4 Nutter. It may not have been my
5 pleasure, but it was his pleasure. And
6 from a recreation standpoint, I've been
7 active with Arthur Ashe Youth Tennis from
8 the time it was a national junior tennis
9 league 30-some years ago, as is my wife,
10 and, therefore, I know the Recreation
11 Department that way.

12 With respect to the future, I
13 am the Co-Chair of the Sustainability
14 Advisory Board. Anne Papageorge and I
15 are the Co-Chairs working under Mark Alan
16 Hughes, and that is something that I
17 asked the Mayor, to let me get off the
18 Zoning Board so I could serve on
19 Sustainability.

20 I am going to stay active with
21 the Fairmount Park Conservancy, and when
22 Michael DiBerardinis accepted this offer,
23 it became like, Wow. I had the pleasure
24 of working with him at DCNR, because I am
25 the Governor's designee to Chair

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2 Pennvest, and it's the Governor's loss
3 and the Mayor's and your gain. So I look
4 forward to doing that.

5 I have made 20 copies of my
6 application and these letters. I don't
7 know if you want them or not.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.
9 Absolutely.

10 MR. MANKO: But I see my being
11 of the Parks and Recreation as an attempt
12 to being able to further my
13 Sustainability Co-Chair position, because
14 9,100 acres is a jewel that we must
15 continue to have as the centerpiece.
16 Just ask the Water Department how
17 important it is. And that's where
18 Fairmount Park Commission was first set
19 up, to be able to protect the water.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
22 right. It's nice to know the history.

23 Please state your name again
24 for the record, not for us but for our
25 transcriber.

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2 MR. MANKO: Joseph M. Manko,
3 M-A-N-K-O. I never thought with the name
4 Manko I would be one of the first people
5 to do anything, beginning with an M.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes. We
7 would welcome written testimony and
8 letters of recommendation. All of that
9 matters in this hearing process.

10 So please accept that, if you
11 would.

12 And ideally, I would like to
13 have materials on the front end, because
14 I'm a note-taker.

15 Councilman Jones, any comments?

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: No, no
17 comments. I'm trying to get us through
18 this.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

20 MR. MANKO: I appreciate the
21 two of you taking the time.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That's
23 very, very important.

24 So, again, we welcome testimony
25 and any other documentation that you're

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2 bringing with you, all of that, as a part
3 of this process.

4 I.A. Maitland -- if I re-call
5 the name, it may be because they may not
6 have been here. And we are going to
7 circle back at the back end for folks who
8 arrive after their name is called to give
9 everyone a chance.

10 Kimberly Massare, Sam Matthew,
11 Fred Maurer. Thank you. Matthew
12 McClure, Michael McCrea, Alan McHale.
13 Please move to the witness table.

14 (Witnesses approached witness
15 table.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Starting
17 with my extreme right, sir. Good
18 afternoon.

19 MR. MAURER: I'm No. 3 on your
20 list.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Forgive
22 me?

23 MR. MAURER: I'm No. 3 on your
24 list.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. Not

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2 a problem. We're going to start right
3 here and circle right around.

4 MR. MAURER: No problem.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
6 make sure you turn on your mikes and
7 speak into the mike.

8 Proceed.

9 MR. MAURER: My name is Fred
10 Maurer. It's M-A-U-R-E-R. I do not have
11 written testimony today.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Not a
13 problem.

14 MR. MAURER: I will provide you
15 with an outline of the form that you
16 requested for application, the same order
17 you've done. I don't want to repeat it
18 here. I've been experienced for a long
19 time.

20 I would like to read into the
21 record the recommendations that I have
22 since I do have copies of them, but I
23 think instead of me talking about myself,
24 I'd like other people to talk about what
25 they think about why I should be part of

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2 the Commission.

3 First one is from the Friends
4 of Tacony Creek Park and it comes from
5 Bill Krantz, who is the President. We
6 founded -- I'm part of a charter member
7 of the Friends group 20 years ago.

8 So in the letter of
9 recommendation, it says, "In regards to
10 nomination of Fred Maurer, we are well
11 acquainted with his work. He has
12 astonishing knowledge of local history, a
13 published historian, responsible for the
14 erection of an official historical marker
15 commemorating the Whitaker Mills. He's a
16 watershed advisor, an active member and a
17 Vice-President of our organization."

18 The second person for
19 recommendation is from the Historical
20 Society of Frankford and it's signed by
21 Debbie Clack, who is the past President
22 of the Historical Society. She's just
23 going out of term this year. I've been a
24 member with them for about 30 years.

25 "To City Council, in regards to

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2 the nomination of Mr. Fred Maurer, we are
3 acquainted with his community work of
4 advocacy for public parks and recreation
5 and local history research. He is an
6 active member and published a watershed
7 history in his Grubtown monument book."

8 The third recommendation I have
9 is addressed from the Juniata Golf
10 Foundation. That's a part of Fairmount
11 Park in Juniata, and the letter is from
12 Robert Wheeler, who is the Executive
13 Director of the Foundation, and it says,
14 "In regards to the nomination of Mr. Fred
15 Maurer, we are very familiar with his
16 community work of advocacy for golf
17 courses and public parks and recreation.
18 Mr. Maurer has been involved with the
19 parks and recreation in the City of
20 Philadelphia for over 20 years, and he
21 will be a tremendous asset due to his
22 long tenure."

23 I'll leave that here for the
24 Clerk.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We'll

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2 certainly accept that. Thank you. Thank
3 you very much for your testimony.

4 Good afternoon.

5 MR. MCHALE: Good afternoon,
6 Councilwoman.

7 Madam Chair, members of the
8 Committee, I'd like to thank you for
9 giving me this opportunity to present
10 myself as a candidate for a position on
11 the Board of the Fairmount Park
12 Commission. My name is Alan McHale and
13 I'm an outreach worker for the Rhawnhurst
14 NORC, an organization in the Northeast
15 that works with senior citizens in their
16 own home. I'm also an award-winning
17 community gardener and a lifelong user of
18 this great city's parks and recreational
19 facilities.

20 These are indeed challenging
21 times for our parks and recreation
22 centers, as the Mayor's recent budget
23 address made abundantly clear last week.
24 However, with all the challenges we face,
25 we are also presented with a wonderful

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2 opportunity. When the people of
3 Philadelphia voted to merge the Park and
4 Recreation Department, they voted for a
5 new beginning and a new direction. This
6 process and these hearings exemplify a
7 new openness that allowed so many quality
8 candidates to believe that they could be
9 a part of that new direction.

10 My earliest memories of the
11 Park system was learning to swim at
12 Hunting Park Pool well over 50 years ago.
13 For the past 35 years, I've been actively
14 involved with myriad community groups and
15 organizations that have allowed me the
16 opportunity to go to every corner of this
17 city. I have set up at fundraising flea
18 markets, been involved with more
19 community clean-ups that I can count and
20 have been an active supporter of both the
21 Parks and the Rec systems.

22 It's difficult to sum up a
23 lifetime of experience and concern about
24 these issues in two or three minutes.
25 Suffice to say that my background as an

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2 involved community person and my resume
3 are open books for anyone to read, and
4 I'm very willing to answer any questions
5 that the community might have.

6 Thank you for giving me this
7 opportunity.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
9 very, very welcome. Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 MR. McHALE: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If you had
13 to ID one or two skill sets that you
14 believe you bring to this anticipated
15 body, they would be what?

16 MR. McHALE: The ability to go
17 into diverse communities and sell an idea
18 and a commitment to a passion.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
20 for that.

21 MR. McHALE: Thank you, ma'am.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
23 afternoon.

24 MS. MASSARE: Good afternoon.
25 My name is Kimberly Massare and I served

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2 for several years on the Philadelphia
3 Green's Parks Revitalization Project as
4 the Park's Network Coordinator, and I
5 worked firsthand with community groups
6 from across the City, as well as staff
7 from the Department of Recreation and
8 Fairmount Park, and I organized a lot of
9 large-scale events over the course of the
10 year, like Fall for Your Park and Spring
11 Into Your Park, that brought neighborhood
12 activists and volunteers from across the
13 City together out to support their parks
14 and show their care for our Park system.

15 And I believe that we're on the
16 cusp of a new era for Parks and
17 Recreation in our great city. We have
18 the opportunity to breathe new life into
19 these cherished public spaces and
20 re-imagine the possibilities for future
21 generations and Philadelphians. It is
22 incredibly important work on which the
23 new Commission on Parks and Recreation is
24 about to embark, and it will require hard
25 work, creativity, patience, perseverance

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2 and visionary thinking.

3 It would be a tremendous honor
4 to serve on the new Commission on Parks
5 and Recreation, and I believe that my
6 diverse experiences within Philadelphia's
7 Park systems have led to a deeper
8 understanding of the challenges and
9 opportunities that lay ahead. I feel a
10 deep sense of commitment to assuring a
11 bright future for our city's Park system,
12 and I thank you for the honor of your
13 consideration.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
15 very welcome. Do you have written
16 testimony?

17 MS. MASSARE: I do have a copy
18 of it and I also submitted a letter of
19 recommendation.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

21 MS. MASSARE: Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
23 afternoon.

24 MR. McCLURE: Good afternoon,
25 Madam Chair, Councilman Jones. My name

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2 is Matt McClure, Matthew N. McClure. I'm
3 a lifelong resident of the City of
4 Philadelphia who, like many in this room
5 or not all of us in the room, realize
6 that to a large measure the quality of
7 life of our residents is influenced by
8 the quality of parks and recreation
9 centers. I have applied for this
10 position on the new Commission because I
11 believe I have the right skill set for
12 the job, a record of community
13 involvement, an understanding of the
14 importance of the new department in the
15 lives of our citizens and the appropriate
16 sensibilities regarding the role of the
17 new Commission to be an effective
18 Commissioner.

19 Currently, I make my living as
20 a real estate lawyer at Ballard Spahr.
21 Throughout my legal practice, I have
22 worked on some of the more complex real
23 estate matters in the City. I have
24 advised public, private and non-profit
25 sector clients in the areas of historic

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2 preservation, open space preservation,
3 effective land use management and
4 environmental regulation. Additionally,
5 I've worked on important pro bono
6 representations directly germane to the
7 new department. For example, I
8 represented the John Bartram Association
9 in a multi-year battle trying to stop a
10 waste transfer facility to locate next to
11 actually historic Bartram Gardens. I've
12 also provided pro bono representation to
13 the Philadelphia Mural Arts advocates and
14 consequently the Mural Arts Program.

15 Furthermore, my record of
16 community involvement has prepared me for
17 service on the Commission. Currently, I
18 serve on the Board of Directors of
19 important community-based organizations -
20 Arthur Ashe Youth Tennis and Education
21 Center, the Green Woods Charter School,
22 Need in Deed and East Falls Development
23 Corporation.

24 As someone who actively grew up
25 using the parks and recreation centers, I

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2 understand the extraordinary role they
3 play in providing opportunities for our
4 children and improving the City's quality
5 of life. As City Council knows better
6 than anyone, the core challenges facing
7 the City and its residents, even before
8 this current recession, are dramatic.
9 Alarming, 46 percent of our children
10 come from single-parent households. As a
11 kid that grew up in one of those
12 single-parent households, I understand
13 the incredible role that our parks and
14 recreation centers can play in helping
15 kids stay busy and on the path of
16 productive lives. If selected as a
17 Commissioner, a large portion of my time
18 and thinking would be dedicated to seeing
19 how we can best utilize the Department's
20 phenomenal assets, improving the lives
21 and unleashing the potential of our
22 city's children.

23 To be truly effective, the
24 Commission must be responsive to the
25 needs of the communities in which our

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2 parks and recreation centers lie. For
3 me, that means the Commission should not
4 be a disconnected commission located
5 downtown holding hearings of policy. For
6 me, that means the Commissioners must be
7 involved in their communities, must
8 attend civic association meetings, must
9 be conversant on the political issues and
10 also must be currently engaged with
11 elected officials throughout this city.
12 No one understands the needs and concerns
13 of our residents better than the 17
14 members who make up the City Council.
15 For the Commission to be effective, it
16 must work closely with Council.

17 In closing, the health and
18 prosperity of Philadelphia is linked to
19 the future of our Parks and Recreation
20 system. We as a city must decide to
21 treat the system with incredible care.
22 By investing in the Park and Recreation
23 system, we invest in the people and
24 fabric of our city. For the foregoing
25 reasons, it would be an honor to serve on

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2 the Commission.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
4 very, very much. Thank you.

5 Good afternoon.

6 MR. McCREA: Good afternoon,
7 Councilwoman. Good afternoon, Councilman
8 Jones. My name is Michael McCrea and I'm
9 President of my local advisory council at
10 the Feltonville Youth Access Center,
11 President of Philadelphia Recreation
12 Advisory Council citywide, civil engineer
13 and pig farmer applying for a position on
14 the Commission on Parks and Recreation.
15 In these elected and volunteer positions,
16 I serve a number of very diverse and very
17 different constituencies.

18 At Feltonville Youth Access
19 Center, we partner with the Recreation
20 Department to deliver vitally needed
21 services to the youth of our community,
22 involving fundraising, access to grants
23 and other funding from both local and
24 state representatives, as well as private
25 donors. We just recently completed a

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2 very large and involved public-private
3 partnership, taking a generous pledge of
4 \$200,000 from Shire Pharmaceuticals and,
5 with the help of Councilwoman Sanchez,
6 added \$250,000 in capital dollars, used
7 that pool a funding to hire our own
8 contractor and complete a total
9 renovation of our outdoor facilities in
10 only three months, start to finish. Our
11 partnership with so many individuals and
12 entities is what really made this happen.

13 Philadelphia Recreation
14 Advisory Council represents the local
15 volunteer advisory council citywide, each
16 one representing their own local
17 recreation center, park or playground.
18 Every community, just like every
19 neighborhood, has its own identity and
20 individual needs. I think serving as a
21 collected body of passionate, dedicated
22 volunteers for more than ten years gives
23 me a truly unique perspective in serving
24 a citywide constituency, and I believe it
25 would make me a valuable asset to this

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2 new Commission.

3 Credibility and independence
4 are two of the most important qualities I
5 think needed to serve on this Commission,
6 and both are qualities that I think I've
7 exhibited for most of my life. As
8 Vice-President and President of both my
9 local advisory and the citywide, the
10 folks we represent continue to rely on us
11 and that we will stand up for and support
12 what's in their best interest. Otherwise
13 we would not have continued to hold these
14 positions for so long. The fact that
15 we've served for the length of time that
16 we have should speak for itself. It's
17 about standing up for what's right
18 regardless of popularity or personal
19 gain.

20 I also believe I possess an
21 extensive knowledge of the Philadelphia
22 Parks and Rec system, both from a
23 volunteer perspective and also from a
24 management perspective, having worked
25 with several different administrations of

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2 both Parks and Recreation on many issues.

3 In addition, I understand the effort it

4 takes to provide these vital services

5 from both an administrative and a

6 volunteer perspective, balancing

7 expectations with the ability to provide

8 basic services and bridging the gap

9 between them.

10 The land management and

11 environmental experiences I bring from my

12 job as a civil engineer are also key

13 points in considering my qualifications.

14 I believe these and the previously stated

15 characteristics ultimately qualify me to

16 sit as a new member of the Commission on

17 Parks and Recreation.

18 To be successful, the

19 Commission on Parks and Recreation has to

20 be able to stand on its own and achieve

21 an individual identity, taking on the

22 difficult issues that have continually

23 retarded the growth of both the Park and

24 Recreation Department systems, and my

25 application was submitted for my deep

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2 belief that I can help make a difference
3 and assist the new Commission in
4 accomplishing these goals of creating a
5 Park and Recreation system that benefits
6 everyone and that we can all be proud of.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Councilman
9 Jones.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: I can't help
11 it, Madam Chair.

12 Where is your pig farm?

13 MR. McCREA: It's actually a
14 piece of Fairmount Park. We run a 4-H
15 club in the 4 section. You actually gave
16 us a grant for a thousand dollars last
17 year from the Philadelphia Activities
18 Fund. And I have a picture too I brought
19 for you. I didn't know if I'd see you
20 today or not.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'd love to
22 see the picture.

23 Thank you.

24 MR. McCREA: But it's a piece
25 of Fairmount Park. Actually, it's Saul

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2 High School actually uses it, all the way
3 the end of Spring Lane right behind the
4 Schuylkill Valley Nature Center.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: And what is
6 the pig population in Philadelphia?

7 MR. McCREA: Probably about a
8 couple of dozen maybe at certain times.
9 At this point there's not, but normally
10 we only do the pigs -- because we have to
11 actually have a place to sell them at the
12 end. So there has to be an end point to
13 it. So you can't redo pigs all year
14 round unless you breed them, and we just
15 don't have the facilities or the
16 wherewithal or the money to breed, so we
17 buy pigs for the kids in like August and
18 we take them to different shows and then
19 we go to the Pennsylvania Farm Show every
20 January and we sell them. We show them
21 and sell them at the Farm Show in
22 January.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, once
24 again, did you win a ribbon at all?

25 MR. McCREA: A couple of the

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2 kids did. I don't show them. I'm the
3 club leader. I'm the pig farmer and the
4 club leader. I don't show.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just
6 wanted to thank you in these tough times
7 for bringing home the bacon.

8 MR. McCREA: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: That was
10 pretty good, Councilman Jones.

11 That's a classic example of the
12 richness of our parks. Who knew? And
13 I've been to all -- good for you, sir,
14 back there.

15 I've been to all parts of the
16 City and visited most of our high
17 schools. Did not know that.

18 MR. McCREA: It's pig, sheep
19 and cattle also. There's sheep and
20 cattle also. My daughter has raised all
21 three.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, we
23 thank you very, very much for your
24 testimony.

