

6/6/2023

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON PARKS, RECREATION
AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Tuesday, June 6, 2023
1:00 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.

BILLS: 221016, 230324, 230461

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I now note that the hour has
And I'm going to ask the Clerk
se call the roll to take
nce. Members that are in
nce will please indicate that
present when your name is
and also please say a few

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1 words when responding so that your
2 image will be displayed on screen as
3 you speak.

4 Madam Clerk, please call the
5 roll.

6 THE CLERK: Councilmember
7 Gauthier.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
9 Present.

10 THE CLERK: Councilmember
11 Brooks.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:
13 (Inaudible).

14 THE CLERK: Councilmember
15 Brooks.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Present.

17 THE CLERK: Okay.

18 Councilmember Johnson.

19 (No response.)

20 THE CLERK: Councilmember
21 Jones.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes, Madam
23 Chair. Good afternoon. I am
24 present.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

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1 afternoon.

2 THE CLERK: Councilmember
3 Harrity.

4 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I am
5 present.

6 THE CLERK: Councilmember
7 Thomas.

8 (No response.)

9 THE CLERK: And, the Chair
10 Councilmember Bass.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I am
12 present. Thank you very much, Madam
13 Clerk. And a quorum of the Committee
14 is present and this hearing is now
15 called to order.

16 This is the public hearing on
17 the Committee on Parks, Recreation
18 and Cultural Affairs regarding Bill
19 Nos. 220 -- excuse me, 221016 and
20 230324 and Resolution 230461. I'm
21 going to ask the Clerk to please read
22 the titles of the bills.

23 THE CLERK: Bill No. 221016,
24 an ordinance naming the designation
25 or designating the Chew Playground

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1 Basketball Courts located at 1800
2 Washington Avenue, the Rasual Butler
3 Basketball Courts, in honor of Point
4 Breeze native Rasual Butler, who
5 distinguished himself over a 14-year
6 NBA career, most notably with the
7 Miami Heat.

8 Bill No. 230324, an ordinance
9 officially renaming and designating
10 Bridesburg Park located at 3101
11 Orthodox Street in the City of
12 Philadelphia as Robert A. Borski
13 Park.

14 And Resolution No. 230461,
15 resolution approving the Rebuild
16 Project Statement for Fiscal Year
17 2024 pursuant to Bill No. 170206.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And thank
19 you, Madam Clerk. Before we begin to
20 hear testimony from the witnesses we
21 have for today, everyone who has been
22 invited to the meeting to testify
23 should be aware that this public
24 hearing is being recorded. Because
25 the hearing is public, participants

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1 and viewers have no reasonable
2 expectation of privacy. By
3 continuing to be in the meeting, you
4 are consenting to being recorded.

5 Additionally, prior to
6 recognizing Members for the questions
7 or comments they have for witnesses,
8 I will note for the record at this
9 time that we will use the chat
10 feature available in Microsoft Teams
11 to allow Members to signify that they
12 wish to be recognized. In order to
13 comply with the Sunshine Act, the
14 chat must only be used for this
15 purpose.

16 Before I call on the Clerk to
17 call the first panel, would any of my
18 colleagues like to make opening
19 comments?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. I
22 don't see any requests for opening
23 comments.

24 And, Madam Clerk, will you
25 please call the first panel or

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1 witnesses we have to testify on Bill
2 No. 221016.

3 THE CLERK: I don't really see
4 any panel witnesses here.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So I know
6 that we have the Administration
7 available, so I'm going to ask for
8 them to introduce themselves. I see
9 Aparna Palantino is here from the
10 Administration. Aparna, are you
11 there -- I'm taking it that you are
12 the sole witness for this bill.

13 MS. PALANTINO: I believe I
14 am, Councilmember Bass.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
16 Well, please state your name for the
17 record and proceed with your
18 testimony.

19 MS. PALANTINO: Aparna
20 Palantino, Philadelphia Parks &
21 Recreation. Good afternoon,
22 Chairperson Bass and members of the
23 Committee on Parks, Recreation and
24 Cultural Affairs. My name is Aparna
25 Palantino and I serve as Deputy

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1 Commissioner for Capital
2 Infrastructure and Natural Land
3 Management for the Department of
4 Parks & Recreation.

5 I am here today to testify in
6 support of Bill No. 221016, an
7 ordinance naming and designating the
8 Chew Playground Basketball Courts
9 located at 1800 Washington Avenue,
10 the Rasual Butler Basketball Courts,
11 in honor of Point Breeze native
12 Rasual Butler, who distinguished
13 himself over a 14-year NBA career,
14 most notably with the Miami Heat.

15 The naming of the basketball
16 courts in memory of Rasual Butler who
17 is recognized as a beloved member of
18 the neighborhood of Point Breeze, who
19 proudly represented the City of
20 Philadelphia from his days at Roman
21 Catholic High School to a stellar
22 (inaudible) studies career at
23 La Salle University culminating in a
24 long NBA affiliation with many teams,
25 where Rasual had the opportunity to

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1 showcase his talents for 14 years and
2 play alongside some of the game's
3 biggest stars, yet never forgetting
4 his hometown.

5 Honoring Rasual with the
6 naming of these courts in his memory
7 will hopefully resonate with the
8 children of our City, showing them
9 that success can be achieved here in
10 our City both on and off the court.
11 The Administration supports this
12 measure. And accordingly, I
13 respectfully request that City
14 Council approve Bill No. 221016. I'm
15 also requesting suspension of the
16 rules as to allow for the first
17 reading at the next session of
18 Council. I'm happy to answer any
19 questions you may have. Thank you.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well,
21 thank you for your testimony.

22 Any questions from the
23 Committee?

24 (No response.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No, okay.

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1 I'll just say in Councilman Johnson's
2 absence I'm sure that this is
3 something that is going to be
4 meaningful for the community,
5 particularly in Point Breeze, and we
6 look forward to being able to do this
7 for Mr. Butler and his community and
8 for family and for those who admire
9 his skills on and off the court.

10 Councilman Harrity, did you
11 have a comment?

12 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: No,
13 Chairwoman. Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. You
15 came on the screen so I didn't know
16 if you had a comment.

17 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Just that
18 I went to the school with Mr. Butler.
19 I'm a Roman guy too. And so, very
20 happy to see this.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well,
22 thank you, Councilman.

23 Any additional comments from
24 members of Council?

25 (No response.)

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1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

2 Seeing none, can we now have the
3 Clerk call up the second bill. And
4 let me just see -- actually, I'm
5 going to call Bill No. 230324, which
6 is for the Bridesburg Park because,
7 Aparna, I'm assuming you're
8 testifying on that as well?

9 MS. PALANTINO: Yes.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

11 Aparna Palantino, do your thing.
12 Please state your name for the record
13 and proceed with your testimony.

14 MS. PALANTINO: Certainly.

15 Aparna Palantino, Philadelphia Parks
16 & Recreation. Good afternoon,
17 Chairperson Bass and members of the
18 Committee on Parks, Recreation and
19 Cultural Affairs. My name is Aparna
20 Palantino and I serve as the Deputy
21 Commissioner for Capital
22 Infrastructure and Natural Land for
23 the Department of Parks & Recreation.

24 I'm here today to testify in
25 support of Bill No. 230324, an

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1 ordinance renaming and designating
2 Bridesburg Park located at 3101
3 Orthodox Street in the City of
4 Philadelphia as Robert A. Borski
5 Park. The new park will be an anchor
6 as a larger part of the river trail
7 project along North Delaware.

8 Simply stated, without
9 Riverfront North's tireless work and
10 dedication to the trail in this park,
11 these amenities would not exist.
12 This park and the adjacent trail will
13 provide our City's residents with
14 access to the waterfront and will
15 have safe, fun activities and
16 programming.

17 Riverfront North being
18 committed to the redevelopment of the
19 North Delaware for over 40 years,
20 it's only fitting that this park be
21 renamed for its greatest advocate Rob
22 Borski. The Administration supports
23 this measure and accordingly, I
24 respectfully request that City
25 Council approves Bill No. 230324.