25 MR. McCREA: You're welcome.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
3 all for your testimony. Thank you very
4 much.

5 Lawrence McKnight, William
6 Mellix, Jeannine --

7 MS. MISSAOUI: Missaoui.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
9 Thank you very much. Is that French?

10 MS. MISSAOUI: It's Tunisian
11 Arabic.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Wow.

13 Cheryl Mobley, Joseph Moore,
14 David Mora. Please feel free to come to
15 the witness table.

16 (Witnesses approached witness
17 table.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
19 hand us your testimony on the front end,
20 if you're able.

21 Thank you. Anyone else have
22 written testimony you want to offer now?
23 Great.

24 We'll start here at my far
25 left. State your name for the record and

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2 we'll proceed.

3 MR. MORA: I'm David Mora,
4 candidate for Park and Recreation Board.
5 I am Latino heritage, and in two weeks,
6 I'll be 50 years old. For the last six
7 years, I've been on a leave of absence
8 from my City job as an agronomist with
9 the Water Department. I have a total of
10 24 years of City service. I'm currently
11 an employee of AFSCME Local 2187 as a
12 staff representative. I am also the
13 Vice-President of Local 2187.

14 I have always had an interest
15 in green space. Our family moved to
16 Marlton, New Jersey when it was a small
17 town of five to six thousand people. My
18 brother, who works as a crew chief in the
19 Water Department's Stream Restoration
20 Unit, and I used to wander the wood lots
21 and creeks near our home in Marlton
22 catching turtles, frogs and tadpoles.
23 Even the fear of Rocky Mountain Spotted
24 Fever and encephalitis could not keep us
25 out of the woods. We saw farms disappear

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2 and worried that our playground would
3 disappear and become a crop of houses.
4 Currently, the farms and wood lots that
5 were behind our home are the last green
6 space in all of Evesham Township and is
7 owned and preserved by the Township.

8 Our family moved back to the
9 City via Puerto Rico in 1970. With the
10 exception of four years in my early '20s,
11 I have always been a resident of this
12 great city. Juniata Park and Frankford
13 Creek became our playgrounds.

14 I am proud to be a product of
15 the Philadelphia school system and
16 graduate of W.B. Saul High School of
17 Agricultural Sciences. Many of my
18 schoolmates currently hold leadership
19 positions in Fairmount Park. I'm a
20 graduate of Penn State University with a
21 Bachelor's degree of Science and
22 Agricultural Education and with the
23 emphasis in horticulture.

24 During my college years at Penn
25 State Abington, I worked at Fairmount

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2 Park at FDR Golf Course in South
3 Philadelphia under Jim Donaghy for the
4 summers, and I worked on the grounds crew
5 at Penn State Abington during the rest of
6 the year.

7 After college, over a period of
8 several years, I taught as a per diem
9 substitute and a long-term substitute at
10 Saul High School, teaching soil and water
11 conservation, forestry, wildlife and ag
12 mechanics. Some of my former students
13 worked for the Fairmount Park and the
14 Department of Recreation.

15 For one season, I worked at
16 Melrose Country Club in Cheltenham as the
17 greens keeper. After that, I owned a
18 landscape company known as Mora's
19 Landscape, where I worked hard and put a
20 lot of my knowledge to work. However, I
21 was a poor businessman and with a
22 pregnant wife, I needed a secure and
23 full-time job.

24 I had taken a test for the City
25 and was hired first as a correctional

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2 officer but later hired by Fairmount Park
3 as a Grounds Worker I. Within a year and
4 a half, I was a Grounds Worker III, which
5 is a supervisor position. I was on the
6 list for Park Management Trainee when I
7 was hired as an Agronomist I by the Water
8 Department in 1990.

9 As an Agronomist I, I was
10 involved in the composting phase of
11 biosolids and the marketing of compost.
12 I later was asked to develop an idea to
13 move excess green compost from our site.
14 I came up with compost -- I came up with
15 the compost giveaway program. I also
16 encouraged compost use by all government
17 agencies. I applied for and received
18 approval for compost to be used in
19 highway projects in Pennsylvania. I
20 co-wrote the first two biosolids use
21 approvals given by the State of
22 Pennsylvania. I was also able to place
23 in City contracts that biosolids compost
24 could be used in lieu of meeting topsoil
25 requirements. I was responsible to

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2 ensure that all compost met all federal
3 and various state regulations. I
4 reviewed and reported data to the State
5 of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York.
6 I arranged for the sampling of biosolids
7 products for the 503 regulations. I
8 arranged for yearly approval of samples
9 for biosolids going to landfill. I lent
10 various pieces of equipment to
11 Recreation, the Park, the School District
12 and the Pennsylvania Hort Society. I
13 encouraged Fairmount Park, Recreation and
14 the School District to use our compost.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Fifteen
16 seconds, please.

17 MR. MORA: I encouraged
18 Fairmount Park and Recreation to use our
19 compost and I worked with Penn State
20 Cooperative Extension Service training
21 those people.

22 As for recreation, because I
23 believe the Board members should have a
24 balance of park and recreation
25 experience, I played organized street

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2 hockey in the league at Simpson
3 Playground, sledding in Wissinoming Park
4 and Juniata Golf Course. My friends and
5 I would pay 25 cents to skate at Tarken
6 Ice Skating Rink.

7 And as you can see, I'm a
8 long-time City resident and have an
9 extensive background of horticulture and
10 a user of recreation facilities and would
11 have valuable input into the discussion
12 on park and playgrounds. I would be a
13 representative from the Far Northeast.
14 Being of Latino heritage --

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Five
16 seconds.

17 MR. MORA: Okay. (Continued)
18 -- I would add diversity to the Board,
19 and as a union representative, I could
20 give a union perspective on various
21 projects and programs. I would be a
22 strong advocate for raising money and
23 finding sponsors for the Board.

24 Finally, I would be greatly
25 honored to serve my fellow citizens as an

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2 inaugural member of the Philadelphia Park
3 and Recreation Board.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
5 very, very much.

6 Good afternoon.

7 MS. MISSAOUI: Good afternoon.

8 My name is Jeannine Missaoui. I also
9 come from a very diverse background. I
10 actually have genetic heritage from every
11 continent in the world, although I am
12 mostly Native American and Afro Hispanic,
13 with a little Anglo European thrown in
14 there. I embrace my own ethnic diversity
15 the way I do the City. I really love
16 living in Philadelphia. I've lived here
17 about ten years. And I have to say, I'm
18 totally thrilled with the way the City
19 had the forethought to lay out the Park
20 system for the use of its residents.

21 I've come from Long Island in the days
22 when it was rural and I grew up in a farm
23 community and farming, no doubt about it.
24 There was no other way to survive there.
25 And I just really became very sad growing

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2 up watching farms just be chopped up,
3 with no regard for what was going to
4 happen in the future. And it became
5 very, very apparent to me at a very young
6 age that paying attention to open space
7 is really key to human survival, and not
8 to mention it's not just how beautiful it
9 looks, it's really key to health, and
10 also when you really think about it,
11 water, drinking water recharge, must
12 happen through open space. If you don't
13 have enough open space, you're not going
14 to have enough drinking water. It's
15 going to be polluted if you allow
16 everything to run off. So I think that
17 everything is deeply connected, and I see
18 that Philadelphia has begun to really
19 look at that.

20 I think our Water Department is
21 very forward-thinking. I think Mayor
22 Nutter is very forward-thinking, and I
23 also am seeing a lot of developments
24 happening, for example, with the Delaware
25 River waterfront. I've spent a lot of

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2 time going to welcome meetings around the
3 City.

4 I'm a voting member of the
5 Regional Citizens Committee for the
6 Delaware Valley Regional Planning
7 Commission. I'm also a Board member for
8 a local NAC, the Kensington Area
9 Neighborhood Advisory Committee, which is
10 in Harrogate, Philadelphia, between
11 Juniata, Port Richmond and Bridesburg,
12 which is a very low tree cover area,
13 very -- it's very ethnically diverse, but
14 the economics are rather depressed there,
15 and we're really -- we're working on a
16 new business -- our small business
17 administration for the locale, where in
18 fact we're going to have our first
19 business dinner tonight and our first
20 business breakfast this Friday. We have
21 a lot of projects of that nature going
22 on. Our next project at the NAC will be
23 an outreach for children. We recognize
24 that there's a huge problem with truant
25 children, and I think a lot of the people

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2 are very disconnected from their
3 neighborhood. So in our discussions at
4 the NAC, we really, really look forward
5 to having some outreach through block
6 parties this summer. We're seeking
7 funding for that now. And we have a
8 Soccer in the Streets program going on.
9 We're going to bring in an arts program
10 for the children, and then connect people
11 with our services and also our small
12 business administration.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
14 seconds.

15 MS. MISSAOUI: Thank you.

16 In any event, I have a very
17 diverse background. I'm also in finance.
18 I work as an accountant. I am in the
19 middle of tax season right now. So I
20 have a great knowledge of finance. And I
21 was also a very competitive athlete as a
22 youngster and I was until a recent car
23 accident. Also --

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Five
25 seconds.

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2 MS. MISSAOUI: -- being a
3 farmer, I was also involved with retail
4 nurseries and did a great deal for that
5 community also.

6 Thank you very much. I would
7 be very thrilled to serve on the
8 Philadelphia Commission for Parks and
9 Recreation.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
11 for your testimony.

12 Good afternoon.

13 MR. MELLIX: Good afternoon.

14 My name is William Mellix and I would
15 like to thank the Committee for this
16 opportunity to present my testimony to
17 become part of a new City agency that
18 will have significant responsibilities
19 with the future of our Parks and
20 Recreation facilities.

21 I have been involved in the
22 landscape/horticulture industry for over
23 40 years, 19 years operating a landscape
24 construction company and 21 years with
25 Synterra Limited, a Philadelphia-based

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2 landscape architectural firm who I'm
3 presently working for.

4 The roles and responsibilities
5 of the Commission as defined in the
6 application are consistent with my
7 responsibilities that I perform at
8 Synterra. My main responsibility as a
9 Project Coordinator is to manage
10 projects, oversee design schedules and
11 manage budgets. I am also extensively
12 involved in working with public and
13 community groups and multiple City
14 agencies.

15 One of the responsibilities of
16 the Commission will be to adopt standards
17 and guidelines for Park/Recreation lands
18 and facilities. I have years of
19 experience in that area. I have managed
20 the development of standards and
21 guidelines for a variety of projects,
22 such as landscape master planning for
23 Temple University, the University of the
24 Virgin Islands and Cheyney University.

25 My responsibilities also

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2 require presentations and coordination
3 with City agencies such as the Fairmount
4 Park Commission, the Philadelphia Art
5 Commission and the Philadelphia City
6 Planning Commission. I believe that I
7 have developed a cordial and constructive
8 working relationship with all of those
9 agencies.

10 I have worked on a multitude of
11 projects here in the City that include
12 Citizens Bank Park, Lincoln Financial
13 Field, Northeast Community Center, Please
14 Touch Museum, Schuylkill Banks and
15 Feltonville Middle School. I
16 specifically identify these projects to
17 show the diversity of the projects that
18 have contributed to my growth and
19 experiences.

20 I am also a Board member of the
21 Nile Swim Club in Yeadon, the Chair of
22 the Yeadon Planning Commission and I'm on
23 the executive committee for the
24 Philadelphia Horticultural Society.
25 Being involved in these organizations

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2 allow me the opportunity to sit on the
3 reviewing side of the presentation table.
4 As a result, I have gained unique insight
5 from being both a presenter and a
6 reviewer.

7 I believe that transparency and
8 openness are essential to the success of
9 this Commission. The vision for future
10 development and prosperity of our Parks
11 and Recreation systems will be in the
12 hand of this new Commission. I believe
13 that I possess the qualities and
14 character needed to be a beneficial
15 contributing member to this Commission.

16 Thank you for your
17 consideration.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And thank
19 you very much for your testimony.

20 Good afternoon.

21 MR. McKNIGHT: Good afternoon.
22 My name is Lawrence McKnight. I am a
23 registered professional engineer in three
24 states.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me

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2 just ask you to pause for one moment.

3 Did you submit testimony?

4 MR. McKNIGHT: I do have
5 written. I'm reading it, if I can give
6 it back to you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Surely. I
8 just want to keep my notes correct. So
9 now I need to listen. Go ahead. I'm
10 sorry.

11 MR. McKNIGHT: I'm a
12 professional engineer registered in
13 Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. I
14 have a Bachelor of Science in Civil
15 Engineering, with a minor in ecology. I
16 also have a Master's in Engineering
17 Management. I recently received the 2008
18 Visionary Award Honorable Mention from
19 Sustainable Land Development Today for
20 the Village at Spring Ridge.

21 I'm currently employed by
22 Westrum Development Company. We're the
23 largest urban redeveloper in the City of
24 Philadelphia. Being part of an urban
25 redeveloper is the main reason why I'm

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2 here today.

3 I am a product of the
4 Recreation Department. I'm born and
5 raised in a fine neighborhood called
6 Fishtown in Philadelphia. Recreation was
7 always an integral part of my daily life
8 and my upbringing. Youth league soccer,
9 football and basketball kept me off the
10 streets and provided me with the
11 discipline to avoid the troubles of the
12 streets and to strive to become the best
13 person I could be.

14 Traveling through other less
15 fortunate neighborhoods also showed me
16 how the lack of recreation or beauty of
17 parks can lead to a depressed feeling and
18 look of despair. Like you, my mother
19 also instilled values in me. My mother
20 is a teacher. My father was a cop. My
21 father is retired now. They instilled
22 the values of giving back to the
23 community.

24 When I graduated college, I
25 joined a neighborhood group called the

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2 Ancient Order of Hibernians. It's an
3 Irish Catholic organization that gives
4 back to the community. I aided in
5 reemergence of the neighborhood by
6 designing and building a shrine to Our
7 Lady of Knock at the Holy Name Catholic
8 Church, participated in community
9 clean-ups and doing whatever it takes to
10 rid the streets of drugs. On a small
11 scale, I believe I made my community a
12 little better, and I hope to do the same
13 on a larger scale with this Commission.

14 My professional experience in
15 land development and approval process
16 with Westrum Development will allow me to
17 apply the knowledge and skills required
18 to visualize, design, construct and
19 implement the goals of the Commission.
20 As a manager, I was responsible for
21 turning rural land or abandoned brown
22 fields into residential subdivisions with
23 both passive and active recreations. I
24 performed site selection, negotiated with
25 land owners, hired design consultants and

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2 professionals, met with community and
3 government officials, performed public
4 presentations, obtained approvals from
5 applicable government agencies, prepared
6 bid documents and contracted with
7 construction companies. All of these
8 attributes and skill sets I feel would be
9 a valuable asset to the Commission.

10 During the design and approval
11 process for a development, I have become
12 familiar with the watershed and
13 environmental regulations enacted by the
14 City. Additionally, I've become very
15 sensitive to the aesthetic value and
16 civil pride that recreation and public
17 parks provide for communities. I've also
18 acquired the added value of interacting
19 with community groups in order to provide
20 a more sensible and welcoming new
21 development into an existing
22 well-established neighborhood.

23 As a professional engineer, my
24 education and experience affords me
25 valuable knowledge of federal and local

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2 regulations required to keep the safety
3 and well-being of a public priority
4 number one and apply the principles of
5 engineering to the qualifications
6 required by the Commission.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Ten
8 seconds. The bell rang.

9 MR. McKNIGHT: If I was
10 appointed to the Commission, I feel I'd
11 be able to make the City a better place
12 to live. For too long residents of my
13 age and my demographics have left the
14 City in hopes of finding better amenities
15 to raise their families in. I
16 passionately feel that this city has all
17 the tangibles to provide beautiful parks
18 and trails to utilize and to establish
19 recreations to better raise children in.
20 I'm a product of this city and I want to
21 make it better. I feel my background and
22 experience in land development and
23 engineering will add greatly to the
24 Commission's responsibility to the people
25 of the City.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
3 very much for your testimony.

4 Can we make sure we get a copy
5 of his testimony.

6 Please, sir, state your name
7 for the record.

8 MR. MOORE: Good afternoon. My
9 name is Joseph Moore.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do you
11 have copies of your testimony?

12 MR. MOORE: Yes. I handed them
13 up.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Great.
15 Okay.

16 MR. MOORE: On November 4,
17 2008, the citizens of the City of
18 Philadelphia voted to approve a change to
19 the City Charter to dissolve the
20 Fairmount Park Commission and combine the
21 functions of the Commission with the
22 Department of Recreation. I was not one
23 of those citizens who voted for the
24 change, but having lost at the ballot
25 box, I've decided to step forward and

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2 apply to become a member for the newly
3 founded Commission on Parks and
4 Recreation. The Fairmount Park system is
5 huge and encompasses 63 parks and
6 totaling 9,200 acres, and it's unique in
7 its mixture of historic properties,
8 wooded lands, open fields, wetland
9 resources and public art installations.

10 As an archeologist working in
11 cultural resource management for over ten
12 years, I believe I'm an excellent
13 candidate for a seat on the Commission
14 for Parks and Recreation. I've
15 extensively worked with the National
16 Historic Preservation Act and other
17 relevant state and municipal preservation
18 laws. I was responsible for acting as a
19 liaison between clients and regulatory
20 agencies, and I have a great deal of
21 experience working with a wide range of
22 agencies and organizations.

23 I'm going to skip a paragraph
24 just so I'm under time.

25 Given the fairly recent events

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2 surrounding the President's House
3 excavations and the construction of the
4 Liberty Bell Center, it's clear that the
5 citizens of the Philadelphia metropolitan
6 area believe that history is important
7 and that archeology can be vital in
8 revealing that history and making it
9 accessible to the public. Not only does
10 the Fairmount Park system and other City
11 parks have documented historical sites,
12 but they also represent the largest
13 parcels of undisturbed land within the
14 greater urban setting. These areas have
15 the highest probability for containing
16 potentially significant undocumented
17 pre-historic and historic archeological
18 sites within the City. A comprehensive
19 plan to identify and examine such sites
20 could be the key to developing a new form
21 of historic preservation and tourism. In
22 addition to City funding, grants for such
23 research could be sought through state
24 and federal agencies and through private
25 institutions. Historic and cultural

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2 resources are not renewable, and once
3 they have been destroyed, they can never
4 be recreated. The work of the Fairmount
5 Park Historic Trust was initially
6 developed to address the critical state
7 of the significant historic resources
8 owned by the City of Philadelphia and
9 Fairmount Park. The Trust addressed
10 these needs by providing support in
11 matters of historic preservation to the
12 Fairmount Park Commission. The Trust has
13 done a noble job, but more can be done
14 with the support of new Commission on
15 Parks and Recreation.

16 I believe that Philadelphia
17 could be a model for utilizing its
18 historic resources for new historic
19 preservation and tourism opportunities.
20 Philadelphia's parks and their historic
21 resources can be the key to opening a new
22 chapter in the City's life.

23 Finally, I would like to state
24 that I'm a lifelong Philadelphian. I
25 graduated from Central High School and

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2 Temple University for my Bachelor's and
3 Master's Degrees. I have chosen to
4 remain here and raise my two daughters
5 here. My family utilizes the parks and
6 playgrounds in Philadelphia, and I would
7 like to make them something my children
8 would be happy and proud to play in for
9 years to come. It will take courageous
10 individuals to become leaders to help
11 show the world how great our city and our
12 parks can be, and I want to be a part of
13 this new exciting change.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
16 very, very, very much.

17 Let me just say just as a
18 picture, this panel represents the
19 diversity that our city looks like, and
20 it's a classic example why this process
21 really did work, the democratic process.
22 So we are great to have those who
23 believed in it and we're great to have
24 converters, those who saw at the end of
25 the process that this really can be a

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2 good thing for all of us. So thank you
3 very much for your testimony. Thank you
4 all.

5 Cheryl Mobley, Wayne Morra,
6 Daniel Muroff, Sylvia Myers, Richard
7 Nalbandian, Joshua Nims and June O'Neill.

8 (Witnesses approached witness
9 table.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
11 then. We'll start right here at my left.
12 Good afternoon.

13 MR. MORRA: Good afternoon.
14 Thank you very much for having me here.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
16 welcome. You're welcome.

17 MR. MORRA: Wayne Morra, two
18 R's.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You may
20 proceed with your testimony.

21 MR. MORRA: Thank you.

22 Everyone applying for this
23 position is passionate about seeing the
24 Parks and Recreation system grow and
25 prosper. Everyone that comes before you

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2 knows we have a precious jewel that must
3 be protected, polished and showcased for
4 all to see and appreciate. The skills I
5 offer are my training and expertise in
6 natural resource economics, a background
7 well-suited to tackle the charge of the
8 new Commission to expand and diversify
9 the fundings and resources for operation.

10 We all know budget cuts are
11 here and more are coming. To secure the
12 Parks and Recreation system in
13 Philadelphia, we have to find alternative
14 revenue sources and be ever vigilant that
15 those revenue sources are used to the
16 most efficient manner; for example, by
17 directly involving communities in the
18 administration of recreational leagues or
19 in training local people to run their own
20 pools rather than shut them down, to look
21 for synergistic alliances between City
22 Hall and neighborhood groups for managing
23 recreational opportunities for all
24 citizens.

25 We have to get our hands on new

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2 revenue sources, especially community
3 development grants, stimulus grants and
4 corporate grants. We have to find new
5 ways to merge the public and the private
6 sector. As corporations attempt to
7 rebrand their image, the Parks and
8 Recreation Commission will have the
9 unique opportunity to partner with
10 business. Businesses, specifically
11 financial corporations, will have a
12 chance to repair their image, while the
13 Parks and Recreation system will have a
14 chance to develop a path to sustain
15 fiscal vitality. The West African
16 Conservation and Educational program that
17 I co-directed derived almost its entire
18 budget from corporations such as Marathon
19 Oil, Exxon Mobile and Hess.

20 Additionally, we should
21 consider new modes of operation and new
22 entrepreneurial ventures like the very
23 successful Bargemusic program in New York
24 City. We should require event operators
25 to pick up their own trash or pay a fee

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2 more municipal clean-up. We can
3 streamline the licensing process for Park
4 vendors and entrepreneurs who pay taxes,
5 thus augmenting the revenue stream. And,
6 finally, since so many of our suburban
7 friends and neighbors avail themselves of
8 the benefits of the Park, shouldn't they
9 pay a part of the cost? We simply can't
10 afford free riders anymore.

11 As a member of the Commission,
12 I believe my primary contributions will
13 be threefold. First, as a professional
14 trained economist who has worked with the
15 EPA, worked in Africa in partnership with
16 agencies such as USAID, Conservation
17 International and the World Wildlife
18 Fund; second, as a college professor for
19 30 years who has experience not only in
20 the classroom but working collaboratively
21 building consensus, even among faculty
22 members; and, last, as one with a deep
23 unbridled love of our city's parks and a
24 robust belief in the benefits of
25 recreation.

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2 In summary, a person who will
3 work to secure sustainable fiscal
4 vitality for the Parks and the Recreation
5 system, a collaborator and a consensus
6 builder, and a hard worker who will
7 protect and enhance open space we've been
8 endowed with and maintain and enhance the
9 recreational opportunities we are all
10 entitled to.

11 Thank you for this opportunity.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
13 very much for your testimony. I do have
14 a question, but I want to hear all
15 testimony first.

16 Please. Good afternoon.

17 MS. MYERS: Good afternoon,
18 members of City Council. My name is
19 Sylvia Myers. I am here today, as I feel
20 I am qualified to be considered for an
21 appointment to the newly created
22 Commission on Parks and Recreation. I
23 have been an integral part of many facets
24 of the Fairmount Park. I have been a
25 volunteer connected with the preservation

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2 of historic Laurel Hill Mansion for the
3 past 30 years. I have been a garden
4 chairperson. I have conducted tours.
5 I've worked with youth groups brought to
6 the house through our outreach program.

7 As a volunteer with the
8 Roxborough/Manayunk/Wissahickon
9 Historical Society, I have developed an
10 appreciation for the significance of what
11 is in the Park and its role in the
12 development of our city.

13 In my community, I have been a
14 volunteer in the revitalization of Gorgas
15 Park. This work involved the restoration
16 of a War Memorial and raising funds. As
17 a result of my work in conjunction with
18 the Friends of Gorgas Park, I can
19 honestly say the Park is now a gathering
20 place for families and a focal point for
21 summer concerts, movies and community
22 fairs.

23 One of the assets I bring to
24 the position is my experience with the
25 youth of Philadelphia. I am a committee

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2 member of the Pennsylvania Horticultural
3 Society's Kids Grow Expo, which is
4 designed to teach inner city youth the
5 value of horticulture. I bring hands-on
6 knowledge of trees and shrubs. I have
7 cultivated award-winning hollies and
8 evergreens. I became a Master Flower
9 Show Judge after years of schooling and
10 actual show experience. I bring to the
11 Commission a lifelong love of
12 conservation and plant cultivation.

13 Because I have made the Park an
14 important part of my life, I feel
15 strongly that I can advocate on behalf of
16 the Park and those who use the facilities
17 on a daily basis. My pride in the Park,
18 the City and its people is no secret to
19 anyone that knows me. I would like an
20 opportunity to be of service to the Park
21 in this new way and come here today to
22 ask you to give me a chance to be further
23 involved in the best park in the world.

24 I'm not the tallest candidate,
25 I'm not the youngest candidate, but I

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2 pledge to be the most dedicated member
3 should you see fit to appoint me to the
4 Commission of Parks and Recreation.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
6 very, very much.

7 MS. MYERS: You're quite
8 welcome.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
10 afternoon.

11 MR. NALBANDIAN: Good
12 afternoon. My name is M. Richard
13 Nalbandian. That's N-A-L-B-A-N-D-I-A-N.
14 I would like to --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
16 Please.

17 MR. NALBANDIAN: I would first
18 like to thank the Committee for convening
19 this inclusive and transparent process.

20 The Parks and Recreation system
21 in Philadelphia is a unique and
22 invaluable asset. The system's
23 aesthetic, environmental, social and
24 health benefits are many faceted and they
25 are available to every resident of our

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2 region. But in order to realize the full
3 potential of these benefits, a
4 multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder
5 approach is needed.

6 I am currently an Associate
7 Professor of Community and Regional
8 Planning at Temple University and a
9 Research Fellow in its Center for
10 Sustainable Communities. I won't take
11 time here to review in detail my
12 professional credentials and experience
13 since they are included in my application
14 and the attached resume. However, I
15 would like to highlight my 40 years of
16 experience as consultant, manager,
17 researcher, government official and
18 teacher in earth and environmental
19 sciences and planning.

20 I have worked with small and
21 large municipalities, citizen and
22 advocacy groups, non-profits and large
23 corporations to establish and use best
24 management practices for responsible land
25 development and environmental protection

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2 and restoration.

3 I have helped to plan new
4 communities and open space systems and
5 land reclamation projects in many parts
6 of the U.S. and abroad. I have lived and
7 worked in Philadelphia for nearly 30
8 years and have acquired an intimate
9 knowledge of much of the Fairmount Park
10 system and of open space and parklands in
11 neighboring communities through my
12 recreational use and through my work as a
13 principal investigator in the Center for
14 Sustainable Communities' watershed and
15 land management planning efforts in the
16 Pennypack and Wissahickon Creek
17 watersheds.

18 If selected to serve on the
19 Commission, as a professional community
20 and regional planner, I would seek to
21 contribute to the development and clear
22 articulation of goals, objectives and
23 strategies that integrate the necessary
24 disciplines, community needs and citizen
25 concerns. And as an environmental

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2 scientist, I would seek to ensure that
3 the selected strategies are based on
4 sound science and represent best
5 management practices.

6 Thank you for your
7 consideration of my application.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
9 very much for your testimony.

10 Good afternoon.

11 MR. MUROFF: Good afternoon,
12 Madam Chairwoman. Thank you very much.
13 I want to thank -- my name is Dan Muroff,
14 M-U-R-O-F-F. I want to thank the Council
15 Committee on Parks, Recreation and
16 Cultural Affairs for allowing me the
17 opportunity to present in front of you
18 today and to share why I believe I would
19 be an important and valued asset on the
20 newly created Commission on Parks and
21 Recreation.

22 I believe in our city. I
23 believe passionately not only in
24 Philadelphia's people, but also in those
25 things that make our city so special,

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2 including our city's park system. When I
3 make my way downtown from my home in the
4 City's Northwest, I pass through bold
5 rocky bluffs that trace a path directly
6 to the Schuylkill River, which winds
7 across a pasture that ends at an urban
8 landscape, and this never ceases to
9 inspire me that this routine, yet special
10 experience, along with a great
11 appreciation for the exceptional history
12 buried within this landscape, that has
13 elevated my passion to help preserve and
14 improve our parks.

15 I view Philadelphia's Park
16 system as having potential that is yet to
17 be realized. While cities like Vancouver
18 and Washington, DC have effectively
19 incorporated their park systems into
20 their cities' narratives, Philadelphia
21 has an even more expansive historic,
22 unique and dramatic park system to offer.
23 We can do more to elevate the Park system
24 and develop a narrative that better
25 informs our community and nation that

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2 Philadelphia is a city with something
3 unique. In this way, we can leverage our
4 assets and make our parks and our entire
5 city stronger.

6 The trust to preserve this
7 valued asset must be balanced with an
8 understanding that a healthy and
9 sustainable park system must embrace
10 thoughtfully considered and sustainable
11 development. That is why I have worked
12 collaboratively along with other
13 advocates in the City's Northwest to
14 further development of the Cresheim Trail
15 from Montgomery County to Forbidden
16 Drive. That is also why I have worked as
17 President of East Mount Airy Neighbors to
18 support additional funding for our
19 neighborhood parks like Pleasant
20 Playground. These are examples of the
21 sort of smart growth worth supporting.

22 As a member of the new
23 Commission, I would accept this
24 responsibility with tremendous respect
25 for the long and important legacy that is

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2 Fairmount Park and for its preservation
3 for the generations to come. I believe I
4 would be a worthy asset to the
5 Commission, and I thank you for your
6 consideration. I'd like to also add I'm
7 originally from the region and I left for
8 about 10 or 11 years, and I moved back to
9 Philadelphia because I believe in this
10 place, and passionately so.

11 So I thank you very much for
12 the opportunity to express my sincere
13 interest in this.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well, it
15 certainly comes through from you and from
16 all of you. The authenticity is without
17 question.

18 Let me thank you for your
19 prepared testimony, and let me ask you,
20 if I may, Dr. Morra, the Bargemusic
21 program, briefly tell me what that is.

22 MR. MORRA: It's a program
23 that -- what they do is, they bring
24 concerts out to a barge right on the
25 river over by Brooklyn, and it's just a

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2 big happening. They have it five, six
3 days a week, and it's just a big
4 happening out there, and it just attracts
5 a lot of people.

6 Any time I think that you can
7 get any kind of private ventures working
8 in the Park, I think it's a win-win
9 situation, and that's why I said about
10 streamlining the licensing process to get
11 more vendors to use the Park and get more
12 revenue for the Park that way. I really
13 think that's a key revenue source for us
14 as time goes on.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
16 that's a classic example of the long list
17 of ideas we've been able to glean from a
18 lot of the testimony. It's another
19 classic example.

20 Thank you all very, very much.

21 Cheryl Mobley, you're welcome
22 to come to the table and offer your
23 testimony. Joshua Nims, June O'Neill,
24 William O-S-T-A-P-C-H-U-K. I want to
25 honor that pronunciation. Gregory

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2 Pastore, Katie Pastuszek.

3 (Witnesses approached witness
4 table.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If you
6 have testimony, my little helper, who is
7 out of school but is going to work today,
8 if you could pass the testimony to Miss
9 Brielle. This is my American Express
10 card. School is out. She's working with
11 me, my daughter, Brielle Brown.

12 Good afternoon, everyone.

13 Please state your name for the
14 record and offer your testimony.

15 DR. MOBLEY-STIMPSON: Good
16 afternoon. I'm Cheryl Mobley-Stimpson.
17 I'm in a little bit of pain. I'm just
18 coming out of a muscle spasm,
19 Councilwoman, but I'm very happy to be
20 here today. I'm also known as Cheryl
21 Mobley, also known as Dr. Cheryl, also
22 know as Leon and Cameron's mom, and I
23 consider it an honor to appear before you
24 today with testimony supporting my
25 application for Commissioner.

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2 In law, there's a Latin phrase
3 often used, Res Ipsa Loquitur, which
4 simply means that things speak for
5 itself. Therefore, I will not speak for
6 my resume. You have access to that to
7 read at your convenience. Rather, I will
8 bring to your attention the following:
9 I'm a fourth-generation South
10 Philadelphian raising a fifth-generation
11 of South Philadelphians, a
12 third-generation public school graduate,
13 a second-generation college graduate and
14 teacher - B.S. from Cheyney, M.A. from
15 Ohio State, J.D. from Howard Law and
16 ABD/Ph.D Penn State - second-generation
17 block captain and fourth-generation
18 member of Union Baptist Church in South
19 Philadelphia, where my family has served
20 since the late 1800's, early 1900's. I'm
21 a former second International
22 Vice-President of Alpha Kappa Alpha
23 Sorority, Incorporated, and the highest
24 elected ranking elected officer to serve
25 from this area.

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2 I'm a change agent and I'm here
3 today to help. I'm passionate about
4 serving people. You see, it's this DNA.
5 My mother's first cousin was Melvin
6 Burgess. Germantown Settlement has a
7 building named after Melvin that stands
8 at Wayne and Chelten Avenues, and my own
9 mother was legendary in teaching. She
10 didn't have to brag about it, because the
11 things spoke for itself.

12 I have developed a reputation
13 for creating substantive strategic
14 alliances and have experience in the
15 state Legislature, non-profit arena, as a
16 community advocate and small business
17 owner, and I'm now repositioning myself
18 due to an accident and this very tough
19 economy, and that brings me to this
20 moment.

21 My children have become change
22 agents and impact players in baseball.
23 They also play soccer, football, were
24 downhill ski racers with the USSA
25 Association, played basketball and ran

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2 track. I've submitted their athletic
3 bios, so I won't go into that, but one of
4 my crowning achievements has been to
5 develop two African American boys as
6 Division I/Major League Baseball
7 prospects from the inner city in the
8 Northeast portion of this country, almost
9 unheard of in this day and age. So I sit
10 before you today to state that it's taken
11 all I've had to give. Maybe I could have
12 made some different judgments along the
13 way, but there really was no help from
14 the City to assist in this effort, and
15 that is exactly what I'm here to talk
16 about very, very briefly, that there
17 needs to be a partnership, more of a
18 partnership, around parks and recreation,
19 as relates to children and families and
20 in the City of Philadelphia and beyond.