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1 I'm also requesting suspension of the
2 rules so as to allow first reading at
3 the next session of Council. I will
4 be happy to answer any questions you
5 might have. Thank you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
7 Aparna. I don't have any questions.
8 And again, this is not in the 8th
9 Council District, but I will say I'm
10 excited about this renaming as well.
11 I've known Bob Borski for a long time
12 from my years as a young
13 congressional staffer working with
14 him and his staff and he's just
15 always been someone who has
16 represented Philadelphia well and has
17 done amazing things for our City,
18 bringing our resources home and has
19 really been someone that
20 Philadelphians have a great amount of
21 respect and admiration for.

22 And again, it's an honor to be
23 able to memorialize Mr. Borski,
24 Congressman Borski I should say, in
25 this way so that his legacy and his

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1 work continues on and he can smell
2 his roses while we still have him.
3 And so, I just wanted to add those
4 words.

5 Any comments from my
6 colleagues regarding Bill No. 230324?

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Madam
8 Chair.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Councilman
10 Jones has a comment on the bill.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. I
12 remember the Congressman and he was
13 at the heart of Philadelphia, and I'm
14 excited about the renaming. For the
15 record, Madam Chair, Parks & Rec, I
16 never want a rec named after me if I
17 leave you. But for him it is truly
18 appropriate because he fought for
19 that community all those years and
20 was a champion for bringing home
21 resources to Philadelphia.

22 And I feel a little dated by
23 the fact that we knew him -- well, I
24 knew him. You were too young. But I
25 actually do know him.

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1 So thank you, Madam Chair.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: He didn't
3 go anywhere. He's still around.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
5 Well, what, has he retired?

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes, he's
7 retired. He just retired.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's why
10 I said we want to give him his
11 flowers while he's still around. So
12 we all look forward to being able to
13 join him at this great occasion and
14 offer well issues for the
15 Congressman.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Then I look
17 forward to the ribbon-cutting when we
18 rename it and I'll just shake his
19 hand and thank him. All right.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
21 Absolutely. Absolutely. Thank you,
22 Councilman.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
24 Madam Chair.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

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1 Absolutely.

2 Are there any more questions
3 or comments on Bill No. 230324?

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I don't
6 see any. But I do see that we've
7 been joined -- I want to recognize
8 for the record that Councilman
9 Kenyatta Johnson has joined us as a
10 member of this Committee so is he
11 marked present. And also, Councilman
12 Johnson is the sponsor of Bill No.
13 221016 regarding renaming Chew
14 Basketball Courts to Rasual Butler
15 Basketball Courts. And I wanted to
16 see if the Councilman wanted to make
17 some comments regarding that.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON:
19 Absolutely. Thank you, Madam Chair.
20 And it's only fitting and honoring
21 for me to have the opportunity to
22 rename Chew Basketball Courts after
23 Rasual Butler. He was born and
24 raised in Point Breeze, South
25 Philadelphia. He's a graduate of

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1 La Salle University, and also he's a
2 former member of the Miami Heat,
3 that's where he was first selected
4 from, as well as he played for Los
5 Angeles Clippers and a variety of
6 different other teams. But his major
7 team where he spent most of his time
8 with and the team he's most proud of
9 was the Miami Heat. So it will be
10 very fitting that we rename this
11 basketball court after him.

12 But also, we're going to be
13 doing a revitalization of the whole
14 court in his honoring. So that's
15 what we're working on in partnership
16 with the Mural Arts program to make
17 sure we honor the life and memory of
18 former NBA professional basketball
19 player Rasual Butler.

20 Thank you very much, Madam
21 Chair. I'll just give a shout-out to
22 Aparna. Aparna, it's always good to
23 see you, the hard work that you have
24 been doing to help move the City of
25 Philadelphia forward around all

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1 things parks and recreation. So it's
2 good to see you. Thank you.

3 MS. PALANTINO: Thank you,
4 Councilman.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
6 Okay. And so, with that being said,
7 thank you so much, Aparna, for your
8 excellent testimony today.

9 We're now going to move and
10 ask the Clerk to read Resolution No.
11 230461, which is the resolution
12 approving the Rebuild Project
13 Statement for Fiscal Year 2024
14 pursuant to Bill No. 170206. And I
15 noticed that we have Kira Strong here
16 from the Administration to testify.

17 MS. STRONG: Good afternoon,
18 Chair Councilwoman Bass. How are
19 you?

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
21 afternoon, Kira. How are you?

22 MS. STRONG: Good.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good.
24 Glad to see you. So we're going to
25 have you state your name -- you know

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1 the drill. State your name for the
2 record and proceed with your
3 testimony please.

4 MS. STRONG: Excellent. Thank
5 you. Good afternoon, Chair Bass
6 again, members of City Council. I'm
7 Kira Strong, Executive Director for
8 Rebuilding Community Infrastructure
9 otherwise known as Rebuild. I'm
10 joined today by some members of the
11 Rebuild to present testimony and to
12 respond to any questions you may have
13 about Rebuild.

14 I'm pleased to provide an
15 annual update of Rebuild's progress
16 and especially to discuss the future
17 of Rebuild. In 2017, this governing
18 body along with Mayor Kenney made
19 history, taking bold action by
20 creating Rebuild and telling
21 Philadelphians all over the City that
22 they deserve high-quality public
23 spaces. Rebuild is truly a once-
24 in-a-generation opportunity of
25 investment in our City, focusing on

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1 predominantly high need
2 neighborhoods.

3 And through our work, we have
4 met countless residents who share
5 with us that the improvements coming
6 to their local park, rec center or
7 library are not just physical
8 improvements to beautify the spaces,
9 but are lifesaving measures to ensure
10 our children and families have clean,
11 safe and beautiful facilities no
12 matter their zip code.

13 Before I dive into the design
14 and construction progress, I'd like
15 to draw attention to an achievement
16 that I'm equally as proud of and our
17 team is equally as proud of, our
18 diverse business participation rate
19 in Rebuild contracts. To date, over
20 60 percent of our committed contract
21 dollars are going either to minority-
22 or women-owned businesses. That's
23 over \$57 million worth of work
24 empowering historically
25 disenfranchised groups in the

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1 construction industry.

2 These contracts come in the

3 form of contractors such as Esser

4 Construction working with Fotteral

5 Square Park and Pride Enterprises

6 working at the Pascalville Library.

7 On the design and construction front,

8 Rebuild has completed 15 flagship

9 projects. We define a flagship

10 project as a full Rebuild project.

11 16 of our projects are either in

12 construction or currently prepping

13 for construction, usually in the bid

14 phase, with that number expected to

15 rise over the next few months.

16 Some examples include the Vare

17 Recreation Center, Kingsessing

18 Library and Recreation Center,

19 Francis J. Myers Recreation Center

20 and Ziehler Playground, just to name.

21 24 projects are currently in

22 architectural design and public

23 engagement, which includes an

24 immersive community engagement

25 process for residents to actively

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1 participate in shaping the future of
2 their site. While this opportunity
3 signifies major project movement,
4 Rebuild does not occupy in a vacuum.
5 We understand that these sites are
6 living and breathing entities in our
7 community that need attention ahead
8 of their flagship improvement at
9 times.

10 Our first-fix approach allows
11 Rebuild to step in and supply
12 critical funding to design and
13 construction to address urgent issues
14 in order to ensure that these
15 facilities can stay open. 38 of our
16 sites have received a first fix. A
17 first fix may mean installing a
18 boiler to ensure that heat can work
19 in the winter or adding a sanitary
20 pipe to ensure that restrooms can
21 function for afterschool programs.
22 It's stepping in to invest in a new
23 roof to ensure buildings are
24 water-tight and operable year-round
25 or even sometimes it may constitute a

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1 redoing of a unique community feature
2 like an outdoor hockey rink.

3 While Rebuild is a historic
4 investment in our public spaces, the
5 need at our sites far exceeds our
6 budget allocation, as I know many
7 folks here know. The Rebuild team
8 has done a tremendous job in raising
9 additional dollars. Since program
10 inception, we have raised an
11 additional nearly 41 million in
12 support from public and private
13 sources. Recent awards include
14 \$400,000 dollars for Vare Playground
15 from DCED Local Share Account
16 Program, \$200,000 for Kingessing Rec
17 Center from the NFL Foundation,
18 \$750,000 for Murphy Recreation Center
19 from Live! Casino, and thank you to
20 many of you here at this meeting
21 today too for your support of these
22 grants and getting them through. We
23 really appreciate it.