21 I have used recreation centers
22 and parks all through the City. As a
23 child I used Vare, Chew and played in
24 Wharton Square. My children have used
25 centers throughout this entire city,

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2 playing at DV, Taney, SEYAA, SABRE,
3 Anderson, Fairmount, Elmwood, Feltonville
4 and other centers and parks throughout
5 the City from the south to the northeast.
6 They've also used centers and parks
7 throughout Montgomery, Delaware, Chester
8 and Bucks County. I'm a
9 second-generation block captain and I'm
10 trained in greening and systemic
11 approaches to preservation, and my own
12 church is actually considered for
13 preservation on the National Registry.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So let me
15 advise you, you missed the opportunity
16 for the rules. Everyone had three
17 minutes. So you have 15 seconds to wrap
18 up.

19 DR. MOBLEY-STIMPSON: Okay. In
20 closing, there are many careers that are
21 waiting to be developed using parks and
22 recreation. There are fractured lives
23 that can be mended. They are waiting.

24 I want to publicly thank
25 Councilman Bill Green for what he has

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2 done in the life of my older son, and I
3 wanted to go on record as thanking
4 Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell, who has
5 written my letter of recommendation for
6 today, as well as Gail Connor, who is
7 President of a local environmental firm
8 that's located in Delaware County, and
9 also Chuck Pearsall, who is the Athletic
10 Director of one of our stellar prep
11 charter schools, Prep Charter in South
12 Philadelphia.

13 Again, I want to hold hands
14 with you. I have a proven template
15 beyond a resume. Remember, Res Ipsa
16 Loquitur. Everything I've done speaks
17 for itself.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
19 then. Thank you for your testimony.

20 Please.

21 MS. PASTUSZEK: Good afternoon.
22 I'd like to begin by thanking the members
23 of the Committee on Parks, Recreation and
24 Cultural Affairs, Councilwoman Blondell
25 Reynolds Brown for your commitment and

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2 your service to the natural places and
3 the future leaders of this great city.

4 I'm honored to be here today
5 among such worthy citizens who, like me,
6 share a commitment to the lasting
7 preservation of this city's parks and
8 urban wilderness and, equally as
9 important, share a desire to provide the
10 City's young people with experiences that
11 will shape their futures and the future
12 of this city.

13 As I thought about what I
14 wanted to share with the Committee
15 relative to my application to serve as a
16 member of the new Commission on Parks and
17 Recreation, I too decided not to talk
18 about myself, but rather to talk about
19 those experiences that I work to deliver.
20 I concluded that the best spokespeople
21 for Outward Bound's place at the table
22 are the students that we serve. As the
23 Executive Director of Outward Bound, I
24 want to tell you stories of three
25 students, and it's my hope that you will

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2 recognize the value of including Outward
3 Bound's voice among the others that you
4 select to serve the Parks and Recreation
5 systems in Philadelphia.

6 In 2000, Outward Bound offered
7 its first five-day Philadelphia
8 urban-based expedition course to nine
9 students and the Vice-Principal of
10 Furness High School in South
11 Philadelphia. The students selected to
12 participate included a diverse mix of
13 student government representatives.
14 Among the participants was a young woman
15 of Chinese heritage whom I will call
16 Xuai. Xuai appeared enthusiastic during
17 the start of the course, packing her
18 backpack methodically, following
19 directions and quietly assuming her place
20 alongside her crew mates. I met the
21 group on the third day of their course in
22 Philadelphia as they were beginning the
23 rock climbing activities at Livesey Rocks
24 in the Wissahickon Valley Park.
25 According to the instructors, Xuai had

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2 been a quiet participant on the first few
3 days of the course, not complaining;
4 however, keeping to herself much of the
5 time. At the rock site, however, Xuai
6 demonstrated her fearless ability to
7 scale the rock face, dancing to the top,
8 tagging the bell and repelling back down
9 to congratulatory cheers from her crew
10 mates. By the afternoon as the group
11 centered around the 30-foot pole at our
12 high ropes course on the other side of
13 the Wissahickon Creek, Xuai easily
14 climbed the ladder, stepped quickly up
15 the staples on the side of the swaying
16 pole, skillfully maneuvered herself on
17 top of the tippy plate at the top of the
18 pole and turned carefully around to face
19 her crew, ready to take her leap of faith
20 off the top.

21 We ask our students to share
22 with us something about themselves they
23 wish to leave behind as they jump from
24 the pole high in the trees secured by a
25 full-body harness supported by ropes, fed

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2 through a technical belay system with
3 their crew mates holding them on the
4 ground. Xuai, using what many believe to
5 be the first-time full sentences in
6 perfect English came through her lips,
7 said, I want to be a leader and I want to
8 leave behind my shy and timid self and
9 step into a new me, ready, willing and
10 able to take safe risks to make my world
11 a better place.

12 With that, she leapt forward,
13 gracefully flying through the air before
14 landing safely on the ground. The
15 Vice-Principal and I watched her as her
16 crew mates enveloped her in a group hug.
17 The instructors were moved. The
18 Vice-Principal, through tears, shared
19 that she had never before experienced
20 such a profound learning opportunity for
21 her students.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So I would
23 ask that you try to wrap up for the last
24 15 seconds.

25 MS. PASTUSZEK: This is Outward

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2 Bound at its finest moment.

3 These are only stories of one
4 of the three of the more than 12,000
5 students and teachers we serve here in
6 Philadelphia. Our mission is to inspire
7 leadership, and we believe we are
8 accomplishing this task with the support
9 of our incredible partner schools,
10 youth-serving organizations, the City
11 Department of Recreation, Fairmount Park
12 and the many other organizations that
13 collaborate with us to provide the
14 life-changing experiences known as
15 Outward Bound.

16 Here in Philadelphia we're
17 blessed with the beautiful natural places
18 of Fairmount Park, the expansive
19 recreation opportunities and, most of
20 all, with amazing young hearts and souls
21 ready to experience these wonders. We
22 see it every day here in the City, in the
23 parks and in partnership with our
24 recreation centers.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you

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2 very much. Please don't leave yet.

3 Good afternoon, sir.

4 MR. PASTORE: Good afternoon.

5 My name is Greg Pastore, P-A-S-T-O-R-E.

6 Thank you for this opportunity to speak.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
8 welcome.

9 MR. PASTORE: I have no written
10 testimony per se. I did hand up another
11 copy of my original application with a
12 recommendation letter. My application
13 contains my background and credentials.

14 I am a member of the Zoning
15 Code Commission as a culmination of my
16 years of community service. I just
17 wanted to state a few particular thoughts
18 and opinions I have relating to parks,
19 rec and the new combination.

20 First of all, it is a good
21 thing -- I think this is obvious, but
22 needs to be restated -- that the parks be
23 bifurcated by operations rather than by
24 agency. It's important that we
25 understand that parks are land

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2 management -- a land management company,
3 and recreation is really for the
4 activation of those land uses on that
5 land. So we have to understand that
6 that's what we're trying to achieve here.

7 In no particular order, a
8 couple of thoughts I had was, one of
9 these things about land management will
10 be watershed management. That really is
11 job one of the Fairmount Park Commission
12 overall -- of the Fairmount Park overall.
13 Drinking water is job one A and storm
14 water runoff is job one B. As long as we
15 can protect those things, activating the
16 space, as other people have said, is
17 probably job two that we need to do.
18 People using the parks intensively is a
19 good thing as long as we're not violating
20 the passive value of these parks to us.

21 Another thing that -- one thing
22 that I see lacking in parks today is
23 honoring, from the City's perspective,
24 the social contract. The lack of trash
25 pick-up in the small pocket parks and the

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2 neighborhood parks is really an
3 absurdity, and dogs need to be on the
4 leash where appropriate and not on the
5 leash where appropriate. Those are some
6 things that friends groups can't do,
7 individual citizens can't do. That's the
8 responsibility of the government and I
9 think ultimately the responsibility of
10 this Commission to get that point across,
11 that that's something that the government
12 gives to the people, is the rules under
13 which things are done at the parks and
14 the certain support services so that then
15 citizens can give back, to the extent
16 they can, and enjoy.

17 One particular example of a
18 vision for the Park as far as activating
19 the use is the lakes at FDR. There's no
20 reason that the facility there, the
21 pavilion, can't be a great space. It's
22 just sitting there. All we have to do is
23 look at the Water Works on the Schuylkill
24 to understand the analogy to what the
25 lakes can be. At that same location, you

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2 can take a power boat, but you have to
3 climb down like a muddy bank to get
4 there. There's not a dock. And the
5 Boston Swan Boats and umpteen places
6 around the world are a counter example of
7 how that's done, if you just care a
8 little bit.

9 I guess I would like to just
10 conclude by saying that the combined
11 conditions mandate to manage the City's
12 public lands. It does dovetail very well
13 with my experience as a, so to speak,
14 steward of private land. I'm used to
15 making decisions, sometimes hard
16 decisions, about things in my community
17 and citywide, and that's something that
18 this new Commission is going to have to
19 do. There's no two ways about the fact
20 that some decisions that need to be made
21 are hard, whether it's budget issues or
22 otherwise, as other people have said, and
23 we need to be able to do that.

24 So thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're

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2 very welcome.

3 Good afternoon.

4 MR. OSTAPCHUK: My name is

5 William Ostapchuk. That's the

6 pronunciation. O-S-T-A-P-C-H-U-K.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.

8 MR. OSTAPCHUK: You're welcome.

9 A longtime resident in Northeast

10 Philadelphia. As a 73-year-old concerned

11 senior citizen, I truly believe that I

12 can bring a perspective to the City parks

13 and community centers, what they mean to

14 the elderly, the youth of the fine city

15 notwithstanding.

16 In my resume, I listed my

17 credentials, which include a business

18 degree from St. Joseph University. I

19 earned my degree in five years at night

20 while working full time and raising a

21 family.

22 Now, I don't have firsthand

23 experience to the specifics of operations

24 of Parks and Recreation facilities, so

25 one may ask what could I bring to the

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2 table. My response, a willingness to
3 work with my contemporaries and the
4 elected public officials such as yourself
5 to achieve the highest standards in doing
6 what is best for the parks and recreation
7 centers. Recognizing that these are very
8 difficult economic times, some hard
9 decisions will have to be made. But if
10 decisions are made with common sense and
11 best intentions, our diversity should
12 come together for the betterment of
13 Philadelphia citizens. That's what I
14 would fight for.

15 There is one specific element
16 that I would like to address, which is
17 maintaining a clean environment in our
18 Parks and Recreation facilities. This
19 includes keeping them trash-free and well
20 kept. This notion, in my view, is to be
21 exercised and promoted by its users,
22 without which anything else would be
23 muted.

24 Finally, as a social member of
25 Glen Foerd Mansion Preservation for a

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2 number of years and a past social member
3 of Friends of Pennypack Park, I feel akin
4 to being associated to the Philadelphia
5 Commission on Parks and Recreation,
6 although I recognize that it's a much
7 bigger responsibility. Your
8 consideration is greatly appreciated.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
11 welcome. We thank you for your
12 willingness to offer testimony and state
13 your interest, despite the fact that many
14 of you have a huge responsibility.

15 To the both of you, let me say
16 you should be encouraged, because one of
17 the first things that happened under the
18 former Managing Director, Phil Goldsmith,
19 is that he did actually what you
20 suggested, combined the operations like
21 grass cutting. There's no need to have
22 one set of grass cutters for Parks and
23 another set of grass cutters for Rec.
24 Let's have one to take care of both. And
25 so the alignment of some of those

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2 functions and operations began to happen
3 immediately. So those were good signals
4 that we were on our way to doing what
5 Councilman Clarke and I needed to do. So
6 I simply wanted to acknowledge and affirm
7 what you stated in your testimony.

8 To you two ladies, I need to
9 ask, briefly state what one or two skills
10 you bring to the table for consideration
11 on the Commission. Please. Because your
12 testimony reflected other perspectives,
13 but for our purposes here.

14 MS. PASTUSZEK: When I started
15 in my position as the Executive Director
16 of Outward Bound in 1999, we served ten
17 schools and we served a total of about 58
18 students a year. Last year we served
19 2,800 students and teachers across the
20 City of Philadelphia in representing
21 schools in all ten Council districts.
22 We've built a program. I manage a Board.
23 I know how to manage a non-profit
24 organization. We are completely
25 non-profit, so our funding comes from a

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2 little bit from the School District, a
3 little bit from the state and a large
4 percentage of it from individual and
5 private entities.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Very
7 helpful.

8 Dr. Mobley-Stimpson.

9 DR. MOBLEY-STIMPSON: Yes,
10 Councilwoman. The two things I want to
11 highlight, because I have a number of
12 diverse skills that I bring, but number
13 one, I'm a post-secondary education
14 expert, and I think every single thing
15 that this City does that involves
16 children and youth needs to be connected
17 to post-secondary education in some form
18 or fashion in a way that's both systemic
19 and in a way that's strategic, and
20 certainly utilizing Parks and Recreation,
21 there are a number of areas that could be
22 touched upon with regard to career
23 development once you're talking about
24 sports. We're not just talking about
25 kids being able to go to the NCAA and

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2 play, although that's important, if they
3 can get there. We're not just talking
4 about them trying to get to the
5 professional level, but we are talking
6 about all the various careers that are
7 connected to sports. There's sports law,
8 there's sports medicine, there's sports
9 as it relates to parks and recreation.

10 So I hope I made myself clear
11 there, just regard post-secondary
12 education expertise.

13 And the second thing is my
14 ability to mobilize vast networks as a
15 result of my own tenure in this city in
16 terms of the length of time I resided,
17 the length of time my family has existed
18 here and all of the arms and legs that
19 stretch out from there from the
20 standpoint of work, from the standpoint
21 of just socialization, church, any number
22 of things, existing in the neighborhood.
23 That's important, because that does not
24 exist today. All the way down to the
25 grassroots level, again, in a way that is

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2 both strategic and in the way that's
3 systemic, and so what we end up with is
4 one-hit wonders. We take five steps
5 forward and three steps backward, and
6 every time there's a new Administration,
7 there are new areas to be explored, tasks
8 to be accomplished, but going all the way
9 down to the lowest common denominator,
10 it's not happening. Things are not
11 connected up. So that's what I bring.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
13 very, very much for your testimony.

14 I would like to acknowledge my
15 colleague in this endeavor, Councilman
16 Darrell Clarke.

17 Councilman Clarke, please offer
18 a few words.

19 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yes.
20 Absolutely.

21 Did you apologize for me?

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We did.

23 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I'll do it.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

25 Absolutely. We indicated early on that

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2 you actually chair the other Committee on
3 Fiscal Responsibility and because of the
4 urgency of dealing with the stimulus
5 dollars, we had to get those agencies in
6 on the record.

7 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Yeah. I
8 just wanted to, first of all, thank you
9 for continuing to do a great job on this
10 very important initiative. You are a
11 trooper -- or a troopist. What is it
12 when you're woman?

13 First, how is everybody doing?
14 I just wanted to apologize, as
15 Councilwoman said, that I'm actually
16 chairing as we speak the Committee on
17 Fiscal Stability, and we're talking about
18 the significant revenue that's going to
19 be coming to the City of Philadelphia.
20 So we brought in all of the stakeholders,
21 SEPTA, the housing authorities, job
22 training, all of the various entities
23 that will be charged with spending we
24 hope what will be approaching a billion
25 dollars in the City of Philadelphia. So

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2 I had to do that, because I want at the
3 end of the day to be in a position to put
4 more money in both our Parks and our
5 Recreation systems.

6 One of the things I said
7 earlier -- I know those of you, Laura and
8 the folks that have been here at all of
9 the hearings, I just wanted to say -- and
10 I don't know if it was mentioned yet.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please say
12 it.

13 COUNCILMAN CLARKE:
14 Unfortunately, most of you all will not
15 be successful, and that's just the simple
16 case of numbers. But in the first two
17 hearings that I've been privy to in terms
18 of sitting there and listening to the
19 candidates, it became increasingly clear,
20 although it was clear when we first got
21 the initial applications, that there is
22 no way that, given the quality of people,
23 that we're going to be able to select 25
24 nominees and, in retrospect, wish that we
25 had said possibly we should have 100

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2 people on this. I mean, the quality of
3 the people that have come in, I tell you,
4 it's just been amazing, and it's
5 encouraging to understand that people in
6 the City of Philadelphia, one, they care
7 so much about their Parks and Rec
8 systems, but the quality of the people
9 and the commitment has been extremely
10 encouraging.

11 So one of the things that
12 became clear to us is that we have to
13 make sure that we keep people engaged,
14 because what we don't want to do is
15 nominate 25 people and the Mayor selects
16 nine of those 25 and then the rest of you
17 say, Well, I took a shot at it, so be it,
18 and go on about your daily business. We
19 can't let that happen. We got to keep
20 you engaged. So we're working on a
21 strategy that will create -- and I don't
22 want to say exactly what it is, but it
23 will be something that will allow people
24 to continue to participate in a
25 meaningful way and both provide

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2 substantive recommendations and influence
3 the strategies as it relates to policies
4 on Rec and Parks.

5 The other thing, for those of
6 you that are successful -- and hopefully
7 somebody in this room will be there --
8 there were some concerns early on in this
9 process about this being a,
10 quote/unquote, advisory council and not
11 in the position to influence policy. I
12 would like to say that from our
13 perspective, that cannot be anything
14 further than the truth. We are going to
15 be leaning on this group in a significant
16 way to ensure that you help develop
17 strategies on parkland, rec land,
18 disposition, watershed management,
19 policies as it relates to dealing with
20 young people and older people on these
21 various recreation needs.

22 So one of the other things that
23 we wanted to make sure, because we have
24 created what I believe probably should be
25 a blueprint on how to have a transparent

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2 process and being proactive and getting
3 people engaged, we're going to expect,
4 although we're not going to be in charge
5 of this Commission, but we're going to
6 expect and encourage that this Commission
7 takes its show on the road. We would
8 like to see you have these public debates
9 in various parts of the City to solicit
10 ideas from all of the citizens to make
11 sure that we get an accurate picture of
12 what should actually happen in our
13 system.