24 I am proud of our team and all
25 the partners for the work we've been

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1 able to accomplish since the program
2 started. We've weathered rising
3 supply costs due to the pandemic.
4 We've addressed dramatically higher
5 than anticipated needs and costs at
6 our selected sites and we have tried
7 to organize our team to be as
8 efficient as possible to move these
9 projects forward and deliver on our
10 promise to Philadelphians.

11 I'd like to thank you,
12 Councilmembers, for your partnership
13 and support of the work that we've
14 completed and have ahead of us. Your
15 knowledge of the libraries, parks,
16 playgrounds and rec centers in your
17 District as well as your knowledge of
18 the families, individuals and
19 children who use them have been
20 invaluable in ensuring our collective
21 work in creating high-quality public
22 spaces for all Philadelphians as
23 successful.

24 We know that the need for
25 these spaces are evident more now

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1 than ever. This concludes my
2 testimony. Thank you for your time.
3 My team and I are happy to answer the
4 questions you may have.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
6 for your testimony. And as you
7 aware --

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I have a
9 question, Madam Chair, at the
10 appropriate time.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
12 Absolutely. Thank you. I did not
13 see you in the chat, so thank you for
14 letting me know. I do want to just
15 go over something really quickly, and
16 then I'm going to turn it over to
17 Councilman Kenyatta Johnson for a
18 question.

19 But I wanted to go back just
20 over some things that we talked
21 about, Kira, last week at a community
22 meeting regarding Rebuild and the
23 expectation that was introduced to
24 the community around what Rebuild was
25 going to be and what Rebuild would do

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1 and what has actually happened.
2 Because, you know, as we mentioned in
3 the campaign, a lot of what I heard
4 during my primary contest was around
5 Rebuild. And the expectation that
6 was laid out by Jim Kenney and the
7 Administration was that this was a
8 seven-year three-phase program with a
9 budget price tag of \$500 million.

10 Of that \$500 million, 300
11 million was supposed to be --

12 (Background interruption.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Councilman
14 Johnson, I think your mic is --

15 (Background interruption.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Councilman
17 Johnson, Councilman Johnson, can we
18 mute -- let me see. I don't know if
19 I have -- okay. He's muted.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm
21 sorry. That was a quick response
22 so --

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No
24 problem. No problem.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I thought

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1 this was going to be --

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yeah. I'm
3 not wrapped up just yet.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Hold on,
6 Councilman.

7 So again, this is seven years,
8 three phases, \$500 million, 300
9 million in bond issuances and 100
10 million from the William Penn
11 Foundation and 100 million from a
12 combination of state and federal
13 funding and other fundraising
14 efforts. I know you did detail some
15 of those fundraising efforts thus
16 far.

17 But let me ask a couple of
18 questions: So the first is of the
19 \$100 million that was promised or
20 committed by the William Penn
21 Foundation, can you tell us how much
22 of that has actually been received
23 thus far?

24 MS. STRONG: Yes. Let me look
25 at that really quickly to get the

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1 current amount.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And
3 actually, if you can go through all
4 the funds received from the William
5 Penn Foundation, state money, federal
6 money and private fundraising money.

7 MS. STRONG: So I think for
8 the William Penn grant, we have
9 current funding of 48 million. And
10 just to bring folks up to speed
11 and -- please let me -- I apologize.
12 My camera is on, but it looks like my
13 Teams keep telling me it goes off.
14 Am I back on?

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Now you
16 are.

17 MS. STRONG: I haven't changed
18 anything on my end, but it seems --
19 so apologies. It seems to flicker.
20 Yes, so the William Penn grant is
21 predicated upon a match. For every
22 bond dollar spent, for every \$1, we
23 get \$4 of William Penn dollars. For
24 every grant dollar raised, we get \$2
25 William Penn. So as we spend other

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1 funds, they contribute more to the
2 program. And I believe we have again
3 in my notes here about \$48 million so
4 far from the William Penn Foundation.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
6 from state and federal sources and
7 private grants?

8 MS. STRONG: We have raised
9 \$41 million of state and private
10 grants. We do have a few asks
11 currently in I think they are at
12 about 9 million. Don't hold me to
13 that. I can get back to you with
14 that exact number, but we have raised
15 a committed \$41 million.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Is
17 that in or is that coming in?

18 MS. STRONG: It's committed
19 and awarded and in would be -- the
20 finer answer to that would be, for
21 example, RACP grant you have to show
22 expenditures before you can draw down
23 those dollars. So some are
24 reimbursable grants and some are
25 upfront. So it would be a mix.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. All
2 right. And federal dollars in?

3 MS. STRONG: Also within that
4 41 million.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So 41 is
6 state, federal and private?

7 MS. STRONG: Yes, and we do
8 not -- the majority -- we do not have
9 federal dollars. Majority would be
10 state.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
12 I just ask because the total amount
13 was supposed to be 60 -- excuse me,
14 100 million. And so, we're short
15 almost 60 million; is that correct?

16 MS. STRONG: No, there's \$48
17 million of that 100 that is part of
18 the City capital commitment. The
19 fundraising goal initially Rebuild
20 was predicated was \$52 million. We
21 actually about two years ago
22 downgraded the fundraising goal to 25
23 million. We've since luckily, and
24 again thanks to the support of many
25 Councilpeople we have surpassed that

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1 and we're at 40. So we actually -- I
2 hope we can achieve that original \$52
3 million goal. But the other part of
4 that 100 is the \$48 million the City
5 committed out of the --

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The
7 City --

8 MS. STRONG: -- the capital.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
10 52 million was from our capital
11 budget. 48 million was state,
12 federal and private donations or
13 contributions. So that's --

14 MS. STRONG: 48.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So that's
16 where that 100 million came from?

17 MS. STRONG: Right, 48 from
18 the City's capital and 52 was to
19 intended to be fundraised, correct.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
21 as you are aware, one of the things
22 that really became a great concern
23 and we talked about last week was the
24 lack of progress that we've seen on
25 these Rebuild phases. We're still in

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1 Phase 1. We're supposed to be in
2 Phase 3 at this point. We're at the
3 end of the Kenney Administration. At
4 the end of his Administration we were
5 supposed to be wrapping up these
6 projects in many, if not most, cases
7 that the projects either happened,
8 actually started, people don't see
9 construction.

10 When I say they haven't
11 started, there's no shovel in the
12 ground because that is a signal to
13 the community. All of the design
14 work, all of the stuff that's
15 happening behind the scenes, that's
16 great, we're glad it's happening, but
17 the community doesn't really feel it
18 until they see something happening,
19 they see something on the site.

20 And so, can you talk a little
21 bit about what are we going to see at
22 the end of this Administration, which
23 is really just a few months away?
24 How many projects have been done,
25 what's going to happen to the

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1 projects that are still kind of
2 hanging out there?

3 Another thing that we
4 discussed was staffing. I think you
5 said you all were working on 79
6 projects or something like that and
7 you have a staff of about six people.
8 79 projects into six people, I can do
9 the math. That's a formula that says
10 that we're not going to be able to
11 get nearly the number of these
12 projects done.

13 And so, I'd like to hear your
14 response on those things. Then open
15 it up for some other questions and
16 then I'll come back.

17 MS. STRONG: Yeah. No, thank
18 you. Because I think, Councilwoman,
19 you asked really good questions and I
20 think questions that we feel that
21 from a number of folks and certainly
22 folks that are curious about what's
23 the status, especially as Rebuild
24 moves into potentially a new
25 Administration. So I'm going to try

6/6/2023

1 and cover some of the things you
2 asked.

3 We have 16 projects that are
4 complete. We have a total of 16 that
5 are under construction. So 5 that
6 are in the bid phase and about to
7 enter construction and 11 that are
8 active sites. As I mentioned before,
9 we have 24 in design. We frankly
10 have no greater point in time or
11 point in time currently in moving
12 into this coming year greater
13 activity of Rebuild projects. For
14 these sites that are under
15 construction, Calendar Year '23
16 represent roughly \$250 million worth
17 of construction, so we recognize that
18 Rebuild certainly took a little time
19 to get off the ground.

20 I think two years of beverage
21 tax litigation, City and Supreme
22 Court, a bond that wasn't issued
23 until the end of 2018, and then none
24 of us like to kind of acknowledge it
25 happened, but frankly a pandemic

6/6/2023

1 certainly made this project not start
2 I think full on out the gate the way
3 everybody may have hoped.

4 I think another really key
5 piece is that there's a lot of
6 intentionality around ensuring we
7 have engagement that is authentic.
8 It results in projects where people
9 feel heard and that they have that
10 facility that they've asked for. To
11 that point, we've done over 110
12 different community engagement
13 activities in this past year.

14 We know that that's not always
15 as expeditious. That is the design,
16 and you mentioned the frustration
17 that people have not seen the shovels
18 in the ground. And I think that
19 design work where we're engaging with
20 community members, it does take time
21 to get that right and get things
22 designed to the point where we can
23 actually take it out to bid and have
24 someone build it.

25 The other piece that I think

6/6/2023

1 is really critical is recognizing
2 that we've been very intentional
3 around the businesses we engage in
4 Rebuild work. Now, we've heard I
5 think loud and clear from the Mayor,
6 from Councilmembers that making sure
7 that we lift up Black and Brown
8 businesses in the work of Rebuild,
9 that this really is a
10 once-in-a-generation opportunity for
11 people to benefit from this magnitude
12 in the scale of City work.

13 So as you I think are aware,
14 we have an apprentice program, we
15 have a small business supports
16 program, and that has really enabled
17 us to build a pipeline to achieve
18 some of the participation that we are
19 achieving. You know, 61 percent WBE
20 participation, we're really proud of
21 that, and I think that's really a key
22 component of what Rebuild is.

23 I think the other thing I'd
24 like to say, and thank you for also
25 your support of our team in

6/6/2023

1 understanding that we have 72 sites
2 and that a team of six can't do that,
3 right, and certainly can't do that
4 with any speed. We started as very
5 tiny. We started initially as four
6 people, grew to six as you mentioned.
7 And then with the support of the
8 Managing Director Tumar Alexander and
9 others in his office, Dave Wilson,
10 et cetera, they've really enabled us
11 and I think been the wind in our
12 sails to build our team. So we do
13 have a much larger team now that is
14 able to really push projects through
15 at the speed that we would like.

16 So I hope I answered all the
17 questions. I tried to hit them all,
18 but I think we are -- I will add one
19 thing, which I think is just that in
20 the beginning of Rebuild I think the
21 thought was also that we were going
22 to do a lot of \$1 million to \$5
23 million projects. And as I know you
24 know we have a new vision. For
25 example, for a project in your

6/6/2023

1 District we moved from thinking we're
2 going to fix or tinker with a few
3 things to how do we build a facility
4 that people really need and deserve,
5 and that has certainly added I think
6 frankly both time and budget to our
7 projects.

8 So some of that fundraising to
9 enable the projects to grow also has
10 added timelines onto projects. But I
11 think the end result is really going
12 to be one that people are happy and
13 proud of. I will stop there. Happy
14 to answer any questions. Thank you
15 for that.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

17 Absolutely. So just a couple of
18 things. I'd like for you to also go
19 over the 16 projects that were
20 complete, because one of the things
21 that I feel like is happening and I
22 have a great of amount of concern
23 over is what these projects are. It
24 seems like any time we put a doorknob
25 on a building, we're saying that's a

6/6/2023

1 completed project. If we fix or
2 paint a sidewalk, that's a completed
3 project.

4 And so, when we think of
5 completed projects, we think of sort
6 of these major infrastructure and
7 beautification projects that are
8 needed at most of our facilities.

9 And I'm worried about this because I
10 know that the 8th Council District
11 was shorted significantly in the
12 Rebuild fund allocation, and I'm
13 still trying to figure out exactly
14 how that happened. And although we
15 were able to help with the Council
16 President get some assistance, you
17 know, we were left behind by this
18 program. The 8th Council District
19 was really left behind when it came
20 to allocating resources.

21 And then as people let's say
22 protested, for example, Happy Hollow,
23 I thought it was pretty ballsy of the
24 Administration to send people out as
25 if they didn't know what was going on

6/6/2023

1 and like, oh, how can we help, like
2 where you been, you know, where you
3 been.

4 And so, if you could talk
5 about what these 16 completed
6 projects are and the scope of them
7 because I want to make sure that as
8 we talk about them, we recognize that
9 these are not 16 new buildings, which
10 is what the expectation is from a lot
11 of communities. These are sites
12 that, in my opinion, some tinkering
13 has been done or you've fixed a
14 plumbing problem that should have
15 been fixed all along that was
16 neglected by this Administration and
17 previous Administrations, or you
18 fixed a roof.

19 Well, that's not what people
20 wanted in terms of the maintenance of
21 a building that the City owns. They
22 wanted an improvement to the
23 amenities that they already have on
24 site and were experiencing or not
25 experiencing. So if you could talk

6/6/2023

1 about those 16 completed projects and
2 what the scope of those were, I would
3 appreciate it.

4 MS. STRONG: Sure. Yep --

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And the
6 one last thing I want to add in there
7 is because, you know, and just going
8 back to fairness and equity and how
9 my District again was left out of
10 these kind of conversations and
11 decision-making, to bring to your
12 attention and I know we've had
13 serious conversation on this as well
14 as I had conversation with Aparna
15 about the Portland Loo, which was
16 supposed to be the first in the City
17 to go into Vernon Park where we host
18 several events and how important it
19 was that people in the neighborhood
20 were able to enjoy their public
21 parks. And if there are events, that
22 they have an option to use the
23 restroom instead of leaving the
24 event.

25 And so, our District was

6/6/2023

1 promised that we were going to be the
2 first to be able to bring this
3 fantastic new thing call the Portland
4 Loo in so that we could have those
5 amenities which were easy to clean,
6 easy to maintain, sort of like a
7 prefab building dropped in the
8 neighborhood and hooked up to
9 plumbing. And then just imagine my
10 surprise when I saw that they were
11 put in other neighborhoods in Center
12 City, in other areas first. And so,
13 I just wanted to hear your comment
14 and response to that.

15 MS. STRONG: Sure. Okay. Let
16 me start, if it's okay, with the 16
17 completed projects.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes,
19 please.

20 MS. STRONG: And they are
21 complete projects. They're not door
22 knobs or fixes, but we do have those
23 too. They're first fixes is what we
24 call them, but the completed projects
25 are the projects in their entirety.

6/6/2023

1 So 8th and Diamond Playground is one.
2 Capitolo Playground, Chew
3 Playground --

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: When you
5 say -- I'm sorry. When you say the
6 playground, did we rebuild the
7 playground? Did we rebuild the
8 building? Can you give us just a
9 little bit of detail?

10 MS. STRONG: Sure.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You don't
12 have to go into the whole thing, but
13 just give us a little bit of detail
14 as to what was done.

15 MS. STRONG: Sure. Yep. And
16 just as a reminder to folks, we've
17 worked with the respective
18 Councilperson around the scope for
19 each of these projects and certainly
20 around the projects within each
21 Councilperson's District. And
22 keeping in mind that the projects,
23 many of them were never intended to
24 be the entire scope of the site, and
25 that's from the inception of Rebuild.

6/6/2023

1 So the 8th and Diamond
2 Playground was an exterior refresh of
3 the building, a brand new playground,
4 both younger-aged and older children.
5 Capitolo Playground, a brand new
6 mini-pitch, a complete field revamp,
7 a new seating area, some refreshed
8 basketball courts.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Point of
10 information, Madam Chair. Point of
11 information.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes,
13 Councilman Jones.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: When you
15 cite these locations, can you say
16 what District they're in?