14 So, again, I want to apologize,
15 but I want to thank all of you for
16 showing your interest and your
17 commitment. I got to go back across the
18 hall and hopefully wrap up this very
19 important initiative.

20 I've actually compared my notes
21 with the Councilwoman from the first two
22 meetings and they're pretty similar, so I
23 plan on looking at her notes on the third
24 and get a clear sense of where I need to
25 be.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Terrific.

3 COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So thank

4 you all. I apologize, but I got to go

5 over here. Thank you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,

7 Councilman. Thank you very, very much.

8 So he not knowing and not

9 having heard testimony, we have already

10 heard testimony of the importance of

11 doing just that, going to the trench

12 level in neighborhoods and communities

13 that we can hear up close and personal

14 what we expect.

15 So thank you, Councilman

16 Clarke.

17 So thank you all for your

18 testimony.

19 DR. MOBLEY-STIMPSON: Thank

20 you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you

22 very, very much.

23 Joshua Nims, June O'Neill,

24 Carmella Paulmier, Stephen Pawlowski,

25 Clifford Pearlman, please proceed to the

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2 witness table.

3 (Witnesses approached witness
4 table.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: June
6 Pelzer, Tony Pich, Frank P-I-T-Z.

7 (Witnesses approached witness
8 table.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
10 then. State your name for the record and
11 proceed with your testimony.

12 MS. PAULMIER: My name is
13 Carmella Clark Paulmier. That's
14 P-A-U-L-M-I-E-R, and I would like to
15 thank the Council for having this meeting
16 so that people can have a chance to state
17 their views and to apply or be considered
18 for a seat on the Commission.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Surely.

20 MS. PAULMIER: Let me get right
21 to the point and tell you that I'm
22 applying to the Commission because I have
23 been a lifelong --

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I need you
25 to speak into the mike. Pull it closer

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2 to you. It won't bite you, I promise.

3 MS. PAULMIER: I have been a
4 lifelong resident of the City of
5 Philadelphia and taken advantage of both
6 the Parks and Recreation resources
7 provided by the City. I have fond
8 memories of my family outings to the old
9 Smith Playground and learning to swim and
10 take advantage of the situations there,
11 and my very first working opportunity was
12 on the staff of Camp William Penn back in
13 the Poconos in the early '70s.

14 Every major point of my life
15 has involved aspects of recreational
16 parks in Philadelphia, so I would like to
17 share my interests and abilities and be a
18 representative for the everyday people
19 who use the Parks and Recreation
20 opportunities provided by the City.

21 My background in the service of
22 the Parks and Recreation has been in
23 mainly historical preservation and lands
24 management and then recreational aspects
25 of the Wissahickon Valley and horseback

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2 riding, gardening and horticulture and
3 the management of the grounds and around
4 the area of the Monastery complex. I
5 have been the manager of a former Park
6 property that was turned over to the
7 Boarders and Stewards of the Monastery,
8 and I served as a Board member for a
9 number of years from the financial end,
10 raising money for grants, preserving the
11 property and overseeing the management of
12 the associated grounds and interest of
13 the property.

14 This involvement has given me a
15 deep and abiding feeling of care and
16 concern for the parks and the
17 recreational facilities that are involved
18 in it. And I feel that the facilities
19 are one of the untapped areas of
20 treasures in the area, and I would like
21 to serve on the Commission so I can
22 reciprocate the pleasure I felt as a Park
23 and Recreation consumer and user.

24 I do realize that it's not an
25 easy task and that it will take a lot of

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2 time, energy and commitment, and I feel I
3 have all of that when it comes to the
4 City of Philadelphia and our Parks and
5 Recreation Department.

6 So I would like to thank you
7 again.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
9 welcome. Thank you for your testimony,
10 and we thank you for honoring the clock.

11 Good afternoon, sir.

12 MR. PEARLMAN: Good afternoon.
13 I'm Clifford Pearlman, P-E-A-R-L-M-A-N.
14 Thank you for this chance to tell you a
15 few things about me. I thought I would
16 talk a little bit, if I might, about my
17 use of the Park, just as a Philadelphia
18 resident, what I've come to learn about
19 the Park through a number of consulting
20 assignments I did with the Park at the
21 behest of the William Penn Foundation
22 several years ago and what I've learned
23 as someone who started a business in the
24 City in 1980, a strategic planning
25 business that grew to be the largest of

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2 its kind in the country when I left it in
3 2000. It was a niche market consulting
4 firm. Our client base was grant-makers
5 and the entities in which they had --
6 their grantees in which they had a
7 particular interest, which is how I got
8 involved in doing some work with the
9 Park.

10 I'm sort of an exercise nut and
11 I live downtown, and I think I have
12 probably made the 8.4 mile loop around
13 the river from Lloyd Hall probably more
14 different ways than just about anybody.
15 I ran it when I was younger. When my
16 knees went -- I ran it and I cross
17 country skied it back in the day when we
18 used to have large snowstorms in this
19 city. When my knees went, I started to
20 bike and then inline skate, and now I row
21 six miles a day on the river, which is
22 about all my knees will let me do at this
23 stage in my life.

24 I've been a youth tennis player
25 at Seger Playground. It's at 10th and

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2 Lombard. Seger is interesting because
3 the Rec Department staff there has
4 historically run a reservation system for
5 people who pay a \$25 fee in order to be
6 able to reserve courts, which is a big
7 thing in tennis. This is maybe one of
8 the rec sites that does this. And then a
9 few years ago when the courts needed
10 resurfacing, the fees that it built --
11 these reservation fees that have been
12 built up over the year paid for the
13 resurfacing of the court sort of outside
14 of the City budget. Kind of an
15 interesting model.

16 I also do some work on the
17 river as a rower. I do some work with
18 the head of the Schuylkill Regatta. One
19 of your staff members each year opens an
20 invitation from me inviting you to come
21 down for a guided tour, but I know how
22 busy people are on October weekends.

23 Maybe I'll just move to talk a
24 little bit about my work with the Park at
25 the behest of the Foundation. I've done

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2 a number of assignments. These are back
3 a few years ago. I worked with the
4 then-President -- oops. I got to move
5 here.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
7 seconds.

8 MR. PEARLMAN: -- (continued)
9 in the rollout of the \$25 million capital
10 infrastructure grant that the Park made
11 and then in the development of a
12 professional development curriculum for
13 staff at the Park. And I'll just have to
14 leave my third aspect of my work to stand
15 for itself in my resume.

16 Thank you so much.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
18 very, very welcome. Thank you.

19 Good afternoon.

20 MS. PELZER: Good afternoon,
21 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown. It's an
22 honor for me to be here at this point,
23 and I'm not going to take up a lot of
24 time.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You have

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2 three minutes like everyone else. You
3 can use all of your three minutes.

4 MS. PELZER: All right. But I
5 just want to say that I've been --

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We need to
7 hear your name first for the record.

8 MS. PELZER: Oh, I'm sorry.
9 Sorry. My name is June Pelzer. That's
10 P-E-L-Z-E-R, and I just want to say a few
11 things here.

12 I've always had a love affair
13 with the Park system. From a child I've
14 been going to the Park, because we grew
15 up poor in West Philadelphia, didn't have
16 any money to go anywhere else.
17 Therefore, we utilized Fairmount Park as
18 a form of recreation. This was all that
19 we had. Kelly Pool, League Island,
20 Gustine Lake, these were the places that
21 we swam. And I even remember when Kelly
22 Pool had a 17-foot-deep pool there with a
23 diving board. That's long gone now. I'm
24 talking about late '50s, early '60s when
25 we enjoyed being children in this city,

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2 in West Philadelphia in particular.

3 I've been involved for a long
4 time with different organizations in
5 Philadelphia. I'm a member of the
6 business association of West Parkside.
7 I'm a member of the Parkside Association.
8 Civic organizations I've been drawn to in
9 my quest to help Fairmount Park in any
10 way that I could, because Fairmount Park
11 to me is like an old friend and I just
12 didn't want to see it just decline. I
13 wanted to do all that I could to help
14 Fairmount Park survive and be the park
15 that it can be. There's so much
16 potential there.

17 And I am not going take up any
18 more time. I have two letters of
19 recommendation here that I would like to
20 give you, and they both pretty much sum
21 up what I am about. I'm a hands-on
22 person. I participate every year in
23 Philadelphia Cares about Fairmount Park,
24 even with my two granddaughters. I
25 brought them up when they were little.

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2 My husband and I practically raised them
3 from the time they were little, and I
4 brought them along with me with the
5 shovels and everything and we'd get out
6 there and clean, and I showed them the
7 way, you see.

8 And I would like to just end by
9 saying I'm here because I have a great
10 interest in furthering Fairmount Park and
11 in doing whatever I can to make it more
12 successful. I know it can be a
13 world-class park system. I've been to
14 other cities and states and I've seen
15 what they have to offer, and I believe we
16 can bring ours up to par also.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We thank
19 you all very, very, very much for your
20 testimony. We deeply appreciate it.

21 Please, we'd like to
22 acknowledge another member of our
23 Committee who is splitting himself in two
24 as well, also a member of the Committee
25 on Fiscal Responsibility, Councilman for

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2 the 1st Councilmanic District, Councilman
3 Frank DiCicco. So we want to acknowledge
4 his presence for the record as well.

5 Next up, Tony P-I-C-H, Frank
6 P-I-T-Z, Arthur Plaxton, Curtis Pontz,
7 Carla Puppin.

8 (Witnesses approached witness
9 table.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
11 afternoon, everybody.

12 Please state your name for the
13 record, and we will pay attention and
14 hear your testimony. Please, sir.

15 MR. PONTZ: Good afternoon. My
16 name is Curtis Pontz, P-O-N-T-Z. I
17 appreciate this opportunity.

18 The numbers are daunting.
19 Several hundred applicants are no doubt
20 deserving of consideration and only nine
21 members to be appointed. So I am here
22 today not to rehash my resume, but to
23 cite the considerations that I believe
24 set me apart from the other worthy
25 candidates.

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My ties to Philadelphia are extraordinarily deep. I was born and raised in Philadelphia, graduated from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School and Temple University Law School, and I've lived my all adult life in Philadelphia. I'm also a lifelong Philadelphian by dint of commitment.

That commitment is embodied in my community activism, as reflected in my resume, which has involved my holding influential leadership roles in a wide range of organizations aimed at bettering the quality of life in our city.

Professionally, I served for two years as senior counsel to the Pennsylvania State Police while a Deputy Attorney General for the Pennsylvania Justice Department, enabling me to acquire a keen insight into issues closely related to public safety in our Parks and Recreation facilities. I worked for 26 years for a Fortune 300 company. For 15 years I was, among other

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2 duties, the company's Director of
3 Environmental Litigation, having been
4 charged with implementing strategies to
5 improve corporate-wide responsiveness to
6 environmental regulations. I insisted on
7 responsible corporate citizenship and
8 respect for our environment.

9 As Director of Compliance
10 Programs for that company for seven
11 years, I directed all compliance training
12 activities and enforcement of the
13 company's code of ethics among over
14 20,000 employees. And since retiring
15 from the corporate world in 2001, I have
16 taught organizational ethics at Drexel
17 University School of Engineering. I
18 cannot imagine being better suited to
19 help the new Commission gain the high
20 regard and respect as an ethical model of
21 governance it will hopefully want for
22 itself.

23 In the area of sports
24 programming, I served for ten years as
25 the Commissioner of the Chestnut Hill

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2 Youth Sports Club High School Basketball
3 League, composed of high school students
4 from Germantown, Mount Airy, West Oak
5 Lane and Chestnut Hill. For years I
6 coached basketball and baseball teams for
7 the same sports club.

8 In addition to serving on the
9 Board of West Mount Airy Neighbors, I'm
10 an active member of its Streetscapes
11 Committee, helping to plant trees and
12 participating in community landscaping
13 projects and, for the past several years,
14 have personally spearheaded the steady
15 collection of litter in my neighborhood.

16 In my view, two primary
17 responsibilities of the new Commission
18 will need to be, one, to mobilize our
19 citizens in order to supplement the
20 diminishing City resources available to
21 collect litter and otherwise maintain the
22 beauty of our parks; and, two, to obtain
23 alternative sources of funding to assure
24 the survival of our city's Park system
25 and Recreation facilities.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
3 seconds, please, sir.

4 MR. PONTZ: I am prepared to
5 work untiringly on behalf of the
6 Commission in helping to initiate
7 volunteer clean-up projects and in
8 fundraising efforts. Being retired from
9 my former corporate position, I will be
10 able to devote considerable time to such
11 tasks without having to face the
12 competing constraints and tugs of
13 full-time employment.

14 I have been personally involved
15 in active and successful fundraising
16 efforts over the years. I hope my
17 credentials will be considered as
18 distinguishing me from the field of
19 applicants and will motivate Council to
20 support my nomination to the new
21 Commission. I'm grateful for the
22 opportunity to participate in this
23 selection process.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're

1 3/24/09 - PARKS - RES. 090057

2 very welcome. Thank you.

3 Good afternoon.

4 MS. PUPPIN: Good afternoon.

5 My name is Carla Puppín, P-U-P-P-I-N, and

6 thank you for this opportunity to speak.

7 I guess I describe myself as a
8 grassroots community, greening,
9 tree-hugging activist. I am borrowing
10 the Philadelphia Parks Alliance slogan
11 from a few years back: "Great parks make
12 great cities," and I'll take that
13 further: Great partnerships make great
14 parks, because that is how I view the
15 forthcoming merger of the Department of
16 Recreation with the Fairmount Park
17 Commission, a great partnership in the
18 works.

19 I started cleaning up my corner
20 park near the Italian Market in 1990 soon
21 after I had moved to my neighborhood. It
22 was inconceivable to me that my young
23 children could not play in their corner
24 park, but that was the truth. Broken
25 glass, broken benches, dead trees,

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2 litter, graffiti, the litany was all too
3 familiar in the early 1990's for so many
4 of our parks, large and small.

5 I organized my friends and
6 neighbors to form a friends group, but it
7 was a partnership that took our group and
8 that of many others to new levels. The
9 Parks Revitalization Project partnership
10 between the Department of Recreation,
11 Philadelphia Green and established and
12 newly forming parks groups throughout the
13 City gave so many of us, all volunteers,
14 not only the means to improve our parks,
15 but it brought representatives from parks
16 groups from all across the City into one
17 room at PHS headquarters. We met each
18 other. We recognized our common concerns
19 and problems. We attended workshops, and
20 we learned from one another. We
21 strategized and we appeared at City
22 Council hearings, and the word spread.
23 From three parks groups in 1993, there
24 are now over 90.

25 When I began my friends group

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2 in 1990, I was thinking only of my park.

3 Nineteen years of community and

4 grassroots organizing later and I see my

5 park as part of the network of parks and

6 recreation centers, each one an essential

7 part of the fabric of our city and of

8 each of our neighborhoods.

9 I know volunteer groups --

10 volunteers from parks groups all across

11 the City. I know firsthand their

12 concerns, their challenges and their

13 successes. I have worked with the

14 Department of Recreation staff.

15 The new Commission has a

16 crucial task ahead of it in establishing

17 standards and guidelines for the Park and

18 Recreation system and of thinking

19 creatively to expand funding sources. I

20 would bring my years of grassroots

21 experience and skills, a collaborative

22 spirit and commitment, and my enthusiasm

23 to the Commission if chosen.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you

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2 for your testimony.

3 Good afternoon.

4 MR. PLAXTON: Chairwoman

5 Reynolds Brown and Councilman DiCicco, my
6 name is Arthur Plaxton.

7 I'm going to get right at I
8 think what is your concern. What can I
9 do for the Commission and for City
10 Council. And I think the first thing
11 that I can offer is effective
12 communication ability, and as evidence of
13 this, I suggest you look at my
14 application, which I won't go over again,
15 but I have endeavored to be complete,
16 succinct, concise and understandable. So
17 a communication ability is the first
18 thing that I can offer.

19 The second thing that I can
20 offer is an effective business analysis
21 of whatever the problems are that the
22 Commission will face. I have a Ph.D. in
23 operations research from the Wharton
24 School of the University of Pennsylvania.
25 That's basically the application of

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2 mathematics to problems of business. I
3 have served on the faculties of Drexel
4 University and of Philadelphia University
5 in the areas of finance, statistics and
6 management. And there's a saving that
7 the Commission might be able to achieve
8 in the sense that I can either direct
9 some surveys of the operational problems
10 or the financial problems of the
11 Commission myself or I can be a person
12 that can supervise and work with whatever
13 consulting organization or firm the
14 Commission or City Council wants to work
15 with.

16 I am a retired person. I have
17 over 40 years of experience. I've lived
18 in Philadelphia for over 30 years and
19 been active in my neighborhood, and I
20 think above all, I want to be an advocate
21 for the protection and expansion of
22 parkland, whether we're talking about
23 Fairmount Park in total or simply adding
24 a pocket recreation area in a
25 neighborhood where there is a vacant

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2 piece of land and the people who reside
3 in that neighborhood would benefit by it.
4 I want to protect that. Once something
5 is paved over, it's gone forever and it's
6 paved over, and that's a loss, whether
7 the economy goes up or down or the
8 population goes up or down. We need to
9 keep and protect and enlarge Parks and
10 Recreation land.

11 And I'm open to questions now.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
13 thank you very, very much for your
14 testimony.

15 Thank you all. I continue to
16 be awestruck at the commitment for sure
17 which comes through, but the expertise
18 that will certainly be available once we
19 finish up this process.