17 MS. STRONG: Sure. No
18 problem. 8th and Diamond is the 5th
19 District. Capitolo is the 1st
20 District. Finishing Capitolo, I
21 think basketball, seating area, mini-
22 pitch, soccer field, baseball fields,
23 some fencing around community garden
24 there, lighting. All the projects I
25 list at a minimum I'd say, I'm not

6/6/2023

1 sure we have any that are 1 million.
2 Most of these are easily 3 million or
3 over.

4 Chew Playground, field
5 renovation playground, surrounding
6 areas. Disston Rec Center was a
7 completely new playground, adult
8 exercise equipment. We're actually
9 in construction in the building now.

10 East Poplar Playground --

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry.
12 Where is that at, Disston and East
13 Poplar?

14 MS. STRONG: Oh, I'm sorry.
15 Disston is 6th. East Poplar is in 5.
16 And I will apologize because I
17 actually gave you the scope for 8th
18 and Diamond that was East Poplar's
19 scope, so apologies. The 8th and
20 Diamond Playground also in District 5
21 had a new building addition, a new
22 sprayground, new playground, new
23 seating area, brand new basketball
24 courts, et cetera.

25 The East Poplar Playground

6/6/2023

1 also in CD 5 had brand new building
2 exterior refresh, brand new
3 playground, small and larger
4 children's equipment. Glavin
5 Playground is in District 6. That
6 got a rehab of the building, mini-
7 pitch, sprayground, completely new
8 playground.

9 Gifford Playground, District
10 10, that at the time was just the --
11 team, help me on that one -- actually
12 just the sprayground, right. Okay.
13 That was one of our very, very first
14 projects. Hancock Playground,
15 District 5, entirely new renovated
16 playground and basketball courts,
17 seating and planting surrounding the
18 pool.

19 Heitzman Rec Center, District
20 1, in Harrowgate, that was a project,
21 complete building rehab, new
22 multi-sport pitch, new basketball
23 courts, new playground, new seating
24 area. And when I say building
25 refresh, for example rehab, refreshed

6/6/2023

1 gym, new heating, new windows,
2 et cetera, et cetera. Miles Mack in
3 District 3, very similar, building
4 refresh, got rehab, heating, cooling,
5 playground, basketball courts,
6 et cetera.

7 Moss Playground, that was CD
8 6, that was a minor building refresh,
9 new playground, new area for adult
10 fitness and cheerleading. Nelson
11 Playground, District 7, that was a
12 building addition and building rehab
13 in addition to brand new playground.

14 Parkside, practice fields was
15 a grass practice fields in District 4
16 for football practice. Powers Park
17 in District 1 was refresh to the park
18 there with the addition of a storage
19 shed and new lighting. Cobbs Nature
20 Playground in District 3 just opened
21 last week, complete new playground
22 along Cobbs Creek Parkway.

23 In construction if that's
24 helpful, Cobbs Creek Environmental
25 Center, District 3. Fotteral,

6/6/2023

1 District 5, I can do the scope if
2 you'd like. Kingsessing Library,
3 complete rehab renovation of the
4 historic library. Pascalville
5 Library, that's District 2, also
6 complete renovation of a historic
7 library.

8 Mann Rivera Rec Center and
9 Older Adult Center in District 7,
10 complete building and site overhaul.
11 Vare Rec Center in District 2,
12 complete site and building overhaul.
13 Vernon in your District,
14 Councilmember, has new backstop, new
15 baseball fields. A Portland Loo, and
16 I'm happy to speak more about that,
17 coming at the end of the summer --

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well,
19 let's pause because we're mixing
20 what's completed and what's still
21 being proposed because I don't have a
22 Portland Loo in Vernon Park.

23 MS. STRONG: So they're
24 actually under -- the ones I was just
25 reading are under construction but --

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1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Unless
2 you're telling me they're out there
3 digging right now, then there's not
4 even anything under construction
5 right now in Vernon Park.

6 MS. STRONG: Vernon is
7 actually complete with the exception
8 of the Loo, so the --

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, the
10 Loo was the primary purpose of
11 construction or Rebuild dollars. It
12 was really all about the Loo. And
13 so, that's not -- it's still not
14 done. The baseball field was a later
15 addition and a smaller amount. The
16 main thing that we were trying to
17 accomplish was to have these
18 facilities made available in the
19 community.

20 So can you go back for the 16
21 projects that are complete and give a
22 breakdown of how many are in each
23 District?

24 MS. STRONG: I can get that
25 for you in a second. Got folks who

6/6/2023

1 crunch the numbers. I will say for
2 your District, Councilwoman, we do
3 have Vare Playground that should be
4 starting in the fall. We have the
5 Vernon baseball as you mentioned
6 complete with the Loo coming at the
7 end of the summer. We have Happy
8 Hollow, responding to certainly -- we
9 heard the community's expression of
10 need there and your support to get
11 that project started --

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Let me
13 just say this to you, Kira, because,
14 you know, and we had this
15 conversation last year again, and the
16 lack of equity in the way decisions
17 are made around these projects.
18 Because as I'm looking at it and I
19 think the numbers are going to bear
20 out, when you made a decision in
21 terms of where resources were going
22 to go, the decisions were made based
23 along the lines of who had the most
24 need. And for some reason the 8th
25 District was seen as a District that

6/6/2023

1 we didn't need anything.

2 So all of sudden they're
3 responding to Happy Hollow as if the
4 Administration didn't know that Happy
5 Hollow was the mess that it is.

6 There was this thinking that, oh,
7 from the former Commissioner who came
8 out and said that Jerome Brown was a
9 palace, this is what she told the
10 people from the community, and
11 clearly that's not the case.

12 And so, when you look at where
13 resources were allocated of the first
14 16 projects that were completed, it
15 was not in the neighborhoods in my
16 opinion based on the numbers that you
17 gave and the neighborhoods that you
18 gave, the Districts that you gave.
19 It was not keeping in line with where
20 the majority of the money is being
21 spent because that's where the need
22 was.

23 It seems to me a lot of money
24 in neighborhoods that are already
25 overresourced with playground

6/6/2023

1 amenities. And so, we just doubled
2 down and put more money and moved
3 them to the front of the line in some
4 of these instances. So I'm wondering
5 if you can give me a breakdown on
6 that.

7 While you're working on that,
8 I'm going to move to Councilman -- I
9 think Kenyatta Johnson was next and
10 then Councilman Curtis Jones.

11 Chair recognizes Councilman
12 Johnson.

13 (No response.)

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: He may
15 have dropped off. Oh, is that him?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Councilman
18 Jones, we're going to move to you
19 until the Councilman is available and
20 ready.

21 The Chair recognizes
22 Councilman Curtis Jones.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: (Muted).

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You're on
25 mute, Councilman.

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1 COUNCILMAN JONES: (Muted).

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

3 Councilman, you're on mute.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Oh, thank
5 you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You're
7 welcome.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: To give
9 context to what Chairwoman Bass is
10 talking about, through the soda tax
11 aren't we receiving like \$7.5 million
12 a month; is that true?

13 MS. STRONG: Councilman, I
14 can't answer that question. I would
15 need Finance to weigh in on that.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: So those
17 are the last numbers that I had and
18 it goes to a lot of worthwhile things
19 including PreK and other things.
20 We're going to have a hearing to talk
21 about the expansion of PreK. But
22 when you mentioned all of these
23 places, and the Chairwoman wants to
24 know where the major renovations are
25 completed and not where the

6/6/2023

1 renovations are talked about, in my
2 District we received one of the first
3 Rebuild projects. And what it is, is
4 a field with a fence. It's a field
5 with a fence.

6 And what I'm saying is that,
7 yeah, we could not have predicted
8 COVID, we could not have predicted
9 some of the supply chain issues, but
10 what the reality is we're going to
11 appropriations now to look at where
12 we can (inaudible) the gap when what
13 was proposed pre-COVID and the prices
14 that were given to offset inflation
15 supply chain and other problems that
16 came up. And we're going to have to
17 match some of the gaps that we
18 received both from extra revenues
19 from the state and the extra revenues
20 from us.

21 So the sooner we build things,
22 the sooner we stop getting
23 inflationary increases for things.
24 So, you know, I appreciate -- I don't
25 ever, you know, envy my other

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1 colleagues who are getting completed,
2 renovated, sprayground-filled kinds
3 of parks because I will just take my
4 grandkids down to their District to
5 play, but I shouldn't have to. I
6 should be able to enjoy that in the
7 8th District, in the 4th District.
8 And the 5th District has a lot of --
9 I'm going to start hanging out with
10 Council President Clarke a little
11 more. But it should be, as the
12 Chairwoman talked about, in areas of
13 the greatest need.

14 All you have to do is just
15 look at where the shootings are
16 happening, where the violence is
17 happening and then look at the
18 conditions in that neighborhood of
19 the playgrounds, and that should be
20 priority. And the Hollow, when I
21 looked at some of the newscast, it
22 goes down in that area. When I look
23 at Shepard in my area and some of the
24 newscast, it goes down in that area.
25 So the sooner we complete them, the

6/6/2023

1 sooner we can divert young people
2 into a positive trajectory because
3 that's what this was all about.

4 Shepard in my District is
5 where Wilt Chamberlain and others
6 played and countless other, not
7 Olympians, have made it through that
8 rec center to colleges and
9 universities and careers. So for the
10 longer they're shut down, the more
11 they are at risk.

12 And so, when the Chairwoman is
13 anxious, when the Chairwoman is
14 insistent and persistent about the
15 completion of these projects, it's
16 because our kids' lives depend on
17 them, that everybody can't make it to
18 (inaudible). And so, we depend on
19 you and the completion of these
20 projects to save lives.

21 Thank you, Madam Chair.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
23 Councilman.

24 Kira, did you want to respond?

25 MS. STRONG: Yeah. Thank you,

6/6/2023

1 Councilman Jones. I think, you know,
2 I feel incredibly lucky and frankly
3 honored to be surrounded by advocates
4 all the time. You all I think take
5 the lead there. I have a team that I
6 think is incredibly dedicated to the
7 mission of Rebuild and feels the
8 urgency that you talk about.

9 I think that a lot of the
10 projects I read off are projects that
11 were never intended to maybe have the
12 entire site redone but certainly the
13 playground or their components, and
14 they were quicker to get done in part
15 to the Councilman's point because
16 they were not the Shepard Recreation
17 Center, for example, the entire site
18 being done. And those certainly do
19 take longer to lift up.

20 And we certainly recognize --
21 I think that when you are grappling
22 with 50 years of disinvestment and
23 unfortunately operating departments
24 that haven't been given the funds
25 like with Happy Hollow to keep it up

6/6/2023

1 to the I think standard all of us
2 would expect for our children, those
3 projects don't happen overnight. And
4 I think that patience is really tough
5 because we have a City that's tired
6 and we've got a lot going on.

7 So I feel the urgency that you
8 convey. I respect it. I think this
9 team feels it. We have a potential
10 for over 15 groundbreakings and
11 ribbon-cuttings between now and the
12 end of October. We want that pace to
13 continue in all Districts, so I
14 appreciate the feedback and we
15 understand.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you
17 for your comments, Kira.

18 I see Councilman Harrity also
19 has a question, but I do want to add,
20 Kira, I hear your statement that
21 you're trying to -- that you
22 recognize the issues around equity in
23 communities, but recognizing the
24 problem and directly responding I
25 think are two different things. And

6/6/2023

1 I don't know that people feel that
2 the response has been acceptable from
3 a conversation that we had really a
4 year ago.

5 And so, here we are a year
6 later and I feel like we're having
7 the exact same conversation really
8 over again about equity and how money
9 is spent and in what neighborhoods.
10 And we should have taken some notes
11 and made some different decisions
12 based on those same conversations
13 from last year, but I'm going to hold
14 my questions and comments.

15 Councilman Harrity. Chair
16 recognizes Councilman Harrity.

17 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Thank
18 you, Chairwoman.

19 Kira, my question -- I only
20 heard one project being done in the
21 7th District. Can you tell me what
22 neighborhood in the 7th District that
23 is?

24 MS. STRONG: Sure. We have
25 Rivera Rec Center and Mann Older

6/6/2023

1 Adult Center that is currently under
2 construction. Nelson Playground was
3 completed. We have McVeigh
4 Recreation Center slated to go to
5 construction we hope before the end
6 of this year. Piccoli Playground is
7 under design, and I think that covers
8 the 7th -- and Waterloo Playground we
9 helped fund but was managed by Parks
10 & Rec, and I believe that is all
11 wrapped up.

12 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay.
13 What about McPherson Library? I know
14 that was on a list. Is there
15 anything going to happen with that?

16 MS. STRONG: Yes. We
17 currently have a site assessment
18 happening there. We've been working
19 with the Councilmember because
20 there's some leakage we understand
21 with the roof so we want to tackle
22 that first and then we'll be moving
23 into a fuller scale project.

24 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: My
25 understanding is there's also some

6/6/2023

1 foundation damage, which to me would
2 seem to be something that we would
3 want to do first. Putting a roof on
4 is all good, but if the building is
5 not going to continue to stand --

6 MS. STRONG: Right.

7 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: -- that's
8 a completely other thing. The
9 importance of that library and as a
10 historical place is very -- I mean,
11 George Washington slept there. It
12 was a stop on the Underground
13 Railroad. There's a lot of history
14 there. So, you know, just would be
15 curious and would like to know when
16 the foundation work would actually
17 get started to be done.

18 MS. STRONG: Sure. The
19 assessment actually is focusing in on
20 that foundation. So our concern is
21 it could be a (inaudible), but we
22 don't know yet. But absolutely,
23 we've been made aware that there are
24 foundation issues. So that's what
25 the assessment will tell us. We're

6/6/2023

1 happy to share that information when
2 we have it and we should have that
3 soon.

4 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay.
5 Thank you. That answers my question.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
7 Councilman.

8 Thank you, Kira. Another
9 question for you, Kira. How much
10 money have we spent so far in
11 projects in Rebuild?

12 MS. STRONG: We have spent
13 nearly \$100 million that's been
14 spent.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: What's the
16 total Rebuild budget?

17 MS. STRONG: We are looking at
18 roughly between \$430 million to \$470
19 million depending on the size of the
20 future bond issuances. And that
21 means also frankly keeping budgets in
22 control.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So we've
24 spent over 30 percent of our budget
25 and we don't have -- and it's just

6/6/2023

1 not moving the way people had
2 expected. One of the projects we
3 talked about the other day was Panati
4 Playground, which started in 2019 and
5 is scheduled for a ribbon-cutting at
6 this point in 2025. And so, that's
7 six years that we would be from start
8 to finish when the whole planning
9 around Rebuild was that or the whole
10 appeal, I should say, to Rebuild is
11 that Rebuild would be faster, much
12 faster, than the capital budget
13 process, which right now, is about
14 six to seven years I think.

15 Aparna, is that correct?

16 MS. PALANTINO: Apologies,
17 Councilwoman. Had to get myself off
18 of mute.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's
20 okay.

21 MS. PALANTINO: It depends on
22 the scale of the project and the
23 funding mechanism.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Sure. For
25 a new building right now what's the

6/6/2023

1 City running to build a new building
2 from start to finish?

3 MS. PALANTINO: It would be
4 three to five years depending on if
5 we had all the money in one year.
6 Our biggest challenge is we never get
7 enough money in one calendar year to
8 start the project.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So if you
10 have all the money you need, the
11 capital budget process is faster than
12 the Rebuild process?

13 MS. PALANTINO: I don't know
14 because you'd have to compare
15 project-to-project. So I don't know
16 that I could answer that exactly.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
18 Because I think that that's something
19 really worth looking at. Because
20 again, the whole process or the whole
21 appeal to doing Rebuild versus
22 capital, why we even got online with
23 all of this, was because we thought
24 we could do things a whole lot
25 faster, we could bypass some of the

6/6/2023

1 rules and regulations around capital
2 and just move things forward so that
3 Rebuild would actually be like a two-
4 or three-year start to finish
5 program.