20 Thank you all very much for
21 your testimony.

22 Councilman DiCicco.

23 COUNCILMAN DiCICCO: This is
24 kind of like being a judge in a beauty
25 contest, trying to figure out how you

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2 pick a few and have to disappoint so many
3 others, who are all well qualified. It's
4 going to be tough.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It sure
6 is.

7 Please come forward Scott
8 Quitel, Anne Rahn, Shawn R-A-I-R-I-G-H,
9 John Rajca, John Randolph and Phillip
10 Ranly.

11 (Witnesses approached witness
12 table.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
14 afternoon, everyone. We'll start over on
15 my left here. Please, sir, if you state
16 your name for the record, we'll proceed
17 with your testimony.

18 MR. QUITEL: I'm Scott Quitel
19 and I thank you for this opportunity.

20 My own background includes
21 extensive experience in land management,
22 landscape design, ecology, horticulture,
23 arboriculture, business, law, marketing
24 and finance, but that represents in brief
25 as two lives. I had a past life with a

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2 JD and MBA and started and ran three
3 successful businesses, switched careers
4 because of my love for ecology, and am
5 currently the managing ecologist running
6 an east coast division of a midwestern
7 firm called Applied Ecological Services.
8 I'm also pursuing an evening of Ph.D.
9 ecology studies at Drexel.

10 I've held or hold several
11 township commission seats -- I live in
12 Whitemarsh now. I'm from Philadelphia --
13 Planning Commission, Environmental
14 Advisory Board and Shade Tree Commission.
15 I've also had numerous volunteer
16 positions. I'm an ambassador for the
17 Friends of the Wissahickon. I also do
18 voluntary restoration efforts in my own
19 town. I have won awards from PHS and
20 Temple. I was formerly a Foundation for
21 Architecture guide and other things like
22 that. I've truly loved Philadelphia
23 parks for my entire life.

24 I feel the essence of my unique
25 value to the Commission is twofold.

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2 First, as a career, I practice
3 sustainability and urban ecology. I use
4 my scientific knowledge to determine what
5 is the best use of urbanized land, how to
6 preserve, conserve, protect, restore,
7 manage and maintain various urban land
8 forms.

9 Second, I do all of this with
10 very tight budgets. I regularly help
11 restore forests, meadows, streams and
12 wetlands. I help implement reuse of
13 vacant land, brown fields and capped
14 landfills. I oversee master plans for
15 urban parks, trails, athletic fields, zoo
16 lands and wildlife corridors. In each
17 instance, I help determine the most
18 sustainable long-term use of land that is
19 most beneficial to humans and all of
20 nature, and I do so with extremely
21 limited funds.

22 The issues that confront
23 Philadelphia's parklands are extremely
24 similar to the issues that I feel I face
25 on a daily basis.

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2 The expertise I possess that
3 may be of most value to the Commission is
4 the following: I'm a practitioner of
5 sustainability and management of natural
6 and built environments in urban settings,
7 working with limited resources. I'm an
8 ecological scientist, but an ecologist
9 with academic practicality. I understand
10 fully how to balance scarce ecological
11 resources and scarce economic resources,
12 all within the context of urbanism, dense
13 population, heavy land use and competing
14 needs and interests.

15 Here is also who I am: I am
16 what you get when you cross a dad who was
17 raised at 52nd and Parkside with a mom
18 who was raised near Cobbs Creek Parkway,
19 a nature-loving son fiercely passionate
20 about Fairmount Park. Over the years
21 I've abetted this passion with firsthand
22 knowledge of how to care for urbanized
23 land with limited funds.

24 I just want to close with a
25 story that I feel is fitting for what

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2 we're doing here. About six years ago, I
3 went on a field trip to the natural area
4 around the environmental center on Cobbs
5 Creek Parkway. Mark Focht led the tour,
6 which focused on a stream restoration,
7 community-led clean-up and improvement
8 efforts, and a wet meadow restoration. I
9 was literally captured on the spot by all
10 that I was observing. There was a stream
11 being moved literally, a newly created
12 wetland meadow and amazing volunteer
13 effort to clean up debris, remove
14 invasives and plant new trees. The whole
15 scene just felt right for me. For the
16 first time ever, I actually experienced
17 professional love at first sight. Then
18 at some point along a recently restored
19 stretch of Cobbs Creek while on this
20 tour, which by the way is where my mom
21 and then later myself played as kids, I
22 exclaimed, This is what I want to do for
23 the rest of my life. And ever since that
24 life-altering experience at Cobbs Creek,
25 I've literally dedicated myself to

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2 healing urbanized lands and putting
3 nature back at scales that range from
4 small fields and streams and wetlands to
5 very large natural lands and reclamation
6 areas.

7 In sum, given my professional
8 experience and deep Philadelphia Park
9 passion, I can think of no better way for
10 me to give back to Philadelphia than by
11 serving as a member of the Commission on
12 Parks and Recreation.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
15 Thank you very much.

16 Good afternoon, sir.

17 MR. RAIRIGH: Good afternoon.

18 My name is Shawn Rairigh, and you're
19 perfectly excused for not being able to
20 pronounce that.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Pronounce
22 your last name for us again.

23 MR. RAIRIGH: Rairigh. I've
24 lived with it my whole life.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Did you

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2 offer us testimony? I just want to be
3 sure.

4 MR. RAIRIGH: No, I did not.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Not a
6 problem.

7 MR. RAIRIGH: I do have another
8 letter of recommendation, though.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

10 MR. RAIRIGH: You've already
11 received my academic and professional
12 credentials detailing my education and
13 careers as a city planner, so today I
14 really want to talk about the importance
15 of green space and outdoor recreation,
16 particularly for urban residents.

17 Last year I had the pleasure to
18 hike the entire Appalachian Trail, all
19 2,176 miles from Georgia to Maine. It
20 took me six months, two weeks and a few
21 more days, and I just carried my life on
22 my back at that time. Obviously I saw
23 some great stuff, but one of the things
24 that really sticks in my mind is the 80
25 miles in Virginia that I spent hiking

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2 alongside about two dozen teenagers and
3 their guide. The kids were on a
4 probation program. They had committed
5 crimes of whatever offense and were out
6 in the woods to hike 80 miles in
7 Virginia. To see them immersed in
8 nature, exploring the daily rhythms, the
9 sun rising and setting, to get them to --
10 watch them understanding their bodies for
11 the first time as a natural thing, it was
12 really an amazing experience, and it
13 shows the transformation power of nature,
14 parks, recreation.

15 I'm sure everybody that comes
16 to you and across the City has ideas for
17 our Park. The real challenge isn't
18 getting ideas for the Park. It's
19 implementing those ideas and funding
20 those ideas.

21 So understanding how the Park
22 system is used now, what it is, how it
23 came to be and how it relates to the
24 surrounding urban fabric I think is
25 critical to answering that challenge.

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2 Number one, the Park system is a regional
3 asset. It's not just a City asset.
4 Anybody that goes to Kelly Drive on a
5 Saturday or goes to the Zoo can tell you
6 it's chock full of suburbanites. It's
7 actually one of the largest remaining
8 open spaces in the region and it's a nice
9 mixing bowl for the region. As such, it
10 ought to be a regionally funded asset
11 too, not just a City-funded asset.

12 The Park system is how most of
13 us experience natural world and outdoor
14 recreation. It helps fight obesity and
15 fosters environmental respect. It gets
16 kids away from the TV. But this is also
17 what attracts volunteers. We have a huge
18 untapped resource in the population of
19 Philadelphia and the region that we
20 should be using for building trails, for
21 running programs, for maintaining
22 landscapes. And just like the parks were
23 created in the beginning as watershed
24 protection, also as urban development
25 schemes to get housing built, new

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2 development, they can be used for that
3 again. Even during this downturn, we're
4 still experiencing new residential
5 growth.

6 Tax-increment financing and
7 some other planning tools can be used
8 where you take the increased value of
9 properties as they're developed near
10 parks. That increased revenue should be
11 put into the parks, which is why that
12 development is there to begin with. Now,
13 obviously that gets into further
14 discussion when it comes to rebates and
15 things like that.

16 And likewise, the Park system
17 ought to be used to rebrand Philadelphia.
18 Portland, Oregon was an industrial mess
19 in the 1970's and well into the 1980's,
20 but when they really applied themselves
21 into a bike system and fostering a
22 relationship with the nearby outdoor
23 assets that they had, the mountain and
24 things like that, they totally rebranded
25 their city, and there are hundreds of

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2 thousands of people that have moved to
3 the Portland area just because they think
4 of it as a very natural, very
5 recreational type of place. Our Park
6 system is already better than everything
7 they've built. We should be using that.

8 That's pretty much my
9 summation. So I will pass it along.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
11 for your testimony. I do have a
12 question, but I want to hear everyone's
13 testimony first.

14 Please. Good afternoon.

15 MR. RANDOLPH: Good afternoon,
16 Madam Chair and Councilman DiCicco. My
17 name is John Randolph and I thank you for
18 the opportunity to speak before you
19 today. Hearing testimony from over 200
20 highly qualified applicants is a daunting
21 task, and you have my humble thanks as a
22 citizen for undertaking this job.

23 My qualifications have been
24 gained through my experience at the
25 Schuylkill River Development Council, the

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2 Fairmount Park Historic Preservation
3 Trust, the Philadelphia Convention and
4 Visitors Bureau, The Waterfront Center in
5 Washington, DC and the Schuylkill River
6 Park Alliance, as well as 20 years spent
7 in the design and construction business.
8 Specific areas of my experience
9 and skills that are relevant to the
10 Commission start with community
11 leadership, neighborhood revitalization
12 and fundraising. I am Founder and past
13 President of the Schuylkill River
14 Development Council, a non-profit
15 organization dedicated to the
16 revitalization of the Tidal Schuylkill
17 River. Under my ten-year-long
18 leadership, the Council was transformed
19 from a neighborhood grassroots group to
20 the Schuylkill River Development
21 Corporation, with a completely new Board
22 composed of corporate and government
23 leaders. Over 15 million was raised for
24 Schuylkill River Park, which has in turn
25 leveraged over 300 million in real estate

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2 development projects that are either
3 built or planned.

4 The first responsibility of the
5 new Commission is to adopt standards and
6 guidelines relating to Park and
7 Recreation land and facilities. While at
8 SRDC, we completed the Tidal Schuylkill
9 Master Plan, a project costing over \$1
10 million, involving numerous public
11 meetings and the coordination of many
12 consultants, resulting in the creation of
13 a new vision and guiding principles.
14 Many of the lessons learned from that
15 experience, as well as my experience with
16 the Fairmount Park Historic Preservation
17 Trust, are directly applicable to the
18 Commission's role to adopt standards and
19 guidelines.

20 The second responsibility is to
21 assist and advise the Commissioner and
22 others to promote, support and enhance
23 the image of Park and Recreation
24 facilities. Again, my experience with
25 SRDC prepared me well for this task.

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2 When we began our work on the Tidal
3 Schuylkill, the future River Park,
4 despite having been on the City
5 Comprehensive Plan for 25 years, was a
6 desolate, abandoned landscape. Our first
7 job was to transform the image of the
8 river to convince people who had never
9 associated the tidal river with anything
10 more than dirty water and trash that it
11 could become a recreational destination.
12 Today the Schuylkill Banks has over
13 16,000 visitors a week who enjoy it as a
14 place to relax and get outdoors, a place
15 to walk, jog, bike or just go fishing.

16 It is through these experiences
17 that I believe I have the qualifications
18 and the passion to be a member of the new
19 Commission on Parks and Recreation. I
20 want to thank you for your time and
21 consideration.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
23 very, very much.

24 Good afternoon, sir.

25 MR. RANLY: Hello, members of

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2 City Council, especially Chair Blondell
3 Reynolds Brown. My name is Phil Ranly,
4 and today has been a very exciting day
5 for me. Just earlier today I witnessed
6 the launching of the Green Business
7 Commitment with Michael Nutter and 32
8 other companies down at the Rohm and Haas
9 center signing a green business
10 initiative. And businesses are seeing
11 green, green building, green
12 infrastructure, green communities and a
13 green Philadelphia. And I think as we
14 sit here today and think about what we
15 want from our Park, we have to start with
16 a vision of what we want that to look
17 like. And my vision of the Park is, I
18 believe we can shape a Philadelphia that
19 offers valuable recreation opportunities
20 for our youth, thriving natural parkland
21 that incorporates green infrastructure,
22 and safe, walkable tree-lined streets for
23 every Philadelphian.

24 I will make an excellent
25 Commissioner. My active involvement with

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2 Fairmount Park demonstrates my passion,
3 my commitment to sustainability and my
4 training at Rohm and Haas, and my network
5 of land management and community
6 advocates provides me with a wealth of
7 advisors.

8 I really think this Commission
9 needs people that can get things done.
10 And four years ago, I saw a need to get
11 some recreation started in the Park, so I
12 started the Wissahickon Trail Classic 10K
13 run up in Andorra, and it has steadily
14 grown every year, raises money that goes
15 directly back into the Park, and we get
16 over 500 participants in that race every
17 year.

18 This year I'm leading an effort
19 at Clifford Park, maybe known as Thomas
20 Mansion. And as Councilman Clarke was
21 saying, we need to take our show on the
22 road, and one way we're doing that is
23 we're putting up blogs, we're e-mailing,
24 we're working on websites and getting
25 other community leaders interested in

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2 Clifford Park to get volunteers and get
3 the efforts there to do some natural
4 restoration efforts.

5 I could go on with other
6 things, but let me just read from my
7 letter of recommendation.

8 To quote Dr. Katie Hunt, who is
9 a Sustainability Director for Rohm and
10 Haas and member of Philadelphia's
11 Sustainability Advisory Board, "I have no
12 doubt that Phil will emerge as a leader
13 on the Commission. Phil has the stamina
14 and the skills to serve on the
15 Commission. He has the training to make
16 database decisions and formulate solid
17 recommendations, the network to vet and
18 refine these recommendations and the
19 organizational skills to engage residents
20 and involved community leaders -
21 Dr. Katie Hunt."

22 To quote Dan Gordon, Founder of
23 the Wissahickon Wanders, "Phil Hanly has
24 produced an impressive track record both
25 in helping to preserve and to promote" --

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2 and I think that's important, to
3 promote -- "Fairmount Park. Phil has
4 demonstrated leadership and initiative by
5 preparing a plan and getting necessary
6 funding to create a Neighborhood
7 Stewardship Initiative at Clifford Park -
8 Dan Gordon."

9 To quote Suzanne Low, Director
10 of the Wissahickon Restoration
11 Volunteers, "Phil will be a strong
12 advocate for Philadelphia's Parks and
13 Recreation system and will bring valuable
14 land management, community outreach and
15 planning skills to the Commission on
16 Parks and Recreations."

17 So as my colleagues have
18 articulated, I think I bring an
19 established network of park users and
20 advocates to this Commission.

21 I thank you for your
22 consideration. And, once again, I will
23 say it is important we bring this show on
24 the road. And if you just give me 15
25 more seconds, I know like, for example,

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2 there's things we want to do at Walnut
3 Lane Golf Course and other facilities
4 like that throughout the region. We need
5 to get into the communities and talk to
6 those people there. And as I was saying,
7 I've been promoting efforts in the
8 Wissahickon Restoration Volunteers by
9 going to neighborhood groups and doing
10 meetings at libraries, and, like I said,
11 the Internet and the communications that
12 you can get by e-mail and blogs and
13 networks is quite tremendous.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
16 all very, very, very much, gentlemen.
17 Don't go yet, because we have -- your
18 name, sir.

19 MR. RAJCA: I'm John Rajca,
20 R-A-J-C-A.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let's hear
22 your testimony.

23 MR. RAJCA: Okay. Real
24 quick --

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You don't

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2 have to be quick. Equity is important
3 here.

4 MR. RAJCA: Okay. Thank you.

5 Gee, I'm just blown away by the
6 quality and qualifications of the people
7 here. I actually feel out of place.
8 Basically I'm just a dreamer and an
9 organizer. I always feel like I'm a
10 voice crying out in the dark, and this
11 gives me a chance to make my views heard.

12 Not too much about me. I'm
13 retired from the Philadelphia Police
14 Department. I was in the Communications
15 Division, Police Radio, for over 26
16 years. So basically most of the input I
17 would have would be law enforcement. But
18 I do have a lot of ideas of my own.

19 The big thing I would like to
20 see with Fairmount Park is to make it a
21 destination. Not an amusement park, but
22 a destination, especially with the
23 historic part, the houses. We have park
24 houses that are falling down, such as
25 Mount Pleasant. Things like that we

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2 could have possibly a hook-up from Old
3 City into Fairmount Park with the
4 tourists. We have tourists come all year
5 round, and if we had the park houses open
6 all year round, we would give them the
7 destination.

8 Also, the other thing is people
9 movers. The first monorail in the United
10 States was at our Centennial in 1876 and
11 it was there in Fairmount Park. I would
12 like to see something like that rebuilt,
13 put back up. That's a people mover
14 around the Park. Maybe take them back
15 into Old City or at least up as far as
16 here, City Hall, maybe Love Park. And
17 even further than that, the Mann Music
18 Center, which seems to be lying fallow
19 now. That should also be somehow
20 revitalized, with professional groups
21 running the things, maybe -- I don't even
22 want to use a name. Maybe Comcast
23 Spectacor, maybe Electric Factory, maybe
24 independent entrepreneurs who would come
25 up with ideas to put on a show. I don't

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2 know, like we have at Penn's Landing, a
3 doo-wop concert.