6 I'm going to pause for a
7 second. I see Councilwoman Gauthier
8 has a question. I'm not sure,
9 Councilman Harrity, if you also have
10 a question. I see your hand is up.
11 I don't know if that was old.

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
14 Councilwoman Gauthier, Chair
15 recognizes.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
17 you, Madam Chair.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You're
19 welcome.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
21 wanted to acknowledge and empathize
22 with your experience and with the
23 frustration while also just offering
24 my own appreciation for the Rebuild
25 team. I think that the 3rd District

6/6/2023

1 too, we've seen some of the smaller
2 projects completed like Miles Mack
3 and we just unveiled a really
4 beautiful nature playground in Cobbs
5 Creek last week. And like some of
6 the other Districts our bigger, more
7 ambitious projects Kingsessing, Cobbs
8 Creek are just now entering the
9 design and construction phase.

10 But I just also wanted to take
11 a moment to acknowledge that this was
12 always a very ambitious initiative.
13 No one expected what happened with
14 COVID to happen. But I have full
15 confidence that the Rebuild team will
16 work with Council to make sure that
17 these projects get done and get done
18 as soon as possible, particularly
19 with the Administration, you know,
20 ending.

21 So I wanted to say that we've
22 seen some frustrating moments, but I
23 also think this has been a really
24 hard initiative in general and that
25 we hit snags that no one thought that

6/6/2023

1 we were going to hit. And I do think
2 it has to be examined that some of
3 these sites are facing years and
4 years of disinvestment, which has
5 made the projects harder overall.

6 And so, thanks to the
7 Councilmembers for putting these
8 issues on the table, but also thanks
9 to the Rebuild team for the very hard
10 work that they've undertaken. Thank
11 you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So thank
13 you, Council Lady, for coming to the
14 rescue of the Rebuild team. Thank
15 you for, you know, giving them their
16 props, you know. Listen, this is
17 City government and we all work hard.
18 That's the gig. That's what you sign
19 up for when we all come through the
20 door. You know, no easy jobs here.
21 And so, that's what it should say on
22 the front door, No easy jobs here.

23 We all sign up to do very
24 challenging work and to serve. And
25 so, while we thank them for the work

6/6/2023

1 that they have done, we also want to
2 recognize that in a lot of
3 neighborhoods the fruit of those
4 labors have not been seen, and in
5 other neighborhoods the fruits of
6 those labors are overly abundant.

7 And so, the question isn't are
8 they working. I believe that Kira
9 and her team do work, work hard, work
10 hard every day. The question is how
11 are we making sure that everyone has
12 access to those resources and all of
13 the wonderful things that are
14 happening throughout the City.

15 There's no question that if
16 you look at let's say the Center City
17 and the commercial corridor down here
18 and the work that's being done, it's
19 summertime and we have so many
20 wonderful things happening in Center
21 City. But if we take that right into
22 certain neighborhoods and look at
23 what has happening in those
24 neighborhoods, you will find that
25 there is a disconnect in many of

6/6/2023

1 those communities, and that's what
2 we're trying to bridge that gap for.
3 So thank you for your comments.

4 Councilman Jones, did you have
5 a comment or question? I saw you
6 come on. No?

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: No, Madam
8 Chair. Thank you. I just want to
9 echo your sentiments. When we go to
10 community meetings and we explain all
11 of the circumstances and pandemic and
12 supply chain issues, at the end of
13 the day they point at us --

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yep.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- and say,
16 make it happen. And so, anything
17 that we say on these hearings is with
18 the spirit of that in mind and it's
19 not personal, it's professional. And
20 it's our passion to represent our
21 people.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:
23 Absolutely. You're absolutely right,
24 Councilman. When we go into the
25 community, who gets the blame. The

6/6/2023

1 person that they elected. It doesn't
2 go to anyone else. It's the person
3 that they feel like they have put
4 into office to represent them and
5 their interest. And so, they don't
6 care about a pandemic. They don't
7 care about a supply chain issue.
8 They don't care about budgets.

9 What they know is when we
10 submitted our list of projects and
11 what we wanted to see happen, other
12 things are happening in other
13 communities. And listen, if you can
14 get it, good for you. But if you
15 can't get it, it's a problem. And
16 for most of the neighborhoods in our
17 communities we can't get it.

18 So, Kira, do you have a list
19 of the 16 projects that were
20 completed and what neighborhoods or
21 what Council Districts they were
22 completed in?

23 MS. STRONG: I do. And just
24 checking, am I on camera? I haven't
25 touched --

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1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes, you
2 are. Yes, we see you.

3 MS. STRONG: Okay. In
4 District 1, three are completed. In
5 District 2, one. In District 3, one.
6 In District 4, two. In District 5,
7 three. In District 6, three. In
8 District 7, one. In District 8, one
9 with Vernon but we understand the
10 Loo, so we can call that complete
11 when the Loo arrives this summer.
12 District 9, zero. And District 10,
13 two.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
15 Thank you very much. And I just want
16 to point out one thing in particular,
17 that some of our Districts here, I
18 think the Districts with the highest
19 numbers were also the Districts that
20 received the lowest Rebuild
21 allocations, among the lowest Rebuild
22 allocations, because they were
23 Districts that had been -- not
24 overresourced, but better resourced
25 over years, I will say that.

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1 So thus far, we've spent \$100
2 million of the City's Rebuild budget,
3 about 30 percent of said budget which
4 is between \$430 million and \$470
5 million. And so, I'm wondering how
6 much have we borrowed? Not just
7 spent, but how much do we have tucked
8 away that we borrowed but haven't
9 spent down yet? Do we have any money
10 or are you counting that in the 100
11 million?

12 MS. STRONG: That's just true
13 spend so it would reflect dollars
14 that we have. We currently in
15 addition to the William Penn funds,
16 some grant funds, we are nearing the
17 end of the first bond issuance.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
19 now we're at the point of the second
20 bond issuance?

21 MS. STRONG: Getting close,
22 yes. We do have -- which would add
23 to our budget which is helpful for
24 some of the overages that were seen
25 at sites, like Panati budget, for

6/6/2023

1 example, you were referencing that
2 has grown. Shepard's budget has
3 grown. We have a number of projects
4 whose budgets have some gaps, so
5 there is a \$40 million allocation in
6 the current budget that will help
7 bridge some of those gaps, which
8 we're very thankful for because those
9 also frankly cause delays.

10 And I did want to,
11 Councilmember, just say six years is
12 not an average for our sites. I
13 think the goal is to get to, I think,
14 two, two and a half. But most of our
15 projects I would say are much faster
16 than six. But as you're familiar,
17 Panati, we started working with a
18 nonprofit and we had a rehab as the
19 scope, and we went down that path.
20 And with your support and frankly I
21 think vision, we were able to pivot
22 to a new building and a new
23 construction building, and we started
24 again with the design. Frankly, I
25 think we absolutely would like it all

6/6/2023

1 to be faster. But that's I think a
2 great example of some of what we
3 encounter when we get to sites that
4 frankly the original vision of what
5 Rebuild might be has really grown.

6 I think not only the
7 expectations of community members,
8 but also community advocates,
9 Councilpeople and just where we are
10 currently in today's society, we
11 recognize the need for these public
12 spaces. And I don't think the boiler
13 fix and the roof, community members
14 are holding us, you especially, to
15 task, it's not cutting it, so the
16 scopes have grown.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Oh, yeah.

18 MS. STRONG: So we understand
19 that and some of the pivot and some
20 of the time that's around
21 accommodating that too. I think
22 we're going to end up with much, much
23 better projects that will hopefully
24 stand the test of time, but some of
25 those pivots do certainly take time

6/6/2023

1 and to raise the funds. But thank
2 you all to your support too on that.
3 It's absolutely critical to bring in
4 those additional funds.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Quick
6 question, Madam Chair.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.
8 Councilman Johnson.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Madam
10 Chair.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.
12 Councilman Johnson. Chair recognizes
13 Councilman Johnson.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you
15 very much.