4 And the last thing is, I would
5 like to also have this further expanded
6 into Valley Forge. Valley Forge is going
7 to be having an American Revolution --
8 oh, I don't know what they call it. A
9 complex. We're not that far away. I
10 believe the Schuylkill Valley Trails are
11 eventually going to end there, and
12 they're talking about a metro rail line
13 to go from here in Center City into
14 Reading, which would stop in Valley
15 Forge. That would encompass all Old
16 City. That would encompass Fairmount
17 Park. That would encompass Valley Forge.
18 If you are a tourist, you would have a
19 destination there, somewhere to go, not
20 just wander around the streets.

21 And that's basically what I
22 have to offer, and I thank you for
23 letting me have my say.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:

25 Absolutely. Thank you for your ideas.

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2 You should know you're the first of the
3 100-plus persons I've listened to who
4 mentioned going that far, that far north.
5 So that's an example that all ideas
6 matter, and dreamers are needed. We need
7 them. And President Barack Obama was an
8 organizer. So we should never, ever
9 diminish what we bring to the table.

10 Great to meet the dreamer and
11 visionary of Schuylkill River. I'm a
12 user of that, and brilliant, brilliant
13 landscape in our city.

14 MR. RANDOLPH: Thank you very
15 much. It's a great honor.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me
17 thank you all for your very, very
18 impressive testimony. Thank you very
19 much.

20 MR. QUITEL: Could I just say
21 something?

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please.
23 Please. Please. And state your name for
24 the record.

25 MR. QUITEL: I'm Scott Quitel.

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2 This doesn't have to do with my
3 candidacy. It just strikes me in hearing
4 everything -- and I wasn't here for the
5 first two sessions -- that given that
6 you're only going to have nine out of
7 this pool --

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me
9 just -- amendment. We're going to offer
10 25 names to the Mayor, yes.

11 MR. QUITEL: Okay. But given
12 the talent of the pool that's not going
13 to be accepted and the amount of passion
14 that exists on the part of so many
15 people, it will be a shame to just put
16 that aside and not figure out a way to do
17 something with that, because I'm sure a
18 lot of us, if we didn't get on the
19 Commission, would still want to be
20 involved in some other way. So there
21 must be something to do with that.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
23 Absolutely. Yes. Your time did not
24 permit you to hear remarks from
25 Councilman Darrell Clarke, who actually

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2 has a vehicle that he's not prepared to
3 make public yet, but he and I have been
4 in discussion where we intend to capture,
5 we intend to capture the rich talent pool
6 and ideas we've heard from those who do
7 not make it to the list of 25. So, yes,
8 there will be a Part 2 or Chapter 2 once
9 we have completed this process in getting
10 the names to the Mayor's desk.

11 MR. QUITEL: That's great.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We agree
13 with you 2,000 percent. And that became
14 very evident to us in our very first
15 hearing. So thank you.

16 Thank you all.

17 Otto Reichert, Carol Rice,
18 Carlos Rodriguez, you're welcome to come
19 to the witness table. Wendy Rosen,
20 Robert Rovner and Hector B-A-E-Z.

21 (Witnesses approached witness
22 table.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me, if
24 I may, call up the last candidates.
25 Wendy Rosen, Robert Rovner, Hector

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2 B-A-E-Z, Johannah Fine, Rose Gray, Alvin
3 Hornstein, Robert Lambert. And if you
4 arrived after I called your name, you're
5 certainly welcome to come and be seated,
6 because we're going to -- please.

7 MS. RICE: I am here today --
8 well, first of all, my name is Carol
9 Rice. I'm here today as a citizen
10 interested in serving on the Park and
11 Recreation Commission.

12 I bring to you an extensive
13 background in the field of recreation,
14 having retired from the City of
15 Philadelphia Department of Recreation
16 after 35 years, and I have continued to
17 be involved in activities that are
18 recreation related. In addition, I have
19 been involved in park-related areas that
20 have given me an even greater
21 understanding and appreciation of the
22 need for open space, environmental
23 protection, trail development for the
24 hiking enthusiast, the bike user and the
25 average citizen who uses the Park for

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2 pure enjoyment.

3 I recognize that this is an
4 advisory committee -- and I stand
5 corrected since Councilman Clarke changed
6 it from an advisory committee -- that
7 needs to organize and determine its
8 direction, while at the same time be
9 responsible for seeking input from the
10 community. It will be vitally important
11 for this Commission to listen and relay
12 the interest the community has, their
13 suggestions for cost-saving methods and
14 seek ways to utilize the community
15 interest to continue services that reach
16 all the segments of the citizenry.

17 This new Commission concept has
18 been a long time in coming, since most
19 municipalities across the country have
20 always had combined services. The idea
21 of combining the Recreation Department
22 and the Fairmount Park has been discussed
23 and preliminarily developed for many
24 years. It is important that input is
25 sought so that both departments see the

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2 Commission as an advocate for their vital
3 programs. The Commission will need to
4 review commissions in other like cities,
5 evaluate their effectiveness and then
6 develop guidelines that meet the needs of
7 this community.

8 I did not put in my testimony
9 any other background information, but
10 even though I retired, I'm still very
11 active. I am with ASAP, which is After
12 School Activities Partnerships, which is
13 an organization that recruits volunteers
14 to provide after-school programs.
15 Primarily chess is our big focal point.
16 I'm on the Board of Caring People
17 Alliance, which is a large non-profit in
18 the City of Philadelphia that serves the
19 entire family. And I have after my whole
20 life being spent in Philadelphia, we
21 moved, but we couldn't go far, because I
22 made my husband understand that I
23 couldn't go away from Philadelphia. So I
24 am now on the Warrington Park and
25 Recreation Board. I am the Chairman.

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2 And I have had the opportunity to work
3 with the other side, the Fairmount Park
4 side, which is the Warrington Park
5 Department, and have an understanding of
6 the needs of that particular area.

7 So I am interested in coming
8 back, quote, to the City of Philadelphia
9 as a volunteer and being part of this
10 Commission. I think that I can bring
11 some good ideas, some commitment and some
12 advocacy to this Commission.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
15 very much for your testimony. Where is
16 Warrington?

17 MS. RICE: Right outside of
18 Willow Grove.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right.
20 Just for perspective. Thank you.

21 Good afternoon.

22 MR. BAEZ: Good afternoon. My
23 name is Hector Baez. I am a civil
24 engineer who specializes in storm water
25 management, site design and planning.

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2 I've prepared a short statement
3 for this hearing.

4 The Fairmount Park system is a
5 great example of the effect that good
6 planning and good strategic management
7 can do. The Fairmount Park system
8 benefits thousands of citizens on a daily
9 basis and really adds to the character of
10 the City. This large Park sustains many
11 businesses within the area and provides
12 Philadelphians with a unique outdoor
13 retreat full of history, nature and
14 wellness. Fairmount Park is also a great
15 location for a plethora of venues ranging
16 from weddings to the famous crew races
17 along historical Boathouse Row.

18 If chosen, I would appreciate
19 assisting in the direction and
20 implementation of the Park's resources.
21 I think my background in design and
22 construction of infrastructure would
23 serve the Commission well and my
24 knowledge of wetlands, coupled with
25 thoughtful planning to conserve the

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2 natural resources of the Park while
3 simultaneously providing access to the
4 all the Park's rich amenities.

5 As a resident and homeowner in
6 Philadelphia, I would also like to join
7 the Parks and Recreation Commission to
8 better serve Philadelphians near their
9 homes. I've always wanted a more active
10 role and direction in Philadelphia, and I
11 feel this Commission would be an
12 excellent opportunity to have real impact
13 on developing some of the neglected
14 areas.

15 It is my opinion that the
16 City's Park system has a direct
17 correlation to the quality of life of its
18 residents. Many parks throughout the
19 City have grown to be an integral part of
20 its neighborhood, and with the success of
21 each park comes a stable, safer, more
22 aesthetically pleasing surrounding area.
23 This all translates into higher property
24 values and intangible benefits like
25 quality of life. Once these parks and

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2 neighborhoods become stabilized, they
3 will provide a better context to
4 introduce recreation activities that can
5 further serve the residents of the City.

6 The unique neighborhood system,
7 with block captains and community
8 organizations, can provide an essential
9 partnership with the Commission to assist
10 in providing successful, well-targeted
11 strategies that will help the City grow.
12 Stimulating neighborhoods can come from
13 the rehabilitation of existing parks or
14 by expanding the City's Park system by
15 utilizing the vast inventory of vacant
16 lots owned by the City. Those selected
17 vacant lots can be improved and
18 maintained by City and community
19 organization partnership.

20 These are some examples of the
21 impact I hope you achieve if chosen by
22 this panel.

23 Thank you for your time and
24 consideration.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you

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2 for your testimony.

3 MS. FINE: My name is Johannah
4 Fine. I live in West Philadelphia, and
5 I'm surprised to say I'm relieved to be
6 here, and the surprise at my own feelings
7 is, I was so worried about the initial
8 publicity about how few people had shown
9 interest in the Commission, and I will go
10 home and sleep well tonight, because I
11 have heard a group that I would like to
12 hang around with.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

14 MS. FINE: I wanted to say to
15 everybody, Hey, gang, my people. Thank
16 you for making us aware of each other
17 more through this kind of forum.

18 So aside from being
19 enthusiastic and discovering, wow, lots
20 of folks are willing to step up, I'm an
21 instructor in the Department of Landscape
22 Architecture and Horticulture at Temple.
23 I'm very stiff today from teaching
24 students how to yank out invasive plants
25 yesterday. Ouch. Noble work.

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2 I am a certified arborist, have
3 been a volunteer with Philadelphia Green,
4 University City Green and many West
5 Philadelphia groups for almost 20 years
6 in greening and community development.

7 My daughter went to -- who is
8 now 19 and in college -- went to
9 pre-school at 51st and Spruce, and one of
10 the reasons I chose the particular
11 pre-school was that it was right near
12 Malcolm X Park, and I had this idea that
13 wouldn't it be wonderful because when we
14 walked home, we could walk home through
15 the park. But I didn't know the park
16 well, and this is 16 years ago. And so
17 on nice days, I would drag her home
18 through the park, and she finally said to
19 me, Mommy, I don't like to go this way.
20 And I hated saying why, and she'd say,
21 Mom, we can't walk on the grass, there's
22 glass everywhere. Mommy, it's ugly here.
23 And I had to admit to myself that a lot
24 of the trees were dead, and as a
25 biologist, I had been fighting noticing

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2 that all the trees were the same age and
3 that they had been planted -- actually,
4 there were two age groups. Most of them
5 were planted in the 1920's or '30s and a
6 very few in the 1950's.

7 And so we stopped walking
8 through the park, because it was so sad.
9 But this is the same time when the same
10 kid was our official tamper when we were
11 out planting street trees with Tree
12 Tenders and learning to work with
13 Fairmount Park.

14 A couple of years later I went
15 to work as the head gardener in Bartram's
16 Garden and got to know Fairmount Park and
17 its wonderful crew, who I love deeply,
18 because we all learned to work together,
19 by golly, because Bartram's Garden is
20 part of Fairmount Park, but is duly
21 administered by a non-profit along with
22 Fairmount Park.

23 So I pick up a lot of skills in
24 how to bridge that, putting the
25 non-profit and the government work

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2 together as the gardener, but I kept
3 coming back to Malcolm X and thinking,
4 how do we get so stuck like this. And an
5 amazing thing happened, because it turned
6 out all around the City there were other
7 people like us, whether they were Tree
8 Tenders, you heard from Carla Puppini
9 today. She's another one of -- our
10 numbers multitude, and we're in every
11 neighborhood, who we're saying, You know
12 what, I think we can do better than this
13 and we can work "with" as against working
14 against the Rec Department, Fairmount
15 Park. We learned to partner. We learned
16 to buddy. And if you go over to Malcolm
17 X Park today, you will see what Gregorio
18 Cojulan and friends have achieved. You
19 can have church picnics out there. You
20 can have revival meetings, family
21 picnics, and last fall Malcolm X --

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
23 seconds.

24 MS. RICE: -- Malcolm X Park
25 was the staging area for the planting of

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2 168 trees, all across West Philadelphia,
3 so that this once dismal place was the
4 center of hundreds of people going out,
5 pulling the beauty and strength of the
6 park and the community into its streets
7 from what had once been bleakness.

8 I want to bring that capacity
9 to the Commission. There's many of us
10 who can bring that capacity, and I'll
11 tell you the truth, I don't mind who
12 brings it, but I want it brought. We can
13 squeeze a quarter out of a nickel. We
14 can work together with government
15 agencies, non-profits and communities,
16 and we make things happen for everybody.
17 Let's do more of it.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
19 very much.

20 Good afternoon.

21 MS. SYKORA: Good afternoon,
22 and thank you very much for holding this.
23 It's been -- I think the passion that we
24 have heard has been what's most exciting
25 to me.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

3 MS. SYKORA: My name is Kay
4 Sykora and I currently manage the
5 Schuylkill Project, which is a waterfront
6 project that is between East Falls and
7 Manayunk. It's two CDCs. We're funded
8 by William Penn, and we're looking at the
9 trails and the green space and the
10 connections into the neighborhood.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Stop right
12 there and give me your full name again.

13 MS. SYKORA: Kay Sykora,
14 S-Y-K-O-R-A. I'm sorry. I'm out of
15 order because --

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: No. It's
17 not a problem. I just want my records to
18 be accurate.

19 MS. SYKORA: Okay. Thank you.

20 Testimony about picking up
21 trash and being frustrated, it's
22 interesting because somehow from that I
23 moved into partnerships with Fairmount
24 Park, past President of the Schuylkill
25 River Heritage Area, which is a regional

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2 planning and implementation group that's
3 funded through DCNR. I've sat on
4 committees of DCNR and worked with many
5 City agencies through the Schuylkill
6 Project, and for 18 years I headed up the
7 Manayunk Development Corporation. So in
8 that role, I started a lot of the
9 planning that resulted in improvements to
10 the Fairmount Park. So for over 30
11 years, I've worked to support and advance
12 Parks and Recreation, the communities of
13 Manayunk, Roxborough and East Falls.
14 I've always believed that they were our
15 biggest asset. And I'm really ecstatic,
16 as I said earlier, over the public
17 interest and commitment that we see now.
18 In the early years, you didn't see so
19 much of that. But it's grown, and that's
20 very exciting. And it was validated
21 recently in a report done by Peter Harnik
22 that was released through, I believe, the
23 advisory group to Fairmount Park, which
24 talks about the dollar value.
25 But this is just the beginning.

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2 I mean, we're talking about green parks,
3 connecting them with trails. We're
4 working on connections not just to other
5 parks, but to Lower Merion, across our
6 bridges, where we are trying to secure
7 funding for that into Montgomery County
8 through the Valley Forge Trail.

9 Our waterfronts, accessibility
10 to all these amenities for all
11 neighborhoods, because not all
12 neighborhoods have access to this stuff,
13 the programming that makes it alive, and
14 most of all what people keep forgetting
15 to talk about is the sustainability for
16 the long term. I mean, all this is
17 really exciting and it's exciting that
18 people are interested, but how are we
19 going to take care of it for the long
20 term.

21 I've been actively engaged in
22 many kinds of planning. We've secured
23 grants for public funding for planning,
24 for projects, for operations. We've
25 partnered with many groups, a wide range

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2 of environmental and groups doing the
3 same kind of work. We've created
4 programming for our park area for
5 education for our schools. We bring the
6 schools down. We have boating
7 activities. We have educational. We're
8 working with the Water Department now on
9 some storm water mitigation projects.

10 We also have created volunteer
11 groups. We have four or five, who each
12 have different kind of special interests.
13 And they are not just volunteers. I
14 mean, that's part of it, but they also
15 bring their passion around wanting to
16 help expand the effort.

17 You can see the physical
18 results of these efforts when you see the
19 Schuylkill Trail in Manayunk, when you
20 see the Manayunk Canal improvements,
21 which are halfway done and still have a
22 ways to go. We're due to have a major
23 park constructed on lower Venice Island,
24 which will begin construction in July of
25 '09, and that will include both park

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2 space and a performance center, which
3 will service the entire city. We're
4 going to be working with non-profits that
5 are involved with that.

6 Capital dollars are not easy.
7 I mean, that's obvious, but it's in part
8 because it's been a small pool of money
9 and there hasn't been a lot of
10 competition, and now there's a lot of
11 people that want those dollars. But I
12 believe that people's passion will bring
13 this forward and we'll begin to see,
14 after the economy begins to straighten
15 out, more dollars.

16 But the biggest challenge for
17 the future, particularly in the smaller
18 neighborhoods, will be around
19 sustainability, because with volunteers
20 you can do a lot, but one of the things
21 we did because we have volunteers and we
22 kind of fell short is, we did a whole
23 study over the last two years of
24 operations and management, of how we can
25 support the Parks and Rec, and what we

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2 found is, it's a very complicated bag of
3 solutions. It's one that we want to take
4 and sort of have more of a citywide
5 dialogue, because some of them do involve
6 citywide thinking in terms of TIFs or
7 bids or that kind of thing.

8 So the answer is complicated.
9 It's not easy. But it requires us as the
10 public to continue to raise the bar of
11 expectation, and I firmly believe that
12 will raise the bar what will happen with
13 our parks.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
15 seconds.

16 MS. SYKORA: So sustainability
17 will be a difficult conversation for the
18 future, but -- and all this is competing
19 with very real other infrastructure needs
20 with the City, we recognize that, but our
21 parks are absolutely critical for the
22 future of the City of Philadelphia, and I
23 would like very much to be a part of the
24 Commission to help see that move forward.

25 Thank you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
3 very, very much.

4 Good afternoon.

5 MR. DANNENBERG: Good
6 afternoon. Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.
7 I am David Dannenberg. I was scheduled
8 Tuesday. I was away at a conference.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Not a
10 problem at all.

11 MR. DANNENBERG: I have a
12 prepared statement. I think I've got it
13 down to three minutes.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

15 MR. DANNENBERG: There is
16 currently growing recognition of the
17 importance of natural open space and of
18 regular physical activity to both the
19 health of the planet and physical and
20 mental health of the nation's citizenry.
21 Over a hundred year ago, long before the
22 first national park was created, the
23 leaders of the City of Philadelphia had
24 the foresight to commit large swaths of
25 land to naturalized open space. They did

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2 this, first of all, to protect the
3 sources of the City's drinking water and,
4 second of all, to provide places of
5 refuge from the daily grind of city life.
6 Today our parklands remain Philadelphia's
7 most valuable asset, an asset that cannot
8 be replaced. This physical legacy makes
9 Philadelphia unique among cities in the
10 northeast. As the surrounding regions
11 have succumbed to rapacious development
12 while largely neglecting open space,
13 Philadelphia stands uniquely poised to
14 create the model 21st century green city.

15 Two things have been a constant
16 in my adult life. The first is that I
17 work with young people. My wife likes to
18 say I've been mentoring adolescents since
19 I was one. The second is an abiding
20 interest in conservation, of the
21 interface between people and the natural
22 world that sustains us. In my
23 professional life I'm a teacher, and in
24 that capacity, I have the privilege to
25 bring students with me weekly to

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2 Fairmount Park, each week renewing my
3 conviction that there exists essential
4 connections among physical activity,
5 outdoor experience, public service,
6 individual responsibility and the process
7 of maturation. In a related way, I was
8 instrumental to enhancing the volunteer
9 conservation work of the Friends of the
10 Wissahickon, a role that has allowed me
11 to connect education and conservation
12 with a variety of recreation park users
13 that constitute a broad cross section of
14 fellow Philadelphians.

15 Most importantly for our
16 purposes here, for the past ten years
17 I've been active on the Board and on
18 committees of Friends of the Wissahickon.
19 Most of my efforts have been focused on
20 the conceptualization and steering of the
21 Sustainable Trails Initiative. This
22 multi-million-dollar project stands among
23 the one or two largest private projects
24 ever undertaken on behalf of the
25 Philadelphia citizens and visitors who

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2 use Fairmount Park. My leadership and
3 participation in this product has ranged
4 from physical labor to the intellectual
5 challenges of conceiving and effectively
6 communicating the intricacies of the
7 project to public agencies, private
8 institutions and various stakeholders. I
9 have the pleasure of working with City
10 agency personnel at the district level in
11 the field and at various administrative
12 levels, as well as with volunteers of
13 diverse ages and backgrounds. I have
14 experienced firsthand the satisfaction of
15 bringing together sometimes vehemently
16 opposed user groups to work in harmony
17 toward common goals.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
19 seconds, sir.

20 MR. DANNENBERG: Through this
21 work, I've honed my ability to appreciate
22 differing perspectives and to speak
23 sympathetically to others' concerns,
24 without compromising essential
25 principles.

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2 I'll skip ahead here.

3 Communities all over the
4 country are scrambling to create and
5 improve public parks and recreational
6 facilities, while Philadelphia boasts one
7 of the best and most extensive networks
8 of park and recreation infrastructure in
9 the country. We can capitalize on this
10 asset for the long-term benefit of our
11 city's social and economic health or we
12 can let it further deteriorate or succumb
13 to piecemeal dismemberment in pursuit of
14 short-term gain.

15 As a Commissioner, I'd remain
16 focused on the long-term integrity of our
17 Parks and Recreation system, along with
18 short and mid-term enhancements. To
19 accomplish this, I'd encourage
20 public-private partnerships, along with
21 the pursuit of dedicated long-term city,
22 state and federal funding. My range of
23 experience will provide perspective. My
24 principles will provide integrity.

25 Thank you for your

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2 consideration.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you
4 for your testimony. Thank you very much.

5 Good afternoon.

6 MS. STERN: My name is Janice
7 Ries Stern and I'm not sure whether I'm
8 on the list today.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do you
10 have -- I see it. Okay. I just want to
11 be sure.

12 MS. STERN: Yes. And I handed
13 my testimony and letters of
14 recommendation to someone here.

15 Thank you very much for
16 convening this hearing and for taking a
17 leadership role in really rationalizing
18 the resources in the City Parks and
19 Recreation and Fairmount Park Commission.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
21 It only took nine years. You must
22 persist and remain a possibility thinker
23 and bring others along the way down the
24 road.

25 MS. STERN: Yes. I can

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2 completely relate.

3 I have been a Philadelphian for
4 30 years, and I believe there is a
5 powerful connection between health,
6 well-being and recreation. I regularly
7 kayak, walk, hike, cross country ski and
8 plant trees in the City.

9 My credentials, which are
10 adequately documented in the
11 application -- and I don't want to spend
12 a lot of time on that right here, but
13 they include that I'm a lawyer, I have a
14 degree in urban studies and I've recently
15 worked with a non-profit organization
16 concerned with natural land preservation.
17 I'm also an educator and I worked as a
18 teacher and administrator in Philadelphia
19 and in the suburbs for eight years.

20 My work experience includes 20
21 years of board and leadership positions
22 at Inglis Foundation, which is the
23 operating foundation here in Philadelphia
24 dedicated to improving the lives of
25 people with physical disabilities. As

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2 the Chair of Inglis Housing Corporation,
3 I oversaw staff in the financing, design,
4 building of approximately 150 units for
5 people with physical disabilities. Most
6 of those units are in Philadelphia.

7 As an Inglis officer, I also
8 oversaw investment of its
9 multi-million-dollar endowment.

10 I was the creator of the Inglis
11 Ace Award Program. It took me ten years
12 to convince my colleagues that it made
13 sense for us to give some money away in
14 order to know more about what other
15 people were doing in the community, and
16 so I identify with your nine-year effort.

17 The Parks and Recreation
18 Commission enabling language calls for
19 the new Commission to represent many
20 diverse constituency. It doesn't
21 specifically call for representation of
22 people with physical disabilities, and I
23 am not a person with a physical
24 disability, but if appointed, my
25 connection to the disability community

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2 will allow me to add a perspective that
3 could be valuable to the Commission and
4 the people it serves.

5 In anticipation of the creation
6 of the new Commission, I have been
7 studying the guidelines of other cities
8 with respect to sale, purchase, trade and
9 lease of parkland. Sound public policy
10 about parkland and recreation facility
11 management requires clear guidelines
12 about how they are to be used. Clear
13 guidelines will create a fair and
14 efficient process for evaluation of
15 economic development opportunities within
16 public lands and recreation facilities.
17 And I believe that Councilman DiCicco
18 referred to this in a recent article in
19 the Inquirer, and I think that
20 Mr. Randolph and some other folks here
21 have said how important these guidelines
22 are.

23 Without them, we will continue
24 to confront time-consuming and expensive
25 conflicts over competing priorities, such

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2 as we experienced with the Fox Chase case
3 and Burholme Park.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
5 seconds, please.

6 MS. STERN: So basically what
7 I'd like to say, since I have so little
8 time, is that we need to figure out ways
9 to establish collaboration between
10 private industry and public resources.
11 We have an obesity problem in this
12 country. We have an asthma problem.
13 There are ways in which we can share
14 costs, share revenues and share goals
15 with funding streams that are provided to
16 address these issues. So apart from my
17 fierce commitment to recreation --

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Did you
19 hear me? I think you've honored the 15
20 seconds.

21 MS. STERN: Ten seconds?

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I did say
23 15 seconds.

24 MS. STERN: Okay. Apart from
25 my fierce commitment to recreation and

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2 parks, the other reason for my interest
3 is that I am a very creative person. I'm
4 a creativity junkie, if you will, and I
5 look at this as an amazing opportunity to
6 think outside the box, to think
7 strategically, to bring people together
8 and to really avail ourselves of all
9 kinds of opportunities that are out there
10 that don't traditionally align themselves
11 with parks. We will find the
12 connections, and that's how we will
13 support what we need to do here.

14 So thank you so much.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
16 very, very welcome.

17 We thank you all for, again,
18 your very, very interesting and
19 passionate testimony. Thank you for your
20 testimony.

21 Alvin Hornstein, Robert
22 Lambert, Rose Gray. And I believe that
23 may wrap us up.

24 MR. DEVLIN: I haven't been
25 called yet.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Forgive
3 me?

4 MR. DEVLIN: Raymond Devlin.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Ray
6 Devlin. Please come forward.

7 (Witnesses approached witness
8 table.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: If you
10 have testimony, I'd be happy to take it.

11 MR. HORNSTEIN: I already gave
12 it, Madam Chairman.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
14 afternoon, gentlemen. Thank you for your
15 indulgence and your patience. Please
16 state your name for the record and then
17 offer your testimony. Please.

18 MR. HORNSTEIN: Alvin S.
19 Hornstein. I'm going to give you a
20 little testimony that's kind of
21 different. I'm going to tell you what I
22 accomplished for Fairmount Park from the
23 years 1966 to the years 1977.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

25 MR. HORNSTEIN: For five hours

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2 I've been standing at my old boss staring
3 down at me, Mayor James H.C. Tate. I
4 hope he approves of what I'm going to be
5 telling you.

6 He appointed Abe Rosen as the
7 City Representative in 1966, and Abe
8 immediately called me and asked me to be
9 his Deputy. In 1968, he approved Abe
10 Rosen becoming President of the
11 Philadelphia Convention and Visitors
12 Bureau, and Abe asked me to go ahead and
13 join him as Director of Tourism and
14 Public Relations.

15 Here's where I've accomplished
16 for Fairmount Park between 1966 and 1977,
17 and it really was accomplished without
18 any money from the City, which I'm sure
19 you're glad to hear. I have other plans,
20 about a dozen, that I can talk about at
21 the end of the procedure. That may cost
22 some money, but I'm hoping that the
23 stimulus money might help us out.

24 I was Director of Tourism and
25 Public Relations for the Convention and

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2 Visitors Bureau from 1968 to 1977. From
3 '66 to '68, I was the Deputy to Abe
4 Rosen. We had a group called the
5 Philadelphia Area for Tourism, which I
6 was the Executive Director. We went on
7 from there. We created new brochures,
8 and historians wanted to lynch me,
9 because I took Independence Hall and the
10 Liberty Bell off of the brochures and put
11 the Benjamin Franklin Parkway on the
12 brochures as the front. When the hotel
13 people asked why or the historians asked
14 why, it was very simple. Independence
15 Hall and Liberty Bell is a three-hour
16 toilet stop for most bus trips and we
17 wanted them to stay longer, because the
18 hotel people wanted to put heads on their
19 pillows. So we felt that the Parkway and
20 Fairmount Park was the answer, because if
21 you stayed in one of those institutions
22 for a few hours, the odds are you'd put
23 your head on a pillow that night and stay
24 in one of our hotels. And that was the
25 purpose of the Convention and Visitors

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2 Bureau, to get tourists. Hotel people
3 did not consider a tourist if you came in
4 by bus, touched the Bell, went to
5 Independence Hall, had lunch, went to the
6 toilet and left for New York or
7 Washington. So we created the Parkway
8 and Fairmount Park as the gem, the
9 undiscovered gem of Philadelphia.

10 My campaign was called Welcome
11 to Surprising Philadelphia. We won a
12 national award from Discover America for
13 that one year for our program.

14 The Tourist Bureau had no money
15 to send me to San Diego, so when I told
16 them to mail me the trophy, they gave in
17 and sent me to, at their expense, to San
18 Diego to accept the trophy. Now, we got
19 a lot of publicity on that. So
20 Surprising Philadelphia was our answer to
21 the fact that nobody really knew
22 Philadelphia. All they knew was
23 Independence Hall and the Liberty Bell.

24 Frank Binswanger, Sr. was our
25 Vice-Chairman in those days. He came in

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2 and chewed me out, because nobody went to
3 see the colonial and historical houses.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fifteen
5 more seconds.

6 MR. HORNSTEIN: That's it?

7 Well, anyway, I created the
8 trolley buses that Mr. Binswanger raised
9 the money in two years. I created the
10 Cultural Loop Bus, which also went to the
11 Fairmount Park, colonial houses, the Zoo
12 and all the Parkway institutions.

13 I also would like to ask you a
14 question, Madam Chairman. How many
15 people here know that there's a Japanese
16 Teahouse in Fairmount Park?

17 They all do. Well, this is a
18 great group, then, because no citizens
19 usually go there to visit. Why? Because
20 we have no activities going on there. So
21 my point, when Elaine Malbin, who was one
22 of Frederick R. Mann's proteges, came to
23 Philadelphia in Madam Butterfly, she had
24 a tea ceremony, which drew a lot of
25 people, and it hasn't been used since, to

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2 the best of my knowledge.

3 I also --

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Five
5 seconds.

6 MR. HORNSTEIN: All right. I
7 started the familiarization tours with
8 the airlines, and they never did it
9 before because they say nobody ever asked
10 them. So in eight years that I was
11 there, we had about 300 or more travel
12 agents, tour operators and travel riders
13 come visit Philadelphia. On Friday
14 night, we went to Franklin Institute for
15 dinner and a Mummers String Band. They
16 had never given money to a tourist
17 legislative committee of our state until
18 they spent that night in the Franklin
19 Institute. The next year -- Joel Bloom
20 just passed away, but Joel Bloom was the
21 Director, and he got a grant from the
22 state for Franklin Institute for the
23 first time in the history of
24 Philadelphia. So that was another
25 accomplishment.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I need to
3 you ask you to close.

4 MR. HORNSTEIN: All right. I
5 helped develop with the women's groups
6 from the Academy of Natural Science a
7 Super Sunday, where a half a million
8 people in the first week in October went
9 to have a great time in Fairmount Park
10 Parkway. It was destroyed a few years
11 later by the illegal vendors. So the
12 Zoo -- we had a Zoo Year's Eve party on
13 midnight.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You are
15 now violating the rule completely.

16 MR. HORNSTEIN: Okay.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right?

18 MR. HORNSTEIN: I'm done.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
20 then. Thank you very much for your
21 testimony.

22 Good afternoon, sir.

23 MR. DEVLIN: Hello. My name is
24 Raymond Devlin. I am a longtime resident
25 of Green Hill Farms neighborhood of

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2 Overbrook in West Philadelphia, and I'm
3 honored to be here before you to discuss
4 my candidacy for the Board membership to
5 the Fairmount Park Commission on Parks
6 and Recreation.

7 To me, this service is a great
8 opportunity to give back to the City that
9 I love in a way for which I have
10 significant knowledge and experience and
11 for a cause for which I have great
12 passion and interest in the Parks and
13 Recreation resources of the City of
14 Philadelphia.

15 Fairmount Park and its
16 facilities is nationally recognized for
17 their excellence. Philadelphia's Park
18 and Recreation facilities and centers are
19 an ever-important resource to the
20 stability and viability of the
21 neighborhoods of the City. I believe
22 that with my professional background of
23 30 years in land use planning, community
24 and economic development, finance and
25 education, I will be a valuable asset to

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2 the Board, the City, the Parks and
3 Recreation staff and ultimately to the
4 end users of the Parks and Recreation
5 facilities.

6 I'm proud to say that I was a
7 commuter for ten years in Philadelphia
8 and I greatly appreciate it from my home
9 in Green Hill Farms in West Philadelphia.
10 I commuted 12 months of the year and I
11 was very appreciative of the Parks
12 Department treating it as a commuting
13 route and plowing it during snowing days.
14 It didn't stop me from going to work and
15 it didn't stop them from plowing. And
16 I'm also an avid cyclist and a runner. I
17 have run actively within a number of
18 marathons and half marathons, and I
19 really appreciate the resources that
20 Philadelphia avails to it to the groups
21 that use that as a fundraising mechanism.

22 I have worked as a community
23 development consultant with the Water
24 Works, Lloyd Hall, the Please Touch
25 Museum, and appreciate the redevelopment

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2 and reinvigoration of active resources,
3 and what I will bring to the Board is a
4 vision and a big picture to help the
5 staff augment its abilities to fulfill
6 its day-to-day responsibilities, and I
7 hope to be a sound and insightful and
8 concerted colleague to my fellow Board
9 members.

10 That's it.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
12 thank you for your testimony. Thank you
13 also.

14 Thank you all for the rich,
15 rich mix and blend of talent that this
16 City indeed represents.

17 This concludes the third of a
18 four-part series of our hearings. The
19 Committee will stand at recess --

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Can I say
21 something, Madam Chair? Point of
22 information.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.
24 Let's hear a point of information from my
25 colleague and Vice-Chair, Councilman

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2 Curtis Jones.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just want
4 to point out that our Chairperson,
5 Blondell Reynolds Brown, has not only
6 championed this cause, but has proven to
7 me today that she has stamina beyond all
8 stamina to listen to all of these
9 testimonies, and I guarantee you, she
10 listened to them and I guarantee you she
11 made notes about each of them. Whether
12 it's a good idea or a bad idea, she
13 probably made notes, and I just want to
14 on the record say and thank her for being
15 Chair.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
17 thank you very, very much. You can be
18 assured I took good notes --

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you.
21 (Continued) -- that I'll be able to share
22 with all members of this Committee so
23 that we indeed seek to achieve the
24 long-term goal we've been after.

25 So thank you, Councilman.

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2 And know that this Committee
3 stands at recess until March the 26th at
4 1 o'clock p.m., and we hope to reconvene
5 in City Council Chambers. Thanks again
6 for being here and for your important
7 testimony.

8 (Committee on Parks, Recreation
9 and Cultural Affairs recessed at 5:20
10 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter on March 24, 2009, and that
this is a true and correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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