16 I just had a quick question,
17 Kira. What's the strategy and plan,
18 a transition to putting together -- I
19 just want to get an idea, especially
20 for the District Councilmembers, how
21 can we be most prepared for this
22 transition so that our projects are
23 continuously moving forward? And I
24 know the new Administration will have
25 a say-so over this. But at the end

6/6/2023

1 of the day, members of Council want
2 to make sure that we are able to move
3 forward in finishing and completing
4 that which was promised to all of our
5 Councilmanic Districts.

6 MS. STRONG: Thank you,
7 Councilman Johnson. We certainly
8 agree to have all these bigger-scaled
9 projects, you know, like Barrett,
10 like Vare, like Shepard, Edgely Field
11 that are in design and where we've
12 engaged community members where we've
13 gotten people really excited and they
14 have to your point been waiting and
15 are impatient, to not see those go
16 into construction in this year and
17 land, I think would really be beyond
18 a travesty for the residents of
19 Philadelphia.

20 Our commitment is to keep
21 those projects moving forward so that
22 they do cut the ribbon and get back
23 into service in a way that lends
24 integrity to the City and the people
25 we serve. I think your continued

6/6/2023

1 support across Council for the
2 program and to keep things moving is
3 great.

4 I think that obviously the
5 dollars that we do have we want to
6 make sure that they are being spent
7 on the construction. Like I
8 mentioned, it's about \$250 million
9 worth of construction over the next
10 year. We want to see those projects
11 happen. So I think we feel that
12 urgency and push to get those
13 projects absolutely in construction.
14 And I think your continued support
15 with our new Administration around
16 the importance and the need for these
17 sites will be very, very, very
18 helpful.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Well,
20 listen, thank you. I appreciate it.
21 And, you know, for me if you can just
22 keep us abreast and maybe we can get
23 a briefing with you and the Mayor's
24 team regarding what this transition
25 is going to look like, that will be

6/6/2023

1 very, very helpful just so we can all
2 be on the same page.

3 As to what to expect,
4 obviously until a new Administration
5 comes in we don't know what to
6 expect, but at least we will all be
7 on the same page as members of
8 Council as to what our expectations
9 are, what the transition period looks
10 like, and then we will present our
11 case to the next Administration.

12 MS. STRONG: Absolutely. Yep.
13 We'd love to (inaudible). Thanks.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: All
15 right. Thank you very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
17 Councilman.

18 Are there any additional
19 questions from members of Council?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Any
22 additional questions?

23 (No response.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.
25 That's going to end our public

6/6/2023

1 hearing and we're going to go into
2 the public meeting. Please pause.

3 Okay. Thank you very much.

4 And that concludes the hearing of the
5 Committee on Parks and Recreation.

6 We're going to give a second for
7 those who are guests on this hearing
8 or who were called to testify, if
9 they could exit the hearing at this
10 point.

11 And before they exit, I do
12 want to pause for one second and make
13 sure is there anyone who appeared or
14 wanted to testify at this hearing
15 that we did not call your name? I do
16 want to make sure that there's no one
17 out there who is interested in
18 offering testimony or comments that
19 was not recognized. I don't think
20 that there was. But if you are,
21 please raise your hand.

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

24 Seeing none, we're going to ask all
25 of our guests to leave the hearing at

6/6/2023

1 this time as we go into our public
2 meeting. If we can have -- okay.
3 All right. And at this time as we
4 move into the public meeting, I'm
5 going to ask the Clerk to please take
6 the roll.

7 Members that are in
8 attendance, please state your name or
9 say present when your name is called.
10 Also, please say a few brief words
11 when responding so that your image is
12 displayed on screen so that we can
13 check the attendance to make sure we
14 still have a quorum.

15 Madam Clerk, please call the
16 roll.

17 THE CLERK: Councilmember
18 Gauthier.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
20 Present.

21 THE CLERK: Councilmember
22 Brooks.

23 (No response.)

24 THE CLERK: Is Councilmember
25 Brooks here?

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1 (No response.)

2 THE CLERK: Councilmember
3 Johnson.

4 (No response.)

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember
6 Jones.

7 (No response.)

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Harrity.

10 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I am
11 here, present and accounted for.

12 THE CLERK: Councilmember
13 Thomas.

14 (No response.)

15 THE CLERK: And, Councilwoman
16 the Chair Bass.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
18 I think that we're short a quorum by
19 two members, so I'm going to pause
20 while we round up two members to take
21 a vote on the matters at hand. One
22 moment.

23 (Brief pause.)

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm here,
25 Madam Chair.

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1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
2 Councilman. And I know we're waiting
3 for one more. We're waiting for I
4 think Councilman Jones.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:
6 Councilmember Brooks is present.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.
8 So we have Councilmember Brooks, so
9 we can proceed.

10 So just going back, we've
11 already confirmed Councilwoman
12 Gauthier, Councilwoman Brooks is on,
13 Councilman Johnson, Councilman
14 Harrity and Chair Bass. So we do
15 have a quorum.

16 That being said, Chair
17 recognizes Councilmember Gauthier for
18 a motion on Bill No. 221016.
19 Councilwoman, do you have the script,
20 Gauthier?

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.
22 Thank you, Madam Chair.

23 I move that Bill No. 221016 be
24 reported from this Committee with a
25 favorable recommendation and further

6/6/2023

1 move that the rules of Council be
2 suspended to permit first reading of
3 this bill at our next session of
4 Council.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Second.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The Chair
7 notes for the record that
8 Councilmember Johnson seconds the
9 motion. It has been moved and
10 properly seconded that Bill No.
11 221016 be reported from this
12 Committee with a favorable
13 recommendation and further move that
14 the rules of Council be suspended to
15 permit first reading of this bill at
16 the next session of Council.

17 All those in favor of the
18 motion will signify by saying aye.

19 (Aye.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Those
21 opposed?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The ayes
24 have it and the motion carries.

25 And next, Chair recognizes

6/6/2023

1 Councilmember Gauthier for a motion
2 on Bill No. 230324.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
4 you, Madam Chair.

5 I move that Bill No. 230324 be
6 reported from this Committee with a
7 favorable recommendation and further
8 move that the rules of Council be
9 suspended to permit first reading of
10 this bill at our next session of
11 Council.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Can I get
13 a second?

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Second.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The Chair
16 notes for the record that
17 Councilmember Brooks seconds the
18 motion. It's been moved and properly
19 seconded that Bill No. 230324 be
20 reported from this Committee with a
21 favorable recommendation and further
22 move that the rules of Council be
23 suspended to permit first reading of
24 this bill at the next session of
25 Council.

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1 All those in favor of the
2 motion will signify by saying aye.

3 (Aye.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Anyone
5 opposed?

6 (No response.)

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The ayes
8 have it and the motion carries.

9 And the Chair recognizes
10 Councilmember Gauthier for a motion
11 on Resolution No. 230461.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
13 you, Madam Chair.

14 I move that Resolution No.
15 230461 be reported from this
16 Committee with a favorable
17 recommendation and further move that
18 the rules of Council be suspended to
19 permit first reading at our next
20 session of Council.

21 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Second.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The Chair
23 notes for the record that
24 Councilmember Harrity seconds the
25 motion. And it's been moved and

6/6/2023

1 properly seconded that Resolution No.
2 230461 be reported from this
3 Committee with a favorable
4 recommendation.

5 All those in favor of this
6 motion will signify -- excuse me.
7 Let me just go back --

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Aye.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry,
10 Councilman. Let me just go back over
11 my language.

12 It's been moved and properly
13 seconded that Resolution No. 230461
14 will be reported from this Committee
15 with the rules suspension and a
16 favorable recommendation.

17 All of those in favor of this
18 motion will signify by saying aye.

19 (Aye.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Anyone
21 opposed?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The ayes
24 have it and the motion carries. And
25 this concludes the business before

6/6/2023

1 the Committee on Parks, Recreation
2 and Cultural Affairs. I thank you
3 all very much for your attendance
4 today. Thank you.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
6 you.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
8 you, Madam Chair.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:
10 Everyone, have a good day.

11 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Take
12 care.

13 (Committee on Parks,
14 Recreation & Cultural Affairs
15 concluded at 2:18 p.m.)
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6/6/2023

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

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

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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

